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Special issue: Migrating through the Arts
Deconstructing Alterities through new Approaches to Music and Dance Practices

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Introduction: Migrating through the Arts: Deconstructing Alterities through new Approaches to Music and Dance Practices

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Abstract

In recent decades, there has been a growing interest in artistic practices as a lens through which to explore inequalities, navigating the intricate dynamics of mobility, citizenship and belongingness. In particular, music and dance have emerged as illuminating pathways for reimagining migration and diversity research. This transformative perspective challenges conventional categories such as "migrant," "migration," "diversity," "alterity," "North," and "South," exposing their normative dimensions. It invites a reconsideration of the circulations of practices, practitioners, and representations within the realms of music and dance, prompting methodological and epistemological inquiries. How can the creativity and agency of actors be reconciled with the institutional constraints they encounter? How can the cultural hybridizations and syncretism resulting from the movements of people, creations, and information be conceptualized? In what ways does a focus on music and dance practices empower scholars in migration and diversity studies to rethink normative categories and dismantle entrenched notions of alterity? This introduction seeks to provide an overview of the compelling issues emanating from research on music and dance in the context of migration and diversity studies. It explores the novel avenues opened up by this research domain, offering a platform for critical reflections on global inequalities.

Keywords: migration, music, arts, dance, belonging, alterity, diversity

The reflections presented in this special issue are rooted in a series of paradoxes that have become increasingly apparent within a contemporary landscape marked by the simultaneous acceleration of global movements of people, capital, and cultural production, the strengthening of borders (Horvath, Pape, Delcroix & Inowlocki 2022; Robertson 1995), and the crystallization of conflicts and tensions rooted in political, religious, or cultural differences (Chattopadhyay 2018). The global cultural scene in particular is characterized by a contrasted interplay between the celebration of diversity and mobility and the harsh material realities and processes of censorship that artists, specifically those from the Global South (Santos & Meneses 2020), often face.

First, a flowering of new or recently visible artistic hubs is emerging outside the traditional artistic institutions in the West, such as the Museum of Black Civilizations in Dakar, the Museum of African Contemporary Art Al Maaden in Marrakech, the Storyland Studios and Lagos Art World, or the 798 Art District Beijing, all contributing to a more diverse and interconnected global art world (Belting & Buddensieg 2009; Fratagnoli & Lassibille 2018). Nevertheless, the imposition of stringent visa and travel restrictions is inhibiting the free circulation of artists from these burgeoning Southern contexts, hindering the realization of the ideals of unrestricted physical and digital mobility associated with a globalized art community. Recent political crises in

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Sub-Saharan Africa have underscored this issue, highlighting the impact of travel restrictions on African artists who already face hurdles in gaining recognition when applying for visas (Gayot and Blanchard 2023). This further emphasizes how passport-related inequalities play a significant role in shaping the dynamics of the global cultural scene.

Second, while art scenes in the West proudly champion political free speech, diversity, and critical perspectives such as the "decolonial" or the "subaltern," this theoretical and ideological stance warrants a critical examination. The dynamics of recognition within Western liberal discourses are indeed influenced by "regulatory ideals" that determine who can or cannot be deemed an intelligible subject (Butler & Athanasiou 2013). Moreover, as noted by Neveux regarding theatre in the French context (2019), advocating "political art" often results paradoxically in the neutralization of the political dimensions of artworks, confining them to types of conformity. The author attributes this phenomenon to the reduction of art to the neoliberal obsession for functionality (ibid.: 58), arguing that there is an increasing demand for art to deliver measurable social benefits, which burdens creation with the obligation to shape citizens and cultivate a "community life" (the *vivre-ensemble*) consistent with the representation of the political class that funds it (ibid.: 74). Consequently, creation is stripped of any capacity to engage in speculative thinking about "hypotheses of alternatives" (ibid.: 233). Beyond the French context, these tendencies have become apparent in recent controversies surrounding the globally renowned *Documenta* exhibitions that take place every five years in Kassel, Germany, which, in the last twenty years, have been curated by several directors (like Okwui Enwezor, responsible in 2002) and collectives born or living outside Europe (like the Indonesian group ruangrupa who signed the exhibition in 2022). The debates that unfolded around certain films and artworks exposed during *documenta15* in 2022 exposed the tensions between different perceptions of the place of the political within contemporary art. Ultimately, these debates resulted in the resignation of a substantial group from the Documenta 2027 Finding Committee, underscoring the centrality of questions related to political statements (and their censorship) to artists' careers and productions (Documenta 2024).

These paradoxes between a desired or proclaimed freedom of movement and existing actual restrictions, along with the tension between celebrating diversity and grappling with the concrete power dynamics and mechanisms of censorship or speech restrictions, give rise to inquiries that transcend the realm of global culture. These inquiries delve into the construction of social frontiers, questions of alterity and self-representation, and the dynamics of global power. Furthermore, they prompt us to scrutinize the perpetuation of problematic and essentializing categories in our social science disciplines, such as "diversity," the dichotomy between the local and the global, or the distinctions between "economic migrants," "refugees," and "expatriates."

In this Special Issue, we center our attention on music and dance practices to contribute to recent initiatives in critical migration studies that aim to reassess normative categories and distinctions, placing the emphasis on people's agency in challenging and deconstructing categorization and othering in border regimes. How can a focus on music and dance practices inspire scholars in migration and diversity studies to reassess normative categories and deconstruct alterities that persist from both emic and etic perspectives? In what ways can a focus on dance and music practices and practitioners support us in challenging notions such as "migrant," "migration," "alterity," "North," and "South," thereby highlighting their normative dimensions? How might we conceptualize the cultural hybridizations and syncretism generated by the movements of people, artistic creations, and information by taking into account both people's creativity and the institutional constraints they face?

The contributions to this special issue endeavor to tackle these questions by opening up new per-

spectives on the movements of practices, practitioners, and representations of music and dance. By delving into the realms of music and dance practices and their practitioners, exploring their mobility and the obstacles they encounter, the authors raise new epistemological and ethical questions that are inherent in critical migration and diversity studies. Moreover, they shed light on how such a focus reveals asymmetries and power relationships that extend beyond art worlds, permeating representations of alterity and echoing in global economic and political disparities. Lastly, they demonstrate the instrumentality of in-depth ethnographic approaches in comprehending how categories are constructed, perpetuated, reversed, or strategically employed by institutions and migrating artists. To achieve this, the contributions draw on insights from migration and globalization studies, along with original research material delving into the significance of music and dance within these fields.

Overall, the Special Issue showcases the contribution that research on music and dance can offer to scholarship on borders and mobilities. Since the 1990s, the "mobility turn" has undeniably spurred significant advances in the social sciences. By embracing an analytical framework that shifts the focus towards human movement, rather than perpetuating the social ideals of immobility or sedentariness, this body of scholarship has facilitated exploration of the inherent fluidity in contemporary global processes (Sheller & Urry 2006; Urry 2007; Cresswell & Merriman 2011). In this sense, geographically defined categories have shown their limits, such that a broader understanding of the "situated politics of belonging" (Yuval-Davis, Viethen & Kannabiran 2006) is now common sense.

Expanding on this paradigm shift, on the other hand, recent publications have initiated a critical re-evaluation of an exclusive focus on mobility (Ortar, Salzbrunn & Stock 2018; Glick Schiller & Çağlar 2011; Schmoll 2020), recognizing the risk of obscuring inequalities in accessing mobility and the various downsides associated with the logics of circulation. Moreover, these critiques shed light on how immobility and barriers to movement are integral components of many life paths (Timera 2009). In-depth examinations of migration trajectories in particular have brought to light the intricate interplay of inequalities and complex tensions between obstacles and circulation that significantly impact issues of mobility, citizenship and belonging in the contemporary world (Agier 2002; Agier 2013; Agier & Lecadet 2014; Vertovec 2010).

In recent decades, these approaches have been invigorated by a growing interest in artistic practices, with music and dance emerging as particularly illuminating avenues for rethinking transnational and mobility-centered approaches to migration studies (Capone & Salzbrunn 2018; Aterianus-Owanga, Djebbari & Salzbrunn 2019; Andrieu & Rinaudo 2023; Sievers 2024). These creative expressions and their subsequent circulation are not solely influenced by the rise of transnational relationships and networks, but also actively contribute to the formation of global and interconnected local imaginaries and "ways of life" (Wulff 1998, 2007; Bohlman 2002).

Scholars focusing on artists' trajectories and biographies have underscored the agency of migrants and minorities, challenging previous perceptions that portrayed them as subjects confined by institutional borders or as a homogeneous group of victims (Martiniello, Puig, & Suzanne 2009). More recently, the emancipatory power of music within the context of forced migration has been recognized, particularly among young refugees (Laborde 2023; Sarroy & Kyratsou forthcoming). Finally, analyses of artists' careers have demonstrated the impact of migration policies on professional achievements (Le Menestrel 2012), as well as how artistic practices provide individuals with access to new social positions, reshuffling local and global hierarchies (Neveu Kringelbach 2013; Sorignet 2010). This research has addressed a gap in migration and diversity studies by highlighting the ways in which artists navigate, divert, and subvert the power regimes to which they are subjected (Derderian 2024). Hence, the pres-

ent special issue about research on music and dance makes significant contributions to the field of the autonomy of migration. Alternative imaginaries of borders (Metcalfe 2022) can be expressed through dance and music practices, and obstacles can be overcome symbolically, although there are still persistent juridical and physical frontiers (Hess 2017). Nevertheless, the focus on migrants' agency through their creativity, artistic practices and trajectories contributes a great deal to renewing the perspective on the autonomy of migration.

On a more interpersonal and intersubjective level, the surge in artists' mobility has given rise to the interweaving of new intimacies and "passionate encounters" (Davis 2015) revolving around the music and dance practices that transcend national borders. The proliferation of courses dedicated to "exotic" dance forms in Western national contexts since the 1990s (Apprill, Djakouane & Nicolas-Daniel 2013) has contributed notably to the emergence of new forms of tourism centered on the practice of diverse dances in various locations (Menet 2020; Aterianus-Owanga 2018). This in turn has created professional and mobility opportunities for artists. Although such encounters are inevitably marked by economic and socio-political inequalities, scholars have also shed light on the criticality and agencies that emerge when individuals confront the "Other," thereby emphasizing the role of artistic conventions in shaping these encounters (Aterianus-Owanga 2021).

These perspectives have facilitated the reevaluation of dominant discourses and dichotomies, emphasizing the importance of specific methodological approaches. On the one hand, studies of transnational and translocal collaborations and funding have revealed new hierarchies, asymmetries, and power relations influenced by various forms of mobility and immobility. For instance, Altaïr Despres (2016) combines an analysis of historical and (post)colonial relationships between France and African countries with an examination of artists' trajectories, challenging representations of cultural globalization as a movement from a centre to peripheries or as a process of deterritorialization. Instead, Despres illuminates how the links that people and institutions forge in a specific socio-historical context shape the emergence of determined art forms in certain locations. Similarly, by incorporating the analysis of the aesthetic content of artworks into research methods, other inquiries have redefined discussions surrounding hegemony and cultural appropriation (Andrieu 2014; Slitine 2018). Through analysis of the logics that underlie creative processes, authors reveal the constant exchanges and inspirations that shape creation. This recentres the debates on individual and collective agencies and values, shifting the focus away from aesthetic impositions or plundering.

These viewpoints emphasize that cultural exchanges and circulations are nuanced and resist oversimplification into stereotypical relations between the privileged and the underprivileged or between the "North" and the "South" (Neveu Kringelbach & Skinner 2012). Although in some cases the traditional opposition between agency-oriented and structuralist views remains evident in the analysis of art worlds (Aterianus-Owanga, Gaulier & Navarro 2022), a prevailing approach should involve a combination of situated ethnographic research perspectives with a thorough analysis of contextual inequalities and historical frames. In essence, these perspectives, with their emphasis on agents or cultural brokers in a translocal perspective, have illuminated practices that, while shaped by the movements and interactions of agents beyond national borders, rely on these agents' capacity to navigate structures of opportunity in a specific locality. This involves adapting to the material, social, and political conditions in place and establishing both symbolic and material roots in that space (Capone & Salzbrunn 2018: 12).

The papers featured in this special issue build upon and further contribute to these emerging reflections by delving into three key dimensions of migration and diversity studies that are rejuvenated through research on music and dance:

ethical and epistemological inquiries; considerations of asymmetries and power relations; and lastly, methodological considerations. Recognizing the richness that diverse perspectives on migrating through the arts can bring to these topics, the guest editors assembled contributors with backgrounds in ethnomusicology, anthropology, sociology, and dance studies, fostering an interdisciplinary dialogue. The geographical scope covered by the contributors extends from South and North America to Europe, Africa, and SWANA (Southwest Asia and North Africa).

Epistemological and ethical questions

The first series of articles deals with **epistemological and ethical questions**. Research in ethnic and migration studies invariably raises questions about the (mis)representation and understanding of the "Other" and prompts reflection on the role researchers play in constructing and challenging such representations. By taking a we-versus-them perspective based on national belonging, nation-based groups are implicitly supposed to be homogenous. Nina Glick Schiller and Ayse Çağlar (2011), like others, have criticized this methodological nationalism. Constructive theoretical approaches focusing on diversity (Salzbrunn 2013; 2014), super-diversity (Vertovec 2010) and belonging (Pfaff-Czarnecka 2012) have contributed a great deal to opening up non-essentializsing epistemological perspectives. In the context of the globalization of references and practices, these questions extend further as shared practices and multiple belongings (Yuval-Davis, Viethen & Kannabiran 2006) proliferate worldwide, challenging the very notion of otherness and emphasizing processes of differentiation and identification. The first section of this special issue delves into these issues through three essays that are focused on music practices, their (meta-)analysis, and their role in nurturing new forms of belonging. Authored by scholars with backgrounds in ethnomusicology and anthropology, these essays offer a thoughtful exploration of music in the context of migration experiences, (perceived and constructed) social and cultural difference and diversity, and globalized cultural forms.

In his article **A Radical Concern: Advocacy for an Ingenious Anthropology, Denis Laborde** addresses a fundamental concern regarding the inability of the social sciences to counteract the resurgence of the walls that the previous generation worked so hard to dismantle. Focused on ethnomusicology, or the anthropology of music, the author explores this concern in four steps. First, the article examines the position of ethnomusicology within the social sciences, particularly within the realm of the musical anthropology of migrations. Second, it delves into ethnographic inquiry as an art of diversion, an instrument that sharpens observational accuracy and serves as an engine of indignation, allowing the strategies and tactics used by actors to navigate social categories to be deciphered. Third, the temporal inscription of artistic performances is explored in order to understand the complexities of the narratives surrounding migration. Lastly, the article addresses the "categorical service" provided by ethnomusicology's conceptual frameworks, emphasizing the importance of challenging these frameworks and investigating the question of indexicality. Laborde argues that, by taking indirect paths, understanding the timing of musical actions, and recognizing context without reifying it, we make our observations more complex, avoiding fixed perspectives and resisting the temptation to oversimplify social interactions. The goal is to reveal the overlooked aspects and foster an ethnomusicological science that discovers the hidden instead of creating explanatory models.

In his exploration of **Migrancy and Music on Film, Martin Stokes** challenges the complexities in the field of migrant music studies, which has been labelled by some as "unmappable" due to the ethical and practical demands on researchers. The focus is on questioning the processes of categorization that are related to music and dance in the context of migration. Examining films from commercial cinema, academic ethnography, and contemporary curatorial culture,

the paper depicts complex struggles over time, history, and the skills that migrant musicians bring to such struggles. Simultaneously, it questions the conventional narrative frameworks that are used to represent migrant and refugee musicians. Do we consider music as music and dance as dance when it comes to migration? Through the lens of Bal's migratory aesthetics, Stokes argues that music and sound shed light on the materiality and stickiness of time while offering a critical perspective. He also suggests that the study of music and sound can be more effectively harnessed to understand contemporary perspectives on "new diversities."

In her article **Art Worlds in Situation: Old Methods for a (New) Anthropology of Popular Music and Dance in Migration, Alice Aterianus-Owanga** builds on recent anthropological studies on the activities and networks of "ordinary" migrant artists in migration, including her own ethnography of Senegalese dancers' migrations to Europe, to revisit old ethnographic methods through insights from migration studies. The paper builds on recent paradigm shifts that have characterized the anthropology of migration in the last decades, such as theories of transnationalism, critiques of methodological nationalism, and notions of diasporic citizenship and translocality. It combines these perspectives with methods associated with the analysis of social networks, "social situations," and "social worlds" or "art worlds." These methods, inspired by sociologists of the Chicago school and anthropologists of the Manchester school, facilitate a nuanced understanding of transnational connections and creations in the realms of music and dance. By spotlighting collaborations, interactions, and circulations among diverse actors, places, networks, and values, this approach challenges traditional power structures within institutionalized music and dance worlds. Aterianus-Owanga suggests that conceptualizing art worlds and grounding the understanding of cultural meanings in everyday events and "generic moments" can transcend the limitations of the local/global dichotomy, providing a more nuanced perspective on the intricate social and cultural dynamics in migration contexts. The focus on music and dance in migration therefore offers valuable insights into enduring epistemological and methodological debates.

Asymmetries and Power Relations

Linked to the initial exploration of epistemological questions, the second section delves into the realm of **asymmetries and power relations**. In the context of migration experiences and post-migrant societies, as well as in research on these subjects, hierarchies are manifested in different forms. These pertain first to the downgrading and precarious conditions experienced by migrants and minorities, but they also extend to the dynamics between researchers and the subjects of their studies. Recent analyses have also scrutinized hierarchies concerning access to mobility, visibility, and recognition within art worlds (Fraser 2000; Aterianus-Owanga, Djebbari and Salzbrunn 2019; Andrieu and Rinaudo 2023). This work has focused on the role of brokers in a broad network of artists and producers, as well as on intermediaries who have powerful positions in cultural centres to shed light on the unequal access to resources and the continuous asymmetries and power relations that permeate the networks of artists and producers. Speaking to these issues, the pieces by Neveu Kringelbach, Navarro, and Rinaudo critically examine how mobilities and immobilities, along with the perceptions and representations of such experiences, influence power dynamics, artistic career opportunities, and the attainment of recognition. The exploration encompasses fundamental concepts within the realm of music and dance research, such as the notion of "scene," and investigates the intricate interplay between local contexts and mobility.

In her article **The Art of Navigating Interrupted Mobilities: West African Performers and the Challenges of Temporality, Hélène Neveu Kringelbach** critically examines the asymmetries arising from growing impediments to physical circulation within transnational cultural spaces.

The focus is on the impact of migration regimes in the Global North on West African performers, examining both their on-stage and off-stage experiences, and prompting a revaluation of the temporal dimensions within migration studies. Based on her ongoing research with West African dancers and choreographers, Neveu Kringelbach analyses the tactics employed by these artists to navigate a world that values their work while often excluding their physical presence. These tactics, extending beyond the domain of performance, provide a glimpse into how artists conceptualize and anticipate alternative futures. Addressing what the author terms "interrupted mobility," choreographic artists adopt diverse strategies. The article offers selected examples, such as a focus on solo and duo performances for easier travel, the development of modular "mobile" pieces adaptable to different contexts, the creation of works directly addressing immobility, and the establishment of arts centres in home countries as a distinctive form of return. These forms of return challenge instrumentalizing narratives and show that the strategies employed by choreographic artists go beyond mere responses to migration challenges. A comprehensive exploration of the long-term journeys of African choreographic artists reveals that their mobility strategies transcend migration concerns, encompassing the broader themes of maturing as artists and social adults within transnational communities, and ultimately crafting lives worth living. The article emphasizes the significance of sustained engagement with artists in the region to deconstruct conventional narratives about dance and music in Africa. Neveu Kringelbach's research resonates with Cécile Navarro's analysis of the (im)mobilities experienced by Senegalese rap singers.

In **Power Asymmetries on the Senegalese Rap Scene: Migrants, Mobiles and Immobiles, Cécile Navarro** highlights the growing inequalities in accessing (physical) mobility and various ways of handling these constraints. While mobility and migration have been widely acknowledged for highlighting power imbalances, revealing that certain individuals enjoy freedom of movement, while others face restrictions due to unequal access to political, financial, cultural, and social resources (Kofman 2005), the concrete power mechanisms underlying these inequalities have received less scrutiny. The article draws on the findings of an ethnographic study conducted among rap artists, producers, and cultural entrepreneurs in Senegal, and seeks to delve into the categories of Migrants, Mobiles, and Immobiles as they emerge within the framework of a "music scene." Through the lens of the "music scene," Navarro investigates how music is conceptualized as the product of a specific locale while simultaneously envisioning diverse mobilities. This exploration unveils the intricate dynamics between locality and mobility, shedding light on the establishment of hierarchies of places. By examining the Senegalese rap scene, Navarro discerns the ways in which power asymmetries are manifested and negotiated within the music production landscape. The article thus contributes to a nuanced understanding of the multifaceted interactions between mobility, music, and power, emphasizing the need to move beyond a simplistic characterization of mobility constraints to recognize the complex interplay of factors that shape the experiences of Migrants, Mobiles, and Immobiles in the Senegalese rap scene.

Christian Rinaudo's article, **Interconnected Scenes: Towards a Critical Approach of Mobility, Agency, Territory and Ethnicity**, provides a critical examination of three key issues within the realm of art and migration as addressed by social science research. It scrutinizes the interrelation between various mobility systems (migration, tourism, professional travel, and artistic tours) and diverse subject positions (artist, migrant, tourist, etc.). Furthermore, it explores the significance of territories and forms of local and transnational anchoring within interconnected practices and scenes. Lastly, the article investigates the notions of identity and alterity developed by artists in response to their migration experiences. Adopting an anthropological lens, the theoretical framework sees music as a

vital element for understanding how local and national identities are forged, revealing the intricate interweaving of racial, classist, regional, and sexual ideologies. The methodological approach draws on ethnomusicology, centring on "popular" music and examining its history and transformations within the broader context of local and (trans)national interconnections. Rinaudo supports these theoretical concepts with insights from personal research conducted in Europe and Latin America, supplemented by empirical contributions from other authors. The article underscores the pivotal role of empirical research in challenging assumptions about migrant exceptionalism and advocates relational approaches. It urges a reconsideration of the mobility paradigm, acknowledging artists' experiences of territorial assignment, discrimination, and engagement with bureaucratic border regimes. Ultimately, the paper encourages a nuanced understanding of migration as situated between mobility and motility, freedom and constraint, autonomy and heteronomy, agency and dispossession.

Methodological approaches

The third and final section of the special issue addresses methodological approaches in the study of migration and artistic practices, specifically within the realm of dance performances. Innovative sensory and biographical methodological approaches, together with theoretical frameworks oriented towards the agency and autonomy of migration, enable the capture of intricate social realities, offering a distinct perspective on phenomena. The contributors to this section have backgrounds in sociology and dance research. They chart new and original pathways for research designs by centring on dance, as opposed to traditional focuses on ethnic or migrant groups and their collective identities. These approaches suggest delving into embodied and affective experiences to comprehensively grasp the dynamics of mobility and circulation. Alternatively, the authors advocate concentrating on a singular place to underscore its profound impact on the broader global dance scene.

In her article **Through the Lens of Salsa: Im/Mobile Careers in Transnational Dance Worlds, Joanna Menet** contributes to theoretical and methodological reflections on the study of dance worlds. Building on her personal ethnographic research with salsa dancers, the author introduces the concept of im/mobile careers to elucidate how global inequalities impact dance professionals. Emphasizing variations in accessing resources such as mobility, the paper also underscores the significance of gendered roles and racialized representations in dance practices. Furthermore, against the narrative of the salsa circuit as a paradigmatic space of diversity and inclusiveness, the paper argues that a closer examination unveils nuanced power dynamics that contradict the assumption of inclusiveness. Through an exploration of the careers of three dance professionals, the paper ultimately demonstrates the utility of examining a diverse range of actors to move beyond static categories. The study extends its exploration beyond the confines of the dance floor, providing insights into how categories of difference and expressions of belonging are negotiated throughout the development of dance careers. This expanded biographical perspective not only reveals the intricacies of the salsa dance circuit, it also brings to light connections and frictions that would otherwise remain hidden. By elucidating the entanglements and barriers shaping movement, Menet's approach finally offers nuanced insights into the lives of individuals who are less studied within the salsa dance circuit.

Marion Fournier's article, **Wuppertal: Becoming a *Haut Lieu* and Symbolic Space of Dance through Diversity**, describes the position of Wuppertal in Germany as a significant dance hub shaped by the work of Pina Bausch. The article explores the intricate interplay of the symbolic and institutional layers that contribute to Wuppertal's status as a *haut lieu*. The city's centrality is contextualized within the dynamic mobility of its dancers and the diverse human flows

generated by its audiences and performers. The emotional resonance bestowed upon the Lichtburg studio is examined in the context of the dancers' migration trajectories. Local institutions exert translocal and transnational influences, while theatres become memory spaces, transforming dancers of various national backgrounds into "cousins from Wuppertal." This *haut lieu*, distinct from conventional world dance capitals, acquires symbolic power through Pina Bausch's globally renowned *œuvre*. Wuppertal's centrality is therefore not isolated but becomes manifest through spatial strategies, tours, key locations, and constant movement between artistic hubs and the city itself. The symbolic dimension of the *haut lieu* and of the creations developed within it are intertwined with dancers' migratory paths, which are crucial to the Bauschian artistic creation. In its works, the dance company serves as a narrative conduit for personal and collective migrations, performed in a highly specific theatre that adds another layer to the symbolic tapestry of Wuppertal.

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A Radical Concern: Advocacy for an Ingenious Anthropology of Music

by **Denis Laborde** (CNRS & EHESS, Centre Marc Bloch, Berlin)

Abstract

In three steps, this paper suggests erecting ingenuity as a tool of investigation: *Ethnomusicology in migration contexts, Strategies and tactics, Categorical assignments*. Ingenuity is not to be understood as a gap in epistemic devices but as an instrument that unleashes the gaze, as a tool that aims to ensure the accuracy of observation reports, and especially as a generator of indignation that may take us out of our "comfort zone." A comfort zone is to be understood here as a knowledge configuration that encourages us to think from established categories that assign people to the place provided for them by existing devices, forgetting to take into account the ways these categories are instituted. This leads us to pay attention to the "categorical service" that ethnomusicology's conceptual frameworks provide to our ways of thinking.

Keywords: Ethnomusicology, Anthropology of Music, migration, music, Epistemology, Eigensinn

Introduction

A radical concern is at the root of this article. I put it abruptly by asking the following question: why is it that the social sciences are unable to counter the initiatives of a world that is rebuilding the walls that the previous generation worked hard to bring down? This question haunts the work of any ethnomusicologist, for the theme of migration is constitutive of the way ethnomusicology has constituted itself as an academic discipline, making it a "discipline of alterity" (Nooshin 2008). I propose investigating this concern in three steps, and I ask the reader to be charitable in accepting that, in this article, ethnomusicology and the anthropology of music are considered lexical equivalents.

Before organizing this return to reflexivity in our profession of ethnomusicologist, I propose to draw up an inventory of the place of ethnomusicology or the anthropology of music in social science studies. This first step will allow us to anchor the reflection carried out here in the field of the musical anthropology of migrations.

Second, I consider ethnographic inquiry as an art of diversion, that is, as an art that allows us to understand the interplay of strategies and tactics actors pursue to thwart the nomological force of the categories that assign them to a particular place in the social system.

Third, I suggest taking seriously the question of the temporal inscription of artistic performances in order to understand what is at stake in those actions that brings us into this mystifying time of a past that cannot be dated, yet which so clearly characterizes the chronicle of migration where harmful narratives of fear and exclusion coexist with forms of status assignment that send asylum seekers back to the eternal past of their supposed ever-lasting cultures (Ortar et al. 2018).

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Ethnomusicology in migration contexts

Musical anthropology of migration is an emerging field of research structured in international research programs, international journals, and leading publications. It is customary to consider the pioneering work of Veit Erlmann (1996) and Adelaida Reyes (1999) as the reference works for this type of attention to the migratory question via the analysis of musical practices institutionalized with the international journal Music and Minorities (Vienna , Austria), as well as through the International Research Network entitled "Of what is music capable in situations of Forced Migrations" (*MusiMig*, CNRS) established at Centre Marc Bloch in Berlin and bringing together 10 research teams on a global scale (Laborde 2020). This dynamic should not prevent us from remembering that ethnomusicologists and anthropologists have long studied music in a wide variety of migration contexts. The theme contributes fully to the history of the discipline. I would like to build on perspectives that renew attention to the relationship between music and migration by anchoring it in a multi-disciplinary network. This attitude would enable us to answer the central question: how is it that, despite the expertise it has developed on this theme, both within its own field and, more broadly, within the social sciences, ethnomusicology is reduced to an ancillary status in contemporary debates on mobility, global cities and super-diversity, instead of being treated as "a real turning point in the study of the phenomena of heterogeneity and cultural pluralism" (Doytcheva 2018, 1)? We share a world where the health-related, social, economic, and cultural impacts of the migrant crisis, climate change, and the coronavirus pandemic are shaking up our frames of thought and our ways of making society or even of making science. Social sciences dealing with music must take their rightful place in these social debates, as they have made music a tool for understanding human societies (Aubert 2001, 2007; Nettl 1983; Bohlman 2002; Wade 2000; Baily & Collyer 2006)

The so-called European migrant crisis – which is "emblematic of Europe's ambivalence and failure to manage forced migrations in the present time" (Zanfrini 2023) – is now shedding new light on the issue of cultural practices in such situations. It also raises issues related to (super)diversity and to the practice of making collectives and individuals visible in the context of a cultural pluralism that is the norm in our societies. Many major symposia and works, most of them exploratory, attempt to identify the issues related to musical practices in such contexts as closely as possible. However, the questioning comes from afar, being rooted in foundations constituted by a set of ethnomusicological studies that deal with the circulation of musicians (Charles-Dominique 2018), musical performances and repertoires mobilized by migrant populations, such as those of Veit Erlmann (1996) and Adelaida Reyes (1999); acoustic landscapes and the link to technological devices (Bronfman 2016); and the construction of public spaces and forms of citizenship through music (Stokes 1994; Damon-Guillot & Lefront 2017; O'Toole 2014). Other studies seek to understand how musical idioms (i) stabilize or, on the contrary, reinvent themselves in diasporic forms that aim at the transnational scale (Chambers 1995; Aubert 2005; Olivier 2012; Ferran 2015), or (ii) mobilize musical experience as an instrument of resilience (Dokter1998; Akombo 2000; DeNora 2013; Kiruthu 2014; Stige, Ansdell, Elefant & Pavlicevic 2016; Ciucci2019, 2022) or as a tool to enhance music's potential to form what Philip Bohlman calls "music's aesthetic agency." In this sense, "music's aesthetic agency" refers to how we become used to paying attention to forms of action that form "complex histories of multiculturalism and [that] are central to the social formations of world music in both the past and the present" (Bohlman 2011b, 148). However, this accumulated knowledge and specific expertise now responds to a significant challenge, namely the responsibility of academic research, and particularly of ethnomusicology as a discipline of alterity to forge appropriate responses to a large-scale social crisis linked to the failure of Europe in managing forced migrations, which constitutes a kind of "elephant in

the room"(i.e. a problem that is so massive that no one notices it or so pervasive in our social worlds that no one wants to talk about it) within the horizons of our thinking.[1]

The Power of Music

This is where the music comes in. Trying to improve understanding of the role that music can play in migration processes – especially for people in situations of forced migration – doesn't mean studying music in the manner of the neurosciences, which seek to decipher, on a subhuman scale, the cerebral mechanisms of the physiological benefits of music (Sacks 2007; Patel 2008; Kringelbach 2009). It is rather a question of assuming a researcher's posture, of finding a place in the device that one intends to describe, and of seizing what music is capable of, that is to say, what the social dynamics carried out in its name produce in cultural environments. In this sense, the power of music is a cultural construction, and we should study it in a situated and contextualized way. And "music's aesthetic agency," quoted from Philip Bohlman above, refers rather to the process of "creating capabilities" (Nussbaum 2011).

If we agree with the ethnomusicologist John Blacking that, since music is "humanly organized sound, it expresses aspects of the experience of individuals in society" (1973:89), it is clear that "what music says" is to be found in the relational form constructed in the utterance, in a contextualized and historicized way, which makes it a cultural form. The history of music is interspersed with themes, melodies, and quotations that bear witness to the misuses, misunderstandings, and polemics associated with what Jacques Cheyronnaud calls "the cultural availability" (Cheyronnaud 1999) of music as a way of indicating all the distinct forms of appropriation to which it can give rise. The history of music is littered with decrees, papal bulls, councils, trials, and fatwas that stigmatize musical statements that are deemed deviant in relation to a norm imposed by a founding exteriority (God, the State, the Sovereign, morality…) and accused of making trouble. This is what, in a previous work, I called "musicoclashes" (Laborde 2002). The uses of music are moral and regulatory issues, including its diplomatic uses. Musical figures such as Yehudi Menuhin, Mstislav Rostropovitch, Daniel Barenboïm, Yo-Yo Ma and Bono of U2 are iconic figures of cultural diplomacy (Laborde 2021). At this point, let us take it for granted that music provides the raw cultural material used by individuals to exercise agentive control over mood, to convey meaning, to experience "virtual" possibilities, and to articulate identity (DeNora 2000). From there, we will try to articulate the question of the migrant artistic practices to the very project of this special issue on "Migrating through the Arts."

The stakes involved

A question enhanced by the "new mobilities paradigm" (Sheller.and Urry. 2006), which intends to account for mobilities as a relational, multiple and context-dependent phenomenon, and which immediately gives a cardinal place to migration studies, could be: How do we approach the analysis of situated actions, especially in light of the multiple identities that are shaping our social worlds? This question establishes a shift in the scale of analysis as an essential element in the very definition of ethnomusicology and refers to our own practices of analysis. This consideration is important to improve understanding of the "scale effect." Anthropologists and ethnomusicologists are used to working on circumscribed

[1] Borrowed from philosophical discussions between Bertrand Russell and Ludwig Wittgenstein, the syntagma "elephant in the room" is topical in analytically inspired sociological approaches: Eviatar Zerubavel's book *The Elephant in the Room: Silence and Denial in Everyday Life* (2006). In the field of music anthropology, the term was coined by Bruno Nettl in his *Nettl's Elephant: On the History of Ethnomusicology* (2010). He justifies his title as follows: "I must suggest that the issues emanating from ethnomusicological insights are often the "elephant in the room"" (Nettl 2010, xiv). The book was followed by a polyphonic issue of the journal *Ethnomusicology*: Following the Elephant: *Ethnomusicologists Contemplate Their Discipline* (2016).

units at relatively small scales, which leads them to refer to these observation units as "terrains" and to shape the problem of the relationship between various scales in their descriptive projects. This is particularly important when dealing with local and large-scale migration contexts. The very question is to confront the relationship between the unique and accidental (individuals, events, situated actions, case studies) and both the repetitive and its variations (the observable regularities from which generalization could be inferred). But the change in the scale of analysis is an essential element in the definition of the new studies of musical migration. Our monographs are the depositaries of a documentary coherence. Familiarity is supposed to guarantee a mastery of the object of analysis, as well as a representation of reality that often seems to require that problems be asserted in terms of concrete, tangible, visible units. A monograph is defined in terms of practice, and the description leads to those practices: data and constructed proofs are presented. Those monographs laid the foundations for ethnomusicology. But how can we deal with the proliferation of monographs? Should we regard each monograph as a piece of a puzzle?

It is on these questions that I wish to open the second stage of this paper, which will question our ways of constructing typologies, recurrences, regularities, or any means of building a general science of musical practices in situations of forced migration. It doesn't matter which musical practice it is, it doesn't matter what the styles, the repertoires, the instruments are, it doesn't matter what is the context of musical practice along the migratory route. What counts here is the engagement of the body in a musical action.

First of all, two clarifications. My remarks are inspired by the readings of books that reshape an anarchist anthropology as set out by Pierre Clastres, David Graeber or James C. Scott. They are carried by a concern that can be formulated quite simply in the following way: How is it possible that given the altruism that characterizes our epistemologies – what Benoît de l'Estoile (2007) calls "Le Goût des Autres" (The taste for others) – that the world we inhabit dreams of barriers, exclusion, and segregation? What's at stake here is the place of ethnomusicologists and, broader, the place of social sciences in the public debate.

It is from this interrogation, which is eminently political in the most general sense that refers to the "life of the *polis*" (as a political community of citizens, also called *civitas*), that I approach the last stages of my contribution: 1. an art of detour; 2. a temporal inscription.

An art of detour

Martin Stokes' efforts to "bring the issue of migration back into ethnomusicology" (2020) are of a density that challenges us all. *He argues that "the current moment is one in which the final vestiges of language about migrant culture as adaptive have been swept away and in which the populist evocation of a migrant crisis at our gates has posed unsettling challenges [and] explores the tensions between an emphasis on migrant creativity and survival, mobility and motility, and identity and citizenship" (Stokes 2020, 1).* This position leads us to consider that when Stokes is interested in the Oxford Maqam group (Stokes, This issue), it is not a modest neighborhood group that he is interested in. The musicians here are of a very high level, having joined the band precisely for this excellence. Making music together at such a high level of practice mobilizes the skills of each musician. Doing so, the group enters the contemporary market of musical mobilities, plays all over the world, receives laudatory reviews in mainstream magazines, and makes exceptionality the mark of their commitment. It is therefore a group marked with the seal of exceptionality in a migratory context. And this is a characteristic of many of the cases presented in this issue: many of the musicians we meet are marked by this seal of exceptionality. This brings us back to the dialectical relations mentioned above between the different ways of making our analyses exemplary: how do we construct intelligibility? How do we articulate the singular experience that is the common horizon of our ethnographies and

our fieldwork with the broad scale of migration and analyses of diversity on the global level?

Let's take a little step back. In this context, therefore, what is the relationship between the musical style performed by people in a situation of forced migration, their instrumental or vocal practices, and the modes of writing these repertoires? To put more simply: are migrants condemned to play "their music," or the idea that we have of this music, which would be "theirs" in the name of an essentialized identity? Or are they invited to play the repertoire of the host country at the risk of reactivating, through music, the codes of cultural domination?

Many musicians are involved in NGOs and work in refugee camps. They make music the driving force of their commitment, pledging themselves in the name of music and its properties of resilience (see above), a music able to help overcome the suffering endured in forced exile because it touches the deepest part of the human soul. At this point, the question of musical analysis which we have just discussed joins the social question.

Let's compare the Al Kamandjati project, which founded the Ramallah school in 2005 around a project combining instrument-making and the Arab musical repertoire, to the El Sistema project, which radiates throughout the world, including in the refugee camps in Greece, with the Western Symphony Orchestra as its tool and a desirable horizon. With the Western Symphony Orchestra as a model, including its instruments, its conductor, its spatial arrangement, its chairs, its desks, and its scores, the model of the orchestra situates the five-line musical staff in cultural frameworks where the musical traditions that nourish musical practices which are out of step with the probity of militant mobilizations. The five-line musical stave imposes musical rules that play the role of cultural domestication. Two responses are then possible. On the one hand, we can see this musical practice as a way to escape any form of cultural determinism and to prepare forms of social inclusion through musical practices. On the other hand, we can see it as a way of ratifying a cultural domination that does not offer the repertoires of otherness a chance to express themselves. "Music" does not inhabit a decontextualized or dehistoricized existence. To choose an instrumental formation or a repertoire is to make a cultural mark.

This, then, is a question of strategy and tactics. To put it with Clea Hance, "Which cultural diversity will survive such cultural policies?" (Hance 2014). This focus on the use of musical repertoires in refugee camps leads us to examine how the cultural richness of human societies is articulated with the question of agency when human beings are plunged into a situation of anomie in refugee camps (Bohlman 2011a). Of course, it would be futile to assign to each person the marks of his or her own culture of origin or to attribute to him or her the desire to live according to the immutable rules of an inherited culture from which no one should deviate. From this point of view, the confrontation with other musical traditions can be assimilated to a form of opening up to a repairing agency, as Awet Andemicael suggests in her report to the UNHCR entitled *Positive energy: a review of the role of artistic activities in refugee camps* (Andemicael 2011). I am not trying to say here that the fact that people in a situation of forced migration can "discover" the symphony orchestra in a refugee camp and play in formations that obey the standards of the Western world would be an aporia to be fought in the name of cultural rights! But it is advisable to avoid postulating the symphonic orchestra as the only desirable horizon in disregard of the remarkable richness of the world, which is also a vector of agency. The UNESCO's preamble to the declaration of the Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions (2005 Convention) is also relevant in refugee camps, namely "Being aware that cultural diversity creates a rich and varied world, which increases the range of choices and nurtures human capacities and values, and therefore is a mainspring for sustainable development for communities, peoples and nations." Then are the artistic mobilizations that are

expressed in emergency situations tools of resilience, as Awet Andemicael claims in her report, or are they powerful machines of acculturation, or even vicariousness?

How can we not share with many ethnomusicologists today the concern that such questions are not being addressed by today's ethnomusicology? Or more precisely, that ethnomusicology is rendered inaudible within social-science dialogues? Certainly, we know the contributions of Hugo Zemp and Steven Feld on Rorogwela. This Afunakwa lullaby became Deep Forest's Grammy-winning Sweet Lullaby without anyone calling this creation or arrangement a plundering (Feld 2000). Yet it is indeed a process of "cultural extractivism" (Ochoa 2014; Serafini 2020). But then, how can we conceive an "art of the detour" that expresses itself in this way?

In his famous preface to *Essais critiques* (Critical essays), Roland Barthes (1964) notes that, if you want to show sympathy for someone who is mourning, you have to "make sentences" and go through that indirect moment that all forms of writing involve. This recourse to indirect formulation is what he calls the art of the detour. As I conceive it here, the "art of the detour" refers to this capacity to act in a situation. Something can be said that is likely to bypass the coercive hold of social discourse. It is the art of the detour. The question of the detour is a constant in the work of any ethnomusicologist. And here we have our first paradox: ingenuity is the heuristic posture that allows us to grasp the detour as an art, and it does not matter whether it goes in the right or the wrong direction. It is the process that holds my attention.

Many ethnomusicologists have questioned the success of certain artists, while others, with similar artistic proposals, have not managed to make it on the international scene of musical diversity. Sandrine Teixido (2018), studying the case of Jean-Didier Hoareau, or Charlotte Grabli (2019), studying the Katangan artists Bosco Mwenda and Edouard Marenzo, paint them as resourceful artists, which is why they succeeded. They succeeded because they were able to forge what, through his objective of understanding the mind as a creator of meanings, the psychologist Jerome Bruner would have called an "intercultural personality" (1990), i.e., a personality that creates the forms of social exteriority in its context of existence, while allowing itself to be forged in return by this social exteriority. This culturalist orientation of human cognition helps us to better understand the way artists are adulated (by the colonial administration in the case of the Katangese, by the audience of the great Parisian festival of African music Africolor in the case of Houareau). In reality, however the support is not only "found" in the environment of the artists in question, it is also forged as such by the artists themselves in their capacity to set up the frameworks of international cultural cooperation or private financiers, from Coca-Cola to Bata or Aspro, as resources for their creative and dissemination activities. This is what the psychologist James Gibson calls "affordances of action" (Gibson 1979). I have been able to study this mechanism in relation to the improvisation of musicians or spoken word artists who are able to draw resources for their own improvisation directly from the environment in which they improvise (Laborde 2006).

If we are willing to consider that the implementation of a musical creation in a cultural universe that receives it and makes it its own is analogous to the situation of the musician who improvises, why would we not take the risk of analogy by applying to musical implementation the resources of a pragmatist analysis of situated action (on analogy as a heuristic tool, see Hofstadter and Sander, 2013)? This would lead us to consider this skill of creating the external conditions of one's own fame as a form of competence to turn events that arise or expectations that take shape into resources for an implementing action, i.e., into affordances of action. It is precisely under this description that I consider the agency (or the *Handlungsfähigkeit*) as referring to the capacity for initiative of everyone, including in situations of anomie. It also refers to the ability to treat situations of musical

practice as situations of engagement in diversified forms of social bonding. This is why I place the making of music under this all-encompassing notion of agency as an ability to deal with situations.

By involving the question of affordances of action in the regime of tactics, we treat musicians as authors of their own trajectory and not only as the passive agents of their careers. Here I propose to distinguish between biography, life-course and career, according to the terms presented by Bénédicte Zimmermann (2013). *Biography* is the story of a life made tragic by the violence of forced migration and constructed for an outsider for the purpose of testimony. Here, the subjective aspect draws the auctorial force of the setting in narrative. The *course of life* in exile pays attention to the person, to the private spaces that make up the fabric of the migrant's existence, to life projects, to interactions with the environment (Dewey 1980 [1934]:13), and to life paths. It is here that the forms of affordance are constructed that turn such and such an encounter, such and such an event, into a resource for constructive action. The *career* is a matter of attribute and of statutory attribution: it incites each musician to claim to be an artist above all and to reject any attribute that sends him back to the sole status of a migrant. The confrontation between these three registers of experience – biography, course of life, and career – should allow us to delimit the key situations that make it possible to identify, and then to study closely, the legal, social, policing, administrative, cultural, and family mechanisms the artists encounter. But in addition, such a confrontation should also allow us to improve understanding of how the musicians themselves confront or circumvent these registers of experience and thus allow us to characterize life in a situation of forced migration. We can then analyze the musician's action in terms of turning the mechanisms of cultural domination into resources for inventiveness, which brings us back, as I will now explain, to the distinction made by Michel de Certeau (1990) between strategies and tactics.

Strategy is the mark of detachment. It is the calculation of power relations that becomes possible when a subject can be isolated from an "environment." Tactics are more akin to forms of creative improvisation. They are based on empathy, on this capacity to put oneself in other people's shoes in order to consider a situation "from their point of view." This is what enables each person to adjust his or her own action according to how he or she sees the action of others. In so far as they escape nomological powers, tactics offer a game of actors in which each one invests his or her own inventive capacities. As Michel de Certeau states:

> I call strategy the calculation (or manipulation) of the relations of power that becomes possible from the moment when a subject of will and power (a company, an army, a city, a scientific institution) can be isolated. It postulates a place that can be circumscribed as a proper and be the basis for managing relations with an exteriority of targets or threats (clients or competitors, enemies, the countryside around the city, the objectives and objects of research, etc.). As in management, any "strategic" rationalization first sets out to distinguish an "environment" from a "proper," that is to say, the place of one's own power and will. A Cartesian gesture, if you like: to circumscribe a proper in a world that is forced by the invisible powers of the Other. A gesture of scientific, political or military modernity (de Certeau, 1990:59).

When, in 2019, A. Aterianus-Owanga, A. Gaulier, J. Menet, C. Navarro, A. Rodriguez and M. Salzbrunn organized an international colloquium at the University of Lausanne entitled *Migrating through the Arts: Rethinking worlds of music and dance through the lens of contemporary (im) mobilities*, Jean-Christophe Sevin explained very clearly how the Massilia Sound System synthesized the meeting of reggae and chats in Marseilles. Doing so, the group drew a universe of strategy through an interpretative calculus aiming at elucidating "the institutionalized world of rap" in order to circumvent it better. But when Jack Dish joins the Marseilles team in the name of "the Mauritian spirit", then it is a universe of tactics that takes shape. How can we deal with this dialectic between strategy and tactics?

By taking into account the fact that this "art of detour" signals the capacity of each person to act on his history?

This is what Michel de Certeau said on tactics:

> I call tactics the calculated action determined by the absence of a proper. Whereas no delimitation of exteriority provides it with the condition of an autonomy. Tactics has for place only that of the other. So it must play with the terrain imposed on it as organized by the law of a foreign force. It does not have the means to stand within itself, at a distance, in a position of withdrawal, of anticipation, and of self-gathering: it is movement "within the enemy's field of vision", as Von Bulow said, and in the space controlled by him (ibid.:60-61).

However, we can see that saying this remains unsatisfactory because we have left aside the whole question and the levers of action. The notional pair strategy and tactics leads us here to open a wider perspective on "control relationships" (Chateauraynaud, 2015). This will be the third step in this paper: "What figures or antifigures do the undisciplinary tactics of the 'defeated of history' borrow to persist and resist vis-à-vis the patterns, figures, and paths imposed by the strategies in which they are caught?" (Mboukou, 2015:3).

Referential actualization

The identification of strategies and tactics is the usual horizon of our field observations. To mention a few well-known cases, we take it for granted when tourism replaces sugarcane to become in turn a monoculture, or when Gnawas musicians adapt to disparate cultural environments that sometimes jostle them, or when negotiations take place on international World Music markets to decide on the value of musical creation to which one does not know how to set a price. But on each of these occasions, we are, like Gérard Lenclud's anthropologist or Paul Veyne's historian, "at ease in the study of behaviors and mentalities only when they have settled, conceptually or not, in the peaceful conviction that the awareness that an individual or a society has of its behavior is the least of things" (Veyne, 1976: 37). From then on, the anthropologist's job consists in endowing the observed subjects with instrumental rationality, from which a coherence becomes observable. Now, what rationality are we talking about, and what coherence? They are, we believe, ideas of rationality and coherence provided to the observer by his own culture. Isn't any observer actuated by his own culture of belonging? We do not escape this self-referential work of imputation.

But then, aren't we keeping ourselves approximately at a distance from the facts we hope to make intelligible? Indeed, it is not easy to identify the place where these attitudes are situated, the place where face-to-face meetings decide on postures, the place where interactions produce adjustments, conventions, breaks, and conflicts. At the same Lausanne conference, Hélène Neveu-Kringelbach performed a highly virtuoso exercise by managing to narrow the focus of her observation to the point where migration statistics are shifted onto international regulations embodied in visa-allocation mechanisms. As defined in the 2023 World Development Report of the World Bank, "there are globally about 184 million migrants (about 2.3 percent of the world's population)—37 million of them refugees" (Migrants, Refugees and Societies 2020: 1). These are what everyone plays with in face-to-face encounters that demonstrate a complete arbitrariness of decision-making on the part of state officials.

But then, by proceeding in this way, by making the world fit into our categories without having questioned how we are used to constructing the categories, are we not taking the risk of producing a smooth, irenic, consensual world, a world in which we would only see the operational virtue of our concepts, a world whose description would seem to be self-evident? How can we account for the symbolic violence of an entrepreneurial liberalism that imposes the norms of a globalized music market without concretely examining the asymmetry of power relations in interactions? How can we account, moreover, for the enterprising entrepreneurs who only want to bypass the established categories in the spirit of a counterculture?

The call for a form of ingenuity in ethnographic inquiry that I make in the title of this chapter would likely be an incitement to question our explanatory models as well, to propose a case-based thinking rather than nomological thinking that would proceed by collecting examples in a world of Popperian reasoning (see above). In this framework, what place do our epistemologies give to this form of agency that encourages anyone to mobilize cultural resources to make them vectors of innovation, tools that allow for the secretion of agency, i.e. a capacity to play with regulatory frameworks? This is also what the historian Alf Lüdtke calls *Eigensinn*, a modality of assuming individual attitudes that allow one to act on situations to challenge the established order[2]. *Eigensinn* is therefore a form of resistance that is captured as close as possible to the interactions. This reduction in the scale of observation is, according to Lüdtke, the way to avoid finding ourselves in the posture of the logician Nelson Goodman, who, while he tries to describe the world, realizes, at the end of his reasoning, that he never finds in the world more than the tools he has equipped himself with to try and describe it. Would we work, like Nelson Goodman, on a theory of *depiction* where we thought we were producing a theory of *description*? Referencing this, referencing that, existing as such, must point to a reference that does not exist.

Let us question our encyclopedic knowledge for a moment. Any encyclopedic enterprise presents a state of knowledge about some families of objects. Music, the musical traditions of the world, do not escape this form of *libido sciendi*. Every encyclopedia presents a state of knowledge, and in its final editing, the way in which knowledge is constructed counts for much less than the final description of the object of knowledge. Now, unlike encyclopedias, books in the human and social sciences have in common with the art of travelling that "the final destination counts less than the path to arrive" (Lenclud, 1991: 49). To put it more clearly, if we pay attention to the way knowledge is constructed, the fact that a reference exists is less important than the mechanism of actualization that the imputation of the existence of a reference allows. But then, why do we target the reference rather than the dynamics of referential imputation? Why are we satisfied with taking assertoric truths for granted without trying to analyze the mechanisms that make us "take for granted" those assertions that we bring into our universes of discourse? Is it not because, "provided that a world consists of statements, truth may be relevant. But truth cannot be defined or be checked by compliance with 'the world'. Truth is a docile and an obedient servant, not a 'severe master' (Goodman, 1978: 31)?

The question of referencing represents a cardinal issue in our epistemologies because it draws the inscription of traces and reference points in time, the inscription of marks and signposts that establish an identity for each person in time (Lenclud, 2008).

This excursus brings me back to the subject of this article: an appeal to a form of ingenuity in ethnographic practice. A proverb attributed to Lao Tzu draws our attention to the fact that "When the wise man points to the moon the idiot

[2] The word Eigensinn has given rise to a substantial body of scientific literature. It is virtually impossible to translate. In the online journal Docupedia, Thomas Lindenberger has devoted an important article to the presentation of the term Eigen-Sinn, which he does not translate. Some English-speaking users commonly translate it as "stubbornness", others bring it closer to "agency" to designate this capacity to act on one's own, but neither translation is really satisfactory. In the German Alltagsgeschichte (Everyday History) of the '80s, Eigensinn was used to understand individual behavior and its impact on spheres of power and domination, on strategies of resistance and dropping out. As early as 1986, Alf Lüdtke, then active at the Göttingen Max Planck Institute for History, used the word Eigensinn to gain a better understanding of the behavior of factory workers (Lüdtke 1986). Here, I use it in reference to that capacity for initiative demonstrated by people placed in situation of forced migration: they are not only "stirred" by circumstances, situations and institutions, they also act on their own, turning situations into resources for varied repertoires of action. In this sense, I come close to the theory expressed by Vilén Flüsser in his book *Von der Freiheit des Migranten Einsprüche gegen den Nationalismus,* in which he views migration as "eine kreative Situation" (Flüsser 2021).

looks at the finger". One can laugh, of course, at the complexification of the set of references, its designation, and its actualization. However, if one brings the game of observation back to the exercise of the ethnologist's profession, it appears to me that we still tend to look at the moon before all else, that is to say, at the reference rather than the setting to the status of reference that would be the gesture of showing.

Questioning about the truth, the anthropologist Gérard Lenclud shifts the question of the truth "itself" towards the question of the "holding for true," a real enigma in the social sciences because in itself "the truth does not reveal the enigma of the holding for true" (Lenclud, 1990: 11). What is true for "the truth" is also true for the regimes of truth induced in the modes of ethnographic intelligibility in which we work. If we seek to understand the mechanism of referential actualization more than the reference generated in this interpretive calculation, then we are on the side of "the idiot who looks at the pointing finger" rather than "the moon designated as the reference." To consider that a piece of music is what is said about it and that those who carry it are what they are says nothing, indeed, about the commitment to the belief that music is what it is or that musicians are what they are. For this reason, here I advocate a form of ingenuity in the anthropologist's attitude of knowledge so that he or she focuses on the pointing finger rather than on the moon, which is indeed in the place designated by the finger. The institution of reference is worth more than the reference itself. For the whole question is there: aren't the actors of these worlds of music that we want to endow with intelligibility, without our being aware of it, in the place foreseen for them by our universes of knowledge?

Conclusion

If we take into account the art of detour (strategies and tactics) in our descriptions of musical statuses and actions, if we take seriously the question of the temporal inscription of these actions and dynamics of referential actualization, then we make accounts of observation more complex, not being content to assign to the social interactions that we decrypt "a categorical vocation in the service of descriptions that are generally open more or less implicitly to evaluation" (Cheyronnaud, 2012: 201). We do not ask the interactions to bend to our analytical grids; we grasp them in their complexity and singularity while agreeing not to praise the rise to generality as the ultimate principle of ethnographic investigation.

This idea of reintroducing complexity into our descriptions, of making our analytical frameworks more complex, of making our argumentative models more flexible should make it possible to access spaces of social interaction that reveal what is unnoticed (I do not say invisible; cf. Salzbrunn, 2019, 2016). This would enable us to build an anthropology of music that is concerned to uncover what is hidden, rather than constructing explanatory models based on exteriority.

This posture does not question the high level of intelligibility that characterizes anthropology in its interactions with social analysis. Instead, it aims to examine our capacity to dialogue with other disciplines, in particular with those "sister disciplines" that share the fact of having "music" as their object, so-called in a Promethean symposium of 1997 held by the International Society of Musicology. This resulted in a magnum opus in the musical sciences whose 712 pages were edited by David Greer (Greer, ed., 2000). Such a posture might be an answer to Claude Lévi-Strauss, whose works occupy a canonical place in our libraries and whose *La Pensée Sauvage* (1962) remains within reach on our desks. We want the candid posture we assume here to displace the question of the alternative posed by Lévi-Strauss, who, writing about a lace collar painted by Clouet, proposed to renounce "sensible dimensions by the acquisition of intelligible dimensions" (Lévi-Strauss 1962, 34).

In this contribution, I tried to erect ingenuity as an investigatory tool that enables us to prevent the nomothetic power with which such tools are normally invested. Among other things,

the anthropology of music in migration contexts, strategies and tactics, and categorical assignments are areas in which I have tried to apply this ingenuity. The idea is not that of "discovering" a Weberian axiological neutrality that would be the irenic encounter of our project of knowledge and a reality that is preconstructed in our perception of the world. However, instead, the idea that perceptions of the environment and the events that take place in it are not immune to the constraints of our epistemic activity. In this sense, the problem of the inscrutability of reference, outlined in recent times by W.V.O. Quine, shows that there are no purely descriptive sentences. The factual does not exist independently of what is said about it, and what is said about it links us to that furniture of the world that preexists our denotative undertakings.

Nevertheless, as we have seen, at the price of an "art of the detour," i.e., a way of bringing the themes of the anthropology of music to the heart of social debates, we are well aware that musical practices do not appear to be crucial to migration issues. In the emergency situations we work on, the practical issues of reception, safety, food, hygiene, and health in the broadest sense are of prime importance. However, as soon as these situations stabilize, questions of resilience, social interaction, the link with the culture of origin and its concrete manifestations and confrontation with the conditions put in place by the host society confront everyone with questions of cultural practices in which music – like culinary practices, for that matter – plays a cardinal role. In this context, musical practices say a great deal about the place given to cultural memory, about the commitment to the discovery of new repertoires, new alliances and opportunities, and about the power of music which, intelligently invested both by the migrants themselves and by those in charge of welcoming them, can become a tool for social inclusion in the service of building the multicultural societies that are the development horizon of our social worlds.

Nevertheless, we have seen that saying this is not enough and that we need to make room for the creativity of action in situations of forced migration. Everyone in a situation of forced migration acts. Moreover, to act is to deal with a situation. In this sense, we need to recognize, with Vilém Flusser, the initiative that each person in a situation of forced migration takes to ward off determinations, adapt to the situations they have to face, and act on these situations by relying on what I have proposed to call, after Gibson, affordances of action. They do this by seeking, in the action environment, supports that function as resources for adapting behavior to the situation, i.e. adjusted to both the imperatives imposed by the asymmetrical balance of power (whether administrative, practical, symbolic, legal or affective) and the desires that fuel the individual's project. We have proposed to grasp this link with the creativity of action by thematizing the question of *Eigensinn*, raised by Alf Lüdtke, by arguing that it is more accurate than agency in that it refers not only to a disposition in the person to act freely, but to an action engaged in a situation by a person with a personal goal.

At a time when our social debates seem stuck on the incantatory rhetoric of the danger of immigration and appeals to identity or citizenship, perhaps the time has come to look favorably on the creativity of migrants' actions when situated in a situation of survival. To grasp these forms of creativity, I argue that focusing on cultural practices as spaces of creation can help us see further. In particular it can help us examine how these practices encounter, question, and sometimes modify the spaces of recognition set up by host societies as they strive to make immigration acceptable. Emphasizing these spaces of creativity means abandoning ready-made theories of cultural practices and considering them in the most deliberately candid way possible. This is also a way, it seems, of putting an end to the invisibilization of differences under nomothetic covers and of making the development of these capabilities appear as what they are: the ferment of our multicultural societies, societies in which the attention paid to others does not necessarily mean adherence to their values, but a better

knowledge of cultural behaviors, thanks to which it seems possible to build a habitable world, rich in its diversity and intense in its mutual respect.

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Migrancy and Music on Film

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Abstract

This article discusses the Turkish-German director Fatih Akın's *Gegen die Wand/Duvara Karşı* of 2004, John Baily's pioneering ethnographic film *Amir: An Afghan Refugee's Life in Peshawar, Pakistan* of 1985, and Palestinian artist Jumana Manna's film-installation *A Magical Substance Flows Into Me* of 2016 through the lens of Mieke Bal's concept of "migratory aesthetics". It argues that music and sound illuminate important facets of Bal's argument about time's 'materiality' and 'stickiness'. But the article also offers a critical perspective. The three films – respectively products of commercial cinema, academic ethnography, and contemporary curatorial culture – portray complex struggles over time and history and the masteries and skills musicians bring to such struggles, while also questioning the narrative frameworks within which migrant and refugee musicians have been conventionally represented. They suggest some of the ways in which the study of music and sound might be more effectively harnessed to contemporary perspectives on 'the new diversities'.

Keywords: ethnographic film, ethnomusicology, migrancy, Mieke Bal, Fatih Akın, John Baily, Jumana Manna

Some would say that the field of music and migration studies has become 'impossible to map' (Ozan Aksoy, in Rasmussen et al 2019).[1] It is hard not to sympathize. Earlier paradigms, in which nation states and a problematic of integration were central, are no longer functional. Meanwhile, the Global North's 'migration crisis', the images of overloaded boats in the Mediterranean and the inflammatory rhetoric of the far right suggest that what is needed, from academics, is activism, not more reflection and writing.[2] There are options between the two, of course, such as Mieke Bal's by now well-known 'migratory aesthetics'.[3] This proposed artistic curation, collaboration and critical engagement is a means of 'remembering with' migrants and refugees. Here, I reflect on migratory aesthetics from the point of view of music on film, an aspect of the topic that has not yet been explored. Such reflection acknowledges the call for attention to be paid to the 'spatio-temporal' dimensions of migration in current research into the 'new diversities' (Salzbrunn 2018, Vertovec 2011). This implies the need for a more cautious and critical (historical) account of the kinds of artistic and curatorial collaboration proposed by Bal and others. It also involves both a recognition of the complex representational terrain that 'migrations' traverse and a quest to put them on a new footing.

[1] A sense of crisis is clearly communicated in the Society for Ethnomusicology roundtable (see Rasmussen et al. 2019) from which Aksoy's comments are taken, representing a variety of thoughtful positions on the issue.

[2] The scare-quotes around 'migrant crisis' reflect the critical position of Bhabha and others on this matter (Bhabha 2018), and underline the constructed and often manipulative representations of it in the Global North.

[3] Here I draw primarily on Bal 2011. The introduction to her and Miguel Hernández-Navarro's edited volume (Bal and Hernández-Navarro 2011) contains a more theoretical explanation of concepts such as 'materiality' and 'stickiness'.

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In this article, I explore such matters with reference to three films about music and migration. The films in question are the Turkish-German director Fatih Akın's *Gegen die Wand/Duvara Karşı* of 2004 (henceforth, in English, '*Head-On*'), John Baily's pioneering ethnographic film *Amir: An Afghan Refugee's Life in Peshawar, Pakistan* of 1985 ('*Amir*'), and Palestinian artist Jumana Manna's film-installation *A Magical Substance Flows Into Me* of 2016 ('*AMSFM*'). The comparative 'reading' of the three I propose is significant for three reasons. One is that they all juxtapose commercial, ethnographic and 'art' cinema, allowing us to see what they share, as well as how they might differ. I will show that they all find experimental and unusual ways of reconciling the representation of the temporalities of music and musicianship with film narrative. A second reason is that they all concern migrants and refugees in, and from, the Muslim-majority Middle East. The films all occupy and explore, knowingly and intelligently, what continues to be a (very) highly charged representational field. A third reason is that they all have something interesting to say about the changing shape of diversity in the three cities they explore.

It is worth saying a few preliminary words about both the films themselves and their locations. The background to Akın's film, a melodrama about star-crossed lovers in an unnamed city in Germany and Istanbul, is Turkish labour migration to Germany. This began in earnest following a labour-recruitment agreement between the two states in 1961. Entire neighbourhoods of Berlin and other German cities began to assume a Turkish aspect. A hybrid German-Turkish culture (including a dialect of Turkish – *kanakça/ kanak sprak*) emerged in due course, though one quickly complicated and enriched by German reunification and immigration from other Muslim majority countries. The background to Baily's film, a study of a refugee musician building a life in Peshawar, Pakistan, is the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan in 1979, at the height of the Cold War. The West's sponsorship of the mujahideen resistance in Afghanistan lead to a protracted war, large Afghan refugee camps in Pakistan, and, today, a significant Afghan diaspora in the UK, Australia and California. The background to Manna's film, which explores Robert Lachmann's ethnomusicological research in Mandate Palestine in relation to today's Jerusalem, is the Jewish immigration to Palestine that led to the creation of the state of Israel in 1948, wars with the new state's Arab neighbours, the marginalization of its own Arab citizens and the occupation of Palestinian land. The 1967 war and Israel's subsequent annexation of East Jerusalem was a turning point. Complex histories of Jewish and Palestinian movement and their soundscapes inform Manna's film.

Each of these films might have been described by Bal as studies in the 'stickiness' of time and the '*mésentente*' (disagreement) of the migrant and the refugee, caught between the conflicting temporalities of home and those of their new location. The stakes of such struggles are high in all three cases discussed here. However, as the various protagonists of these films struggle to bridge these divides, so too they complicate but also enrich them. Musicians like the Roma musicians in *Head-On* are signs of difference, in part because of their (subversive) mastery of sound and associated emotions, in part because of their expertise in engaging with difference and diversity within their own societies. These masteries and forms of expertise travel with them, making musicians, in the spaces of licence afforded by their new homes, rather special kinds of cultural agents (Kasinitz and Martiniello 2019).

I make three arguments, then, with reference to these films. The first is that migratory aesthetics might pay more attention to music, particularly for the light it can shed on how migrants and refugees 'make' and manage time across environments. The second is that music and musicians offer a highly productive focus for understanding contemporary conditions of diversity, particularly as these involve migrants and refugees. The third is that films about music and musicians involve narrative and representational challenges, and that, in the light of Aksoy's

impasse, experiments with the genre might usefully be considered by ethnographers and historians of migration. I will explore each of these films in turn with these thoughts in mind.

Head-On

Head-On tells the story of the star-crossed lovers Cahit and Sibel, played respectively by Birol Ünel and Sibel Kekilli. It received various awards, and its director Fatih Akın went on to produce several more successful films about Turkish-German life. The overlap of actors' names with their on-screen characters, not uncommon in popular Turkish cinema, points to a blurring of on and off-screen identities. We are not fully in a fictional world. The untimely and recent death of Birol Ünel deepens this impression.[4]

But neither are we in a world of cinematic realism. *Head-On* is punctuated by song, in the manner of a musical. Indeed, the entire film is presented as a kind of musical performance in itself. In the momentary darkness that precedes the film, the opening song is introduced by an up-tempo verbal count-in: 'one, two, three, four'. We then see Roma musician Selim Sesler and his band accompanying vocalist Idil Üner, as though on a stage. But the setting and the static, unwavering gaze of the camera are distinctly odd. We are outside, evidently in the middle of Istanbul (we see the historic mosques and the Bosphorus in the background). Colourful traditional carpets are spread out across the foreground. The mise-en-scène, then, archly and self-consciously establishes a sonic tableau of 'Turkish tradition'; the camera establishes distance and irony.

When the song finishes, the action of the film starts. We meet the protagonist, Cahit, clearing up bottles after a rock concert somewhere in Germany. He has a beer with a co-worker, drives unsteadily to another bar, argues with his girlfriend, assaults a complete stranger, climbs back into his car, speeds through dark streets to the pounding of rock music, and drives himself at top speed into a wall. After the crash, silence; a bandaged and badly bruised Cahit wakes up in a psychiatric hospital. The film proper begins. But the musical terms of this conflict of identities have been clearly set out in these opening minutes: a static, enduring, knowing 'Turkish culture' versus a dynamic, unsettled, self-destructive 'West'. 'Tradition' versus 'modernity', presented archly and ironically as a mismatched musical performance, beginning in one place, but ending somewhere else. Our hero, a symbolic car crash between the two.

The movie-musical references deepen.[5] We are quickly immersed in genre conventions of the domestic melodrama of the sort Turkish and German-Turkish viewers would identify as 'arabesk' (an Arabized Turkish popular culture associated with Egyptian-style film musicals until the 1980s; see Stokes 2010 for further discussion of the musical context). Cahit meets Sibel in the psychiatric hospital. She too has attempted suicide. She asks him to agree to a sham marriage so she can get her traditionally minded Turkish parents off her back. He agrees. Inevitably they fall in love, and inevitably there is violence. Cahit kills a rival and ends up in prison. Sibel's father sends her brother to kill her, since she has stained the family's honour, but she escapes, taking refuge with Cahit's work friend Şeref. As they are trying to get to sleep in his apartment, Şeref sings a well-known folksong, '*Ne Ağlarsın*' ('Why Cry?') in a cracked and tuneless voice. It is so cracked and tuneless that Sibel is forced to laugh. Suddenly she agrees to Şeref's suggestion that she goes to her sister in Istanbul. The rest of the film is played out there, as the two lovers seek one another, but fail to reconnect.

The musical set-pieces simultaneously underline and ironize the genre references. The characters, having spent their lives trying to escape it, are now trapped in a '*yerli film*' (a domestic melodrama), and they seem to know it. Until now,

[4] Ünel died of cancer 3 September 2020 at the age of 59.

[5] I draw on Berghan's excellent analysis (Berghan 2006), following up on her questions about the play of genre in this film with questions about the implications of such play for music – and vice-versa.

the music has underlined the different worlds the protagonists live in – the city, the migrant neighbourhood, the home, the bar – each with their different tempi. It is 'sticky' material, provoking the visceral emotions and moods that keep everybody unhappily and uncomfortably in place. The prevailing tempo has been established at the outset by Selim Sesler's metronomic count-in and the chorus-like appearance of these musicians at regular intervals throughout the film. This seems to imply that all might change in these migrants' star-crossed lives, but that the bedrock of Turkish 'tradition' and the curse of its violent emotions will not.

However, Şeref's cracked rendition of '*Ne Ağlarsın*' interrupts this logic. At the time the film was made, the song had become well-known through pop vocalist Sezen Aksu's rendition and the album, *Işık Doğudan Yükselir/Ex Oriente Lux*, which reimagined the Anatolian folk music heritage from the perspective of the urban pop tradition. Many saw it as challenge to the Turkish state media's guardianship of this heritage and the cultural nationalism it espoused. Many also saw it as a secular, progressive and liberal articulation of the nation's ethnic 'mosaic' and of the vital place of women in it. It is a careful, and resonant, choice at this moment in *Head-On*. Two characters trapped by the genre conventions of Turkish arabesk (and the timeline of murderous jealousy and revenge) are allowed to escape them, make meaningful decisions and forge their own destinies. It is a classic moment of aporia, exposing the genre conventions not just to the viewer, but to the characters themselves. Understand the problems, the film seems to be saying, and you stand a chance of escaping them.

In doing so, it raises complex questions for the viewer about the place of music and musicians in the narrative thus far. Music and musicians are put on view. They underline the conflicted and contradictory temporalities that the characters must inhabit and negotiate: German/Turkish; bureaucratic/domestic; metropole/neighbourhood; male/female; first generation/second generation. The narrative invests these temporalities with both the materiality and 'stickiness' of heterochronicity, as Bal would say. It shows how they take shape in bodies, spaces, domestic objects and processes. It shows how they are invested with desire and need. For the main characters, their musical preferences resemble their drugs of choice – cocaine in Cahit's case, heroin in Sibel's, upping the tempo in one case, slowing it down in the other. They allow for escape and release, from others and from themselves. They establish both the compulsion and the deepening terms of both characters' alienation.

But alienation from what? And from what temporalities? In somewhat ironized terms (because, as we have seen, the film plays with, and inverts Arabesk genre conventions), 'East' and 'West' are juxtaposed as kinds of temporality – languorous and slow in the former, relentless and frenetic in the latter. Soundscape and camerawork combine to form starkly opposed temporal feels. Within these two broad temporal categories, the film shows various agencies attempting to impose other rhythms on the protagonists: two different nation states (the timelines of integration, of return), employers (the timelines of work and leisure), law (the timelines of revenge, of the state's penal system), German-Turkish women (the timelines of domesticity), and German-Turkish men (the timelines of café life). It is Cahit and Sibel's inability to accept, or manage, the terms of these competing demands that results in their constantly being a beat behind or a beat ahead. This, indeed, is the very essence of their ongoing crisis.

So, the depiction of music and musicians in this film also invites a question about heterochronicity as a field of governmentality and regulation, about the efforts of particular social actors or agencies to subordinate this multiplicity either to an ordered plurality or to a singularity. Music and musicians are themselves actors or agencies in this film, though they operate from a distance. They are always, if ambiguously, in some other space, never quite the space of action and diegesis. This distance is an important element

in how the filmmaker represents the narrative mechanisms of this agency. The characters are shown reaching for music for their own purposes, bringing it into their own worlds in energetic and forceful acts of will. Or we see music and musicians somehow reaching for them. The Roma musicians want, as it were, to tell Cahit and Sibel that 'Turkish culture' has got a language for their pain; Sezen Aksu wants to tell Sibel that she doesn't have to be trapped by being a woman. Music and musicians are thereby shown *imposing* temporalities on the narrative and thus becoming associated with different kinds of regulatory – or emancipatory – power.

We might conclude that Fatih Akın's 'migratory aesthetics' are indeed close in spirit and intent to Bal's. We might note, however, that unlike for Bal, musical *sound* is a very central aspect of it. *Head-On* plays with the ways in which the medium itself affords speculation about the relationship between sound and image. The historical conventions associated with watching and listening, shaped by and shaping, various facets of the psychic apparatus have made this a potent fact of film culture itself (Chion 1994). To bring the historically and culturally constructed figures of musicians and music (in the form of dance tracks, songs, or instrumental improvisations) into a narrative is to complicate and then play with the narrative process itself. To associate music and musicians with figures of migration, betwixt and between, serves partly to enrich this process of narrative play. It also serves to underline that migrants feel, as Bal would say, the associated *mésentente* – complications of narrative, time, and history – in sharp and uncomfortable ways.

Secondly, and relatedly, *Head-On* seems more concerned than Bal with struggles over the mastery of time. 'Heterochronicity', it suggests, is not just an enhanced, and philosophically enlightening, sensitivity to time's contradictions: it is an opportunity for some to exercise their power over others. Men impose their temporalities on women. Women's carefully prepared food is flushed down the toilet when men, wasting their time in cafés or bars, fail to show up to eat it. The first generation of migrants impose the resentful and anachronous temporalities of the honour and shame code on the second. Young women must wait for marriage before they can have sex, and young men must avenge infractions of honour. The German nation-state imposes its temporalities in the relentless rhythms of work and play it organizes for its citizens and in the jail time it ordains for criminals. The modern Turkish nation state, represented primarily by Istanbul's traffic and crowds, imposes its temporalities subtly, but, as the very final scenes of the film suggest, more conclusively. Here, all efforts to master time, to arrange meetings, to make plans, run aground.

Head-On is a fictional film, made for the commercial market, with an eye on both international art-house cinema audiences and those in Turkey. Akın followed it in 2006 with a documentary film about Istanbul's rock and pop scene, *Crossing the Bridge: The Sound of Istanbul*. This too was a critical success. In concluding this section, we might reflect briefly on what these two films share. Both explore ways of framing musical experience through the representation of listening, dancing, watching, singing in a playful and experimental manner. Both have a rather similar listener-*flaneur* – slightly lost, moody, detached – at their heart in the form respectively of Ünel's 'Cahit' and Alexander Hacke, of German experimental rock band *Einstürzende Neubauten* fame.[6] Both portray Turkish-German cultural relations with a playfully 'ethnographic' sensibility. With this thought in mind, let us consider an overtly 'documentary' ethnographic film, John Baily's *Amir*, to think further about how engaging with music might extend Bal's conceptual universe.

Amir

Amir (1985), made by ethnomusicologist John Baily with documentary producer Wayne Derrick, describes the struggles of an Afghan refugee from the city of Herat to make a life for himself as a musician just over the Pakistan border, in

[6] Hacke was also music director of *Head-On*. A similar sound aesthetic prevails in both films.

Peshawar, in the aftermath of the 1979 Soviet invasion of Afghanistan. Amir plays the *rubab*, a short-necked plucked lute, an important instrument in the ensemble accompanying professional singers. But he must now master a more learned music for new audiences. We see him at work as a musician, struggling to get by in his new city.

The production of this celebrated ethnomusicological film followed a period of training by Baily at the National Film and Television School in London. It reflected new sensibilities in documentary film-making that both extended, and reacted to, the observational cinema of the previous two decades.[7] It reflected, too, new thinking about realism and 'reflexivity' – a key word in the critical anthropology of the time. The role of the film-makers in the construction of the narrative and in the changing relationships between the protagonists would be addressed, in various ways, in and by the film itself. Nobody was simply 'looking on'. Such sensibilities, blurring as they did the line between ethnographic and experimental film, could already be discerned in the BBC's documentary-making and in Granada Television's influential *Disappearing World* series.[8]

Amir depicts in such terms a relationship between three men: John Baily, the filmmaker, Shah Wali, a star vocalist, and Amir, one of the latter's backing musicians. The tension in the film revolves around Baily's growing interest in, and sympathy with, Amir's efforts to adapt to Pakistan's musical scene. Amir is nothing if not determined. We watch him learning from master musicians in Peshawar, practicing, and honing his new skills in front of friends. The rhythm of this learning slowly imposes itself on the film, establishing its central timeline. Shah Wali seems unhappy with this. He, after all, is the star. In a wedding scene at the heart of the film, shot in an immensely long, single take, the camera shifts focus between the two, Shah Wali at the front, Amir at the back, with the band. The filmmaker has made his choice, but a tension and an ambivalence remain.

Baily wants his viewers to be able to see and hear exactly what Amir's progress entails, in terms of mastery of repertoire, handling of instrument, the judgment of peers. When musicians are at work, the camera is steady. One can follow the movement of hands, fingers and plectra on fretboards and strings, the expression on faces, the positioning of bodies. There is no voiceover. Musical numbers are represented in full, in their own time, not in edited highlights. The length and dreamlike stillness of these scenes contrast markedly with the movement and bustle elsewhere. In the final scene, we see Amir showing off his newly acquired skills to the evident approval of his friends. The conflict with 'real' time intrudes in a nice detail. One of the listeners has noticed that Amir, lost in musical concentration, has forgotten the cigarette dangling from his lips. He leans forward with a smile to remove it gently from Amir's lips and stub it out.

A narrative tension takes shape in the film between the representation of music and the representation of other aspects of refugee life. This is crosscut by another line of tension. This arises in a scene in which we see Amir at his infant daughter's grave, a small pile of rocks by a Sufi shrine. We see Amir paying his devotions at the shrine and then, in conversation with Baily, speaking about his grief. Words start to fail him, and we see tears in his eyes. The camera wobbles slightly as it steps back, as if to acknowledge the difficulty of this moment for the film-makers, or perhaps in their indecision over whether or not to carry on filming. As it pulls back, we see Amir on his own, a lonely figure in a desolate, dirt-brown landscape. Overhead, we hear the

[7] The complex relationship between ethnographic film-making and observational cinema is succinctly analysed in Loizos 1997. The rigors of 'strict' observational cinema, with its long tracking shot conventions and its commitments to film 'speaking for itself' (without, for example, voice overs), had started to demand responses and elicit reactions. Kim McKenzie's *Waiting for Harry* of 1980, a film Loizos discusses in detail, anticipated important aspects of *Amir* in this regard,

[8] On the lingering nature of the debates about film and ethnographic realism, see Norton 2019, Grimshaw and Ravetz 2015.

rumbling of a military jet – the war-machine, the principal cause of his grief, a world away.

As the scene fades, the rumbling of the jet changes imperceptibly in quality. It slowly becomes the rumbling of water in a mountain stream. The camera shows us Amir and Shah Wali amongst the greenery, having a cigarette break on a journey. Evidently in high spirits, they tell us they are on their way to a refugee wedding on the border. The pivot around the rumble of the warplane and the mountain stream opposes life and death, community and loneliness, music and silence, green and brown, movement and stasis. It is an artful moment, and one that Baily has often spoken about, conscious of the ethical stakes involved in representing such scenes (Baily 2009). The challenges involved in filming the life of refugees were always going to be complex. In the wake of the various refugee crises of the 1970s, it might be said that a media problematic of 'distant suffering' (Boltanski 1999) was emerging: how to provide information and understanding of the human dimensions of these tragedies without aestheticizing or sentimentalizing them.

It is an aporic moment, in which various narrative pressures accumulate, spilling out beyond the frame. Perhaps the most intractable of these is the opposed, and contradictory, logic at play in representing Amir on the one hand as an Afghan, immersed in his culture, and on the other hand as stateless, a figure of what Agamben calls 'bare life' (Agamben 1998). In the first instance, we see Amir not so much 'immersed' in his culture as *crafting* it with his hands and fingers, his skill on the *rebab*. Indeed, one might say he is crafting the very terms of his resilience and adaptability. We see the precarious and threadbare nature of his existence when he shows the filmmakers around his house at the beginning of the film. But we can also see his charm, his love for his family, his devotion to his art, his hunger for learning. He is making a place for himself in this world; he is not a victim of fate or circumstance.

On the other side of the equation, we see a solitary, weeping man and the grave of a dead child. Agamben shows how such images of 'bare life', of *bios* reduced to *zoe*, of humanity stripped of history, culture, community, personhood and the rights that go with it have historically provided the blank slate on to which the modern state projects images of its sovereignty (Agamben 1998). Such imagery has proliferated in media coverage of the more recent movement of refugees. When Syrian Kurdish infant Alan Kurdi's dead body was picked up by a Turkish policeman on an Aegean beach in 2015, the western world reacted in horror. The original image changed as it circulated (Trilling 2019), assuming some of the iconographic qualities of Michelangelo's Pietà as it did. Little was known about the dead child, including, for a long time, the correct spelling of his name. As with many iconic media representations of suffering, it has held the world in a paralysed gaze, which has so far mainly served to inhibit serious public discussion of the Syrian war, the refugees, or the causes of their desperation to reach Western Europe. The high currency of Agamben in refugee studies has not, many argue, exactly helped the situation (Owens 2009).

Both Baily's film and his subsequent commentaries seem to acknowledge the problem. The sonic pivot of the aircraft/stream pairs the representational modes in question – the representation of the refugee's lot as 'bare life', with its obverse: representation of the refugee as culture bearer and culture maker. In pairing the two, the film-makers compare the two framings of refugee life and emphasize the latter. The purposefulness of Amir's life within his community and culture is stressed more and more emphatically as the film goes on. By the end, the scene at the shrine has been reduced to a shadow, even if it has not entirely been forgotten. With the Syrian war (and the image of Alan Kurdi) in collective minds at the time of writing, the stakes of this decision have only grown in recent years.

Chronologically, Baily and Derrick's film precedes Bal's migratory aesthetics. However, it is concerned with similar matters. It sets out not only to explain and contextualize Amir's pursuit of beautiful and meaningful sounds and the livelihood associated with it, but to provide a well-

crafted and aesthetically compelling vehicle for them as film-makers. Part of the story of the film is, after all, how it came to be made in the first place. Baily wants his art to respect Amir's by matching it. In this regard, he anticipates Bal's call for a 'migratory aesthetics' that 'remembers with' its subjects, rather than objectifying them in ethnographic explanation and contextualization. It also anticipates Bal's interest in video not only for what it permits in terms of the representation of time, but as a means of aligning the artistic and creative processes of ethnographers and their subjects.

Ethnography poses some rather specific demands, however, as Baily himself is well aware. One of these, from an ethnomusicological point of view, is that film allows the ethnographer to represent the technical details of a musical performance informatively and indeed analytically, without the need for words.[9] Baily has a long-standing interest in the cognitive and embodied processes at play in the movement of Afghan repertories from one instrument to another, as well as the relations of prestige and cultural hierarchy with which such movements are bound up. These are complex: the *dutar*, a long-necked lute that involves motion up and down the fretboard, is associated with amateur musicianship, which is highly valued for its distance from the world of money. The *rebab*, meanwhile (Amir's instrument), involves movement across the fretboard; it is associated with professional musicianship, which is highly valued for its association with South Asian 'learned' theory and aesthetics (Baily 1988). Such movements cannot be understood without a detailed account of what fingers, hands, arms and bodies are doing in performance. Explaining these technicalities is a cumbersome business in prose, as any ethnomusicologist knows. But film permits not only a kind of technical record, but also an analysis, a way of showing what, beyond the details, is important in music, and how.

Ethnographic film-making benefits from a situation that permits both the musician and the camera to remain relatively still, and for the latter to focus primarily on the movements of a single musician. And even in these highly limiting circumstances, one still has to take account of various kinds of interaction – at which point the camera must shift its gaze. The director must decide how and understand why. A film setting out with such reflexive purpose needs to make such choices visible and comprehensible to the observer.

One of the choices Baily makes has consequences for the narrative. We watch musical performances at length, unfolding, as it were, in their own bubbles of time. Baily is thinking of his ethnomusicological colleagues, who want a detailed understanding of what the instruments are and how they are played. Narrative time in this film stops abruptly when musical time begins. The musical time in question is, in Bal's terms, peculiarly 'material', associated as it is with the mastery of the *rebab*'s wood, metal and gut. And it is peculiarly 'sticky' – there is no quick way to 'get through' the time it takes to achieve that mastery. One simply has to move through it at the pace the medium (i.e. the *rebab*, and its social and material environment) itself imposes.

If *Head-On* allows us to think about how the fictional representation of music and musicians might put pressure on Bal's 'migratory aesthetics', *Amir* raises a similar question about *ethnographic* representation. We have seen how both use the representation of music and musicians to engage with the heterochronicity of migrant time, its 'materiality' and its 'stickiness', as well as struggles over its control. *Amir* raises familiar questions about reflexivity. The playful, if slightly tense choreography of the encounter between Baily, Amir and Shah Wali in the film permits subtle reflection on the play of power between the three, on the question of whose story this

[9] As is often the case in Baily's ethnomusicological film work, verbal explanations, furnished by the musicians themselves, are given their full due. Amir proves to be eloquent in this regard. But Baily wants the viewer to be able to see, and hear, those things that verbal explanation do *not* reach as well, as these can often be vital.

actually is. But what might this obscure about the broader historical and political forces at play? Might Bal's 'migratory aesthetics' be exposed to the same charge? The next film, Jumana Manna's ''A Magical Substance', invites us to look more deeply into this question.

A Magical Substance Flows Into Me (AMSFM)

At its showing in London, *AMSFM* was part of a sculptural installation. The contrast between film and sculpture is stark. The film is saturated with colour, music and the imagery of cooking. The sculpture is lumpy, silent and drab, evocative of a building site or an empty lecture theatre, the (hollow) objects within it suggestive of amputated limbs or discarded pieces of monumental sculpture. One watches the film from inside this landscape, one that seems to be simultaneously an archaeological relic and a building under construction. The juxtaposition is evidently not intended to be cheering. The artist's blurb strengthens that impression: '[i]n a metaphorical excavation of an endlessly contested history, the film's preoccupations include: the complexities embedded in language, as well as desire and the aural set against the notion of impossibility. With the hackneyed one-dimensional ideas about Palestine/Israel, this impossibility becomes itself a trope that defines the Palestinian landscape.'[10]

The film tracks Robert Lachmann's field recordings in Mandate Palestine in the 1930s. Lachmann was a German comparative musicologist and Arabist. His earlier research on the music of a community of Jews on a small island off the coast of Tunisia was motivated by the insights its intricately layered cultural landscape might provide into the synagogue chant traditions of the circum-Mediterranean. Fired from his post in Berlin, he emigrated to Jerusalem. In 1936, while attempting to land an academic post at the Hebrew University, he offered the Mandate's BBC station a series of lectures devoted to the emerging immigrant soundscape there, based on his own field recordings. Clearly, these were intended to boost his credentials, as well as provide an outlet for his busy mind and his instincts as an ethnographer. With so many immigrants there struggling to make homes for themselves, Lachmann felt that Jerusalem was the perfect ethnomusicological laboratory for studying music and social change (Davies 2013).

The academic post never materialized due to his untimely death, but his BBC lectures are still valued as miniature models of ethnomusicological thought and practice. The recordings depict Kurdish, Yemenite and Moroccan Jews and Bedouin, Coptic and Samaritan communities, as well as rural and urban Palestinian Arabs. They consisted mainly of his own field recordings, except for some commercial recordings of Egyptian urban song, which he used to illustrate the urban musical mainstream amongst Arabic speakers in Palestine. In highly compressed form, the lectures explored ideas about the history of song, the instruments, playing techniques, music in religious expression and much else. They drew on a very wide range of philosophical, sociological and comparative musicological references. The question of what we might call, by analogy with Western violin technique, variations in finger 'positions' on the Bedouin *rebab* (a bowed lute), for instance, raises a question in his mind about Weber's concept of rationalization, which he pursues in relation to Balkan *gusle* fingering and related data. They are, in other words, intellectually quite rigorous and demanding. From today's perspective, they paint a nostalgic picture of a Zionism that is capable of acknowledging both the diversity of Mandate Palestine, and the connecting links between the Arab and Jewish worlds.

Manna follows in his footsteps. We see representatives of the communities Lachmann recorded listening to the old recordings, at Manna's invitation, talking about them, reminiscing, reflecting on how much or little things have changed, and playing or singing themselves in response. The film mainly depicts life indoors, in kitchens, offices and living rooms. We are in

[10] **https://www.jumanamanna.com/A-Magical-Substance-Flows-Into-Me**

a world of self-enclosed environments, lit by the same sunshine and permeated by the same smells of cooking, but quite separate from one another nonetheless. Each of these vignettes constitutes a kind of time capsule. In each the past is looked back to, the future looked forward to quite differently – more or less reverentially, more or less hopefully, more or less angrily. We observe these vignettes through a steadily held and slightly detached camera, as though with Lachmann's objective and dispassionate ethnographic eye. We see *saz*-playing Kurdish Jews, Moroccan Jewish vocalists, Bedouin *rebab* players, Samaritan cantors, Palestinian *'oud* players and *debke* musicians. Each vignette, like the separate elements of Lachmann's broadcast lectures, might be seen as a piece of the mosaic of modern Israel/Palestine.

But the 'mosaic' logic, one of people inhabiting local cultural worlds made, as it were, within their own bubbles, is confronted by another. This is represented by Manna's family home, to which we return at regular intervals. In it, we witness everyday domestic routines: coffee being prepared, yoga, watering the plants, sorting out the compostable rubbish, listening to music, preparations for a trip to the beach. We also see Manna's parents asking about the film, inquiring into its progress and commenting on what they hear. Her father researches Palestinian history. We learn that he is working on some important documents on the massacres committed in the Galilee during the Nakba.[11] He sees things in a different way – to Lachmann, that is. For him, the story of Jewish immigration accompanied the terrorizing and displacement of the native population. At play here for him are the historical mechanisms of settler-colonialism, purposeful and all-consuming. The film maker's father's and mother's cosmopolitan musical horizons, and consequently slightly quizzical attitude towards their daughter's film, are signified by their love of Umm Kulthum, the Egyptian diva, a love established at the very beginning of the film. Music underscores, then, the narrative presentation of two opposed temporal and historical scenarios, one concerning immigration to the state of Israel ('the mosaic'), the other settler-colonial occupation and the erasure of indigenous populations.

One scene, at 37'22, troubles this neat and meaningful juxtaposition. It is the one moment in the film in which music-making seems not to be fully contained by the camera within the four walls of a room. Throughout the film, Lachmann is evoked in short texts from the lectures, as often at the outset of these vignettes. In this case we hear him ruminating on music and religion, on 'the prehistoric conditions of life', 'sorcerers, intoxicants, and magic…' But we are in a sparsely furnished and somewhat scruffy office, soon revealed to be an appraisers' office working for the various state bodies that are extending the occupation of the West Bank (including the 'Judea and Samaria Supreme Planning Council', whose logo we eventually see). A map on the wall shows a 'table of land expropriation'. We then hear a Kurdish Jewish musician singing to the accompaniment of an Anatolian *saz* (a long-necked lute). The musical and vocal style is that of Kurdish southeast Anatolia, the modernized Alevi *aşık* tradition. Hebrew religious lyrics have evidently been added. The camera moves unsteadily, on this occasion, between the singing office worker and the view outside the window, presumably the expropriated land in question. The camera view seems to be stolen, a fugitive glance. It is soon obscured by curtains moving in the breeze.

This scene raises two questions. One concerns the relationship between 'sorcerers, intoxicants and magic', and the modern bureaucratic apparatus of occupation and settlement. The other concerns the relationship between the histories imagined by the mosaic model of immigration and settlement – Kurdish Jewish culture in its own little space, alongside others – and the histories of those who previously inhabited this space and have been erased from it. If the mosaic

[11] The Nakba ('The Cataclysm') is the term Palestinians use to refer to the war of 1948 that resulted in some 700,000 Palestinian Arabs fleeing or being forced from their homes.

model imagines the possibility of plural histories, of multiplicity, the other connects this very possibility with the logic of occupation and the erasure of Palestinian culture and history. As with the juxtaposition of 'sorcerers, intoxicants and magic' with bureaucracy, this juxtaposition is an 'impossibility'. We are reminded, by Manna herself, that 'impossibility becomes itself a trope that defines the Palestinian Landscape'.

Reflection on Manna's film prompts us to inquire into the stakes of heterochronicity in Bal's 'migratory aesthetics'. Temporality in such an aesthetic might be 'sticky' and 'material', as we have seen. But do some kinds of temporality have more adhesive qualities than others? Can one get 'stuck'? And can one be forcibly 'unstuck'? Neither seem desirable. Who and what, then, might be responsible for either condition? *AMSFM* suggests both possibilities. The micro-temporalities of the vignettes present diversity, each operating according to their own particular rhythms, but diversity contained within domestic interiors. From this perspective, there is no 'outside' that might ground, or contextualize, this multiplicity. One of her interlocuters mentions that her grandmother 'created her own Morocco within these four walls'. Generations later, her descendants are still there. Manna's own father also lives within four walls, but he has been unstuck from Palestinian time by Jewish migration and settlement. In the vignettes of Manna family life, we see three people, father, mother and daughter, more or less restlessly looking outside. They have their own modes of attachment, of 'adhesion', we might say, to engage with Bal's metaphor: her mother's yoga, her father's love of Umm Kulthum. Her father's quest for the truth about the massacres in Galilee constitutes another. But this is a kind of cosmopolitan adhesion, not the fiercely sticky and binding localism we see elsewhere.

And stickiness to what? The installation implies that not all materials are equally sticky, that some ways of grounding the experience of time are more significant than others. The episode in the 'Judea and Samaria Supreme Planning Council' office and the fugitive camera glances outside suggest there is an answer to this: land. To claim land as one's right is to attach oneself to that most sticky of substances. Could there be any stickier? To remove others from it is to remove them from history, and therefore from a future, in the most decisive way. This is the 'impossibility' for the Palestinian citizens of Israel, as well as those living under occupation in the West Bank. Other things might substitute for that attachment, for those with the intellectual and cultural means. The compensations – cultural citizenship of other worlds, cosmopolitan attachments – are not insignificant. But, as Niklaus Luhmann (2010) would have put it, something operates as an 'anchor of certainty' in this symbolic system – the land itself.[12] It is not enough to talk about the 'materiality' of time: we need to know exactly *which* materials ground it.

Manna's installation returns us to the kind of curatorial culture Bal's migratory aesthetics both emerge from and contribute to, thus closing a circle. As we have seen, it too is concerned with heterochronicity (diverse temporalities), with the materiality and stickiness of time, and the injunction to 'remember with'. Moreover, it is the third of the films to explore this injunction in fraught contexts – contexts defined by migrants and refugees. *Head-On* raises a question about the governmentality of heterochronous time (and with it, the question of who has the power to impose what on whom). *Amir* raises the question of the atemporal figure of 'bare life', and how that might be resisted. *AMSFM* raises a question about what happens when those who insist on the diversity of their own temporal and historical experience deny it to others.

Conclusion

I conclude by underlining how this necessar-

[12] Luhmann describes the 'real assets' of his 'media systems' as 'anchors of certainty… reaching down into the organic sphere' – like sexuality in the media of love, physical coercion in the media of power, perception in the media of science, gold in the media of currency (Luhmann 2010: 37).

ily detailed reading of the three films supports the claims with which I started. The first claim is that Bal's 'migratory aesthetics' might have paid more attention to music and musicians for the light it sheds on how migrants and refugees 'make' and manage time. Each of these films, as we have seen, is a study in the 'stickiness' of time, and the ways in which migrant and refugee musicians struggle with it as music and musicians make new homes for themselves. If migratory aesthetics are intended as a critique of the aesthetics of 'transition', 'flow' and 'passage' (Durrant and Lord 2007), the neglect of music and sound, which lead us so directly to the handling of time, is unfortunate. That might change, I would suggest. The current wave of interest in migrant and refugee music-making in the Global North might also benefit from more rigorous (and sympathetic) critical engagement. This might encourage forms of collaboration beyond the often-exploitative positions once associated with 'World Music'.[13]

The second claim is that music and musicians offer a productive way of understanding contemporary conditions of diversity, particularly as they involve migrants and refugees. For all its attention to heterochronicity and the 'stickiness' of time, 'migratory aesthetics' were a product of their moment and not as attentive as they might have been to the longer histories of migration that shape these artistic and curatorial encounters. Collaborations with migrant and refugee musicians (for instance, in films) can shed considerable light on the rich cultural histories migrants and refugees carry with them, as well as those they encounter. They might also illuminate the rather particular skills in negotiating difference and diversity, skills honed in one environment that are (often) put to good use in another. They may be a useful key, in other words, to the 'new diversities'.

The third claim is that artistic collaboration requires shared, or shareable, narratives. With the Global North's 'migrant crisis', and more recently the Black Lives Matter movement, these narratives are undoubtedly under pressure. Aksoy's comment about the impossibility of mapping the field of migrant music studies is symptomatic. If we are to re-engage with the question of how we might 'map' or narrate with an eye on Bal's still-powerful injunction to 'remember with', a fresh burst of energy is required. Such moments benefit from experimentation with forms of representation. As I hope to have shown, the representation of music and musicians on film puts pressure on both media regarding what we might call the 'handling of time'. These three films respond in different ways. From a theoretical perspective, one could say that the response has been anticipated in longstanding critiques of ethnographic representation (Clifford and Marcus 1986), which by now extend to the representational issues associated with film (Morphy and Banks 1997) and sound (Kapchan 2017). From the perspective of both 'migratory aesthetics' and the 'new diversities', they also suggest fresh models of dialogue, creativity and participation across divides that are becoming more rigid in the currently dominant politics of the Global North.

[13] Critiques of World Music are by now routine, and World Music itself is in abeyance. For a critique of the newly-orientalizing attention being paid to migrant and refugee music, see Stokes 2021.

Filmography:

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Baily, J. dir. 1985. *Amir: An Afghan Refugee's Life in Peshawar, Pakistan*. Cinematography: Wayne Derrick RAI and NFTS. UK. 52 mins.

Manna, J. dir. 2015. *A Magical Substance Flows Into Me*. Cinematography, Daniel Kedem. Palestine and UK. 66 mins.

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Art Worlds in Situation: Old Methods for a (New) Anthropology of Popular Music and Dance in Migration

by **Alice Aterianus-Owanga** (University of Neuchâtel)

Abstract

The aim of this paper is to highlight how recent anthropological studies of musicians' and dancers' activities and networks in migration have attempted to theorize the links between the so-called 'local' and 'global' by both reviving older ethnographic methods and taking inspiration from recent theories and concepts in the anthropology of migration. It draws on the author's research on the migration of Senegalese *sabar* dancers in Europe (mainly France and Switzerland), and on other anthropological studies developed recently about the worlds of music and dance in migration and transnational contexts. After briefly recalling the long history of the intertwining of migration studies and ethnomusicology, it focuses on two main tools that help to grasp the transnational connections and creations that emerge through music and dance and to overcome the simple dichotomy between the local and the global. These methods consist in analyses of 'social worlds' and 'art worlds' on the one hand and of 'social situations' on the other. It is shown how, using these tools, the anthropology of music and dance in migration can find relevant methodologies and epistemologies to overcome the local/global dichotomy and explain how 'art worlds' (Becker 2008 [1982]) are built into the interstices between the two scales.

Keywords: migration, anthropology of music/dance, art worlds, social situations

Introduction

In 2004, Henrietta Moore asserted that, while the existence of links between the notions of 'local' and 'global' was currently indisputable, the problem was rather how the social sciences could theorize and operationalize such links (Moore 2004). With regard to this question, Anne-Christine Trémon later highlighted how the debate about globalization actually 'resurfaced a question long raised by anthropologists,' namely how ethnographic fieldwork can account 'for the insertion of the social unit under study into a set of larger relationships and over a longer period than the here and now' (Trémon 2012). She reminded us that this methodological question divides anthropologists between those who consider there is a structural relationship between the local and a global 'world system' (a view defended by authors such as Jonathan Friedman [2004] and Marshall Sahlins [1988]), and another view that sees globalization in terms of the flows, scapes, and networks that ethnographers can investigate. According to the latter perspective, the world system is not 'a theoretically constituted holistic frame that gives context to the contemporary study of peoples or local subjects,' but 'a piecemeal way, integral to and embedded in discontinuous, multi-sited objects of study' (Marcus 1995:97).

In various ways the anthropology of music and dance has tackled the possibilities of operationalizing the relationships between the so-called 'local' and 'global' and of overcoming this debate between the advocates of a world system and

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discontinuous conceptions of globalization. In 2004, Martin Stokes provided an assessment of the approaches to globalization that ethnomusicologists had developed (Stokes 2004). He also recalled how the viewpoints of the early 1990s were sharply opposed. One viewpoint, seen as Marxist, insisted on the expanding and totalizing reach of global capitalism in the field of music that led to relationships between the West and the rest being exoticized, fetishized, and exploited. The other position, a more 'liberal' perspective, argued that the complexity of current flows could not be explained through a macro-systemic structural model, but should be envisaged instead through nuanced micro-descriptions of how people give shape and meaning to diverse music genres in diverse places. In his analysis of this literature, Stokes noted that much of what had been written since the 1990s mediated between these two positions, that is, between what were respectively top-down and bottom-up perspectives (ibid.).

This paper does not aim to build on Stokes' state of the art analysis by analyzing the ethnomusicological production of the last two decades, nor does it attempt to provide any theoretical input into the complex debates over the structural and discontinuous conceptions of global/local relationships. It aims more humbly at highlighting how recent anthropological studies of 'ordinary'[1] artists' activities and networks in migration have addressed these questions by both reviving older ethnographic methods and taking inspiration from recent theories and concepts in the anthropology of migration. To that end, I will draw on my own research on the migration of Senegalese *sabar* dancers in Europe (mainly in France and French-speaking Switzerland)[2] and on other recent anthropological studies of the worlds of music and dance in migration and transnational contexts.

Following A.-C. Trémon's advice (2012), and inspired by the Manchester School (or the Rhodes Livingstone Institute) and its extended case-study methods, my interest here is in describing how the anthropology of music and dance in migration might help to think beyond the local/global debate by reviving older ethnographic methods in current debates over migration and transnationalism. The anthropology of migration has been extensively transformed in recent decades thanks to the emergence of new theories and epistemological approaches. These

[1] My use of the idea of 'ordinary' artists builds partly on reflections by Howard Becker and his successors on the sociology of 'banality' (Faulkner and Becker 2009; Perrenoud and Bois 2017). It results above all from the observation of several characteristics of my interlocutors' careers: most of the artists I worked with in my fieldwork in France and Switzerland are neither rich nor famous, and they cannot always be described as recognized artists in their cities of settlement, even though they were often famous on the Dakar dance scene. They travel partly in the margins of the institutional and high-culture circuits of France and Switzerland, and they develop most of their activities apart from official stages. Unlike famous figures in African contemporary dance, these dancers are often not recognized among the milieu of African dances, making them seem 'ordinary'. This category does not overlap with or refer to the distinction between 'professional' and 'amateur' artists, as these artists all consider dance as their work and profession, even though they often have to engage in other jobs in Europe in order to boost their incomes. See the third part of this paper for more detail.

[2] From 2017 to 2020, I conducted ethnographic research in the world of *sabar* in migration in France, Switzerland, Dakar (Senegal) and other European hubs of the *sabar* network. My research was conducted through participant observation at *sabar* dance events and workshops, by recording life stories and migration journeys, through ordinary interpersonal relationships with dance students, teachers and musicians, and through a film I made about one dancer (Aterianus-Owanga 2021). The research led me to conduct 71 semi-structured interviews with dancers and participants in *sabar* and other African dance classes. Even though a majority of my in-depth ethnography was conducted in France and Switzerland, I occasionally use the qualification 'European' in this paper because many migration pathways I observed travel across national boundaries, and because a trans-European network has emerged in recent decades to connect those artists and students of *sabar* from different cities, through festivals, workshops, digital connections, and yearly returns to Senegal. As part of my research, I have also conducted brief trips in several European hubs where *sabar* artists and students meet, for example, in Amsterdam, Paris, and Germany.

include theories of transnationalism (Portes et al.1999; Basch et al. 1994; Levitt 2001), criticisms of methodological nationalism, critical analyses of the 'diversity' discourse (Vertovec 2012, Salzbrunn 2015), and ideas about diasporic citizenship (Laguerre 2016) and translocality (Greiner and Sakdapolrak 2013). Previous papers and special issues have shown how the analysis of music in migration made it possible to counteract 'methodological nationalism' and to challenge 'the deep-seated disciplinary and conceptual divisions that prevent an analysis of the domains and relationships within which cultural production takes place' (Glick Schiller and Meinhof 2011:33), involving the notions of 'national borders, rural urban divides, and categories of native and migrant' (Glick Schiller and Meinhof 2011: 33).

In this paper, after briefly recalling the long history of the intertwining of migration studies and ethnomusicology, I will focus on two main tools that help to grasp the transnational connections and creations of music and dance and to overcome the simple dichotomy between the local and the global. These methods consist on the one hand of analyses of 'social worlds' and 'art worlds' and on the other of 'social situations.' Rooted in two different traditions in the social sciences, both positions have been defended by anthropologists who were interested in social and cultural change in the context of domination and transformation – in multicultural urban settings in the former case and colonial cities in the latter. These two traditions were then fruitfully appropriated and rethought by social anthropologists interested in globalization and ethnographic methods.

The Chicago school and the heritage of migration studies in the anthropology of music

The 'migration crisis' of the 2010s led to an outburst of interest by ethnomusicologists and sociologists of music in investigating the relationship between music and dance, on the one hand, and migration on the other, resulting in a spate of publications that unintentionally left the impression that this was a 'new' topic (Glick Schiller and Meinhof 2011; Martiniello 2015). However, as highlighted by several other anthropologists and ethnomusicologists (Baily and Collyer 2006), the interest in migration in ethnomusicology is not new, but had been approached through a number of different aspects, including the idea of diaspora, urban ethnomusicology, and refugee studies (Stokes 2020). This long-term link emerged in the history of the anthropology of migration itself, including the Chicago School of the 1930s, of which several anthropologists are considered to have pioneered migration studies (Cuche 2009; Brettell and Hollifield 2013). In the 1920s and 1930s, the city of Chicago was in the midst of rapid urbanization and urban effervescence. Sociologists at the University of Chicago witnessed the increasing and diversifying migrations to the city and the formation of urban ghettos. These scholars, such as William I. Thomas, Robert E. Park, and Ernest W. Burgess, were interested, among other things, in the relations between the different communities in the city, particularly migrant groups. They studied them through participant observation and by drawing inspiration from other disciplines, such as the anthropology of Franz Boas.

In the wake of the Chicago School, another trend of research developed in the United States around the cultural recreations of African-American populations, following the work of W.E.B. Dubois, and later St Clair Drake, Zora Neale Hurston, and Melville Herskovits, an American anthropologist and former student of Boas at Columbia University in New York in the 1920s. Herskovits would become particularly famous for his research and reflections on the African heritage of Black Americans, contacts between cultures, and processes of 'acculturation.' Whereas other scholars trained in the Chicago School spoke at that time in terms of anomie, the loss of 'traditional' knowledge and cultural destruction because of slavery and segregation, Herskovits paid attention to the traces or 'resistances' of original African cultures in the black diaspora, especially in the field of music.

Although polemical and criticized by some of his peers,[3] Herskovits' work would be highly influential on subsequent developments in anthropology and ethnomusicology. His research helped raise interest in the African origins of musical genres such as blues, jazz, and gospel. Incidentally, Herskovits would become the thesis advisor of one of the pillars of American ethnomusicology: Alan Merriam, who graduated in anthropology at Northwestern University, where he met Herskovits. Under his supervision, Merriam completed a Ph.D. dissertation entitled 'Songs of Afro-Bahian Cults: An Ethnomusicological Analysis' in 1951.

As this brief overview of one of the roots of music and migration studies shows, the interest in the role of music in culture and society also arose among anthropologists who studied the diasporic experience and the transformation of customs and social organizations in migration, especially in the context of America in the mid-twentieth century, in the face of its history of slavery. As Baily and Collyer recalled (2006), this perspective would then be reinforced in the 1970s by the trend towards urban ethnomusicology and by Adelaida Reyes Schramm's work on the interactions between New York's various urban minorities formed through music (Reyes-Schramm 1975).

Obviously, after that period, the transformation of late-capitalism's cultural industries and the emergence of global markets in music and dance shifted scholarly attention towards other domains. They gave birth to a range of reflections related to the commodification and fetishization of alterity (Feld 1995), the synchronized processes of globalization and localization of popular music genres (Langlois 1996; Shipley 2013; Waxer 2013), and the tourism of music and dance (Ebron 2009). The new generation of researchers made huge strides in the understanding of contemporary music markets (Negus 1992; Taylor 1997; Hutnyk 2000), the hegemonic forces involved in the production, circulation and consumption of music, postcolonial representations of the West and its others through music appropriation (Born and Hesmondalgh 2000), and cosmopolitan and hybrid identities created through music in southern cities (Turino 2000). Yet, for a while, the topic of music and migration was relegated to a quite marginal zone, in comparison with the focus on 'world-music' creations and institutions.

From the 2000s, while the world was being transformed more and more into a collection of camps and refugees (Agier 2002; Agier and Lecadet 2014), and as new academic institutions grew up to tackle the 'migration turn,' anthropologists of music have again started paying attention to these questions.[4] Ethnomusicological projects that developed from the 2010s onwards provided new insights by developing an action-research perspective (Caruso 2019), by questioning the experience of making and listening to music in refugees camps (Kaiser 2006; Puig 2007; Greenberg 2009; Da Lage and Hassan 2020), by studying the political economies of prestige forged by musicians in transnational markets (Trapido 2011), and by considering the complex intricacies between mobility and immobility in African music scenes (Navarro 2019). At the same time, several recent anthropological studies of music and dance have renewed approaches to the study of 'art worlds' and 'social situations' through their analysis of ordinary artists' migrations.

Art worlds in migration

Building on interactionist theories about 'social worlds' and the sociology of work, Howard Becker considered art to be the product of collective action held together by a chain of cooperation between different actors who share common conventions and who belong to the same 'art worlds' (Becker 2008). Even though he defined art worlds as areas of collective activity more than as sites of cultural production, Becker's the-

[3] For a biography of Herskovits, see Gershenhorn 2007.

[4] See, for example, Bender 2009; Dor 2015; Rastas and Seye 2016; Laborde 2019.

ory drew partly on the concept of 'social worlds' put forward by diverse sociologists related to the Chicago School (Hammou 2012).[5] Through a contextual approach that valued ethnography over deterministic theoretical frameworks, Becker highlighted the negotiations between different actors that govern the actions and the conventions that order artistic work, regimes of value, and norms. Whereas Becker's theory has often been used to support a sociology of musical work — notably in the French-speaking sociology of art (Buscatto 2013; Perrenoud 2014) — here I am interested in a broader anthropological perspective on music and dance worlds, one that questions the intricacies between artistic careers and migration careers,[6] and that envisages art worlds as sites of the reconfigurations of cultural meaning, moral values, aesthetics, and artistic forms. These reconfigurations are achieved through social interactions and cooperation between artists in migration and a variety of other agents they meet and work with.

Gilles Suzanne's research into Algerian transnational music worlds provides a first interesting example of the relevance of this perspective by avoiding simplified and stereotyped representations of artists' pathways and creations in migration. By tracing the cultural history of Algerian musicians' mobilities between French and Algerian cities during the twentieth century, Suzanne observes their moves between different musical genres, networks and art markets. He also notices how, in previous studies, these artists often made use of reductive approaches that were infused either with an ethnicization that understood their music as 'the expression of the immigrant,' or with an 'ethnologization' that mainly considered their music as 'traditional.' Through a critique of studies based on the theory of social fields, Suzanne proposed a more flexible approach to the study of art worlds, and hence a much more realistic framework of understanding the wide array of forces and influences at play in Algerian networks and creations:

> Rather than being merely the reductive intersection between the habitus and the social position of the immigrant who is supposed to spread them, whether or not he or she is an artist or an actor in the worlds of music, artistic productions are generally at the core of a more complex arrangement. They articulate, firstly, a particular artistic field (music or other arts), or even a music genre (raï, rap or Arab-Andalusian) or a singular style (pop raï or robotic raï); secondly, a sector of cultural activities (show broadcasting, production or distribution of records, etc.); thirdly, a migrant population (or a group of migrants); […] finally, one or more urban places that each serve, according to their characteristics, as a drop-off point and, in relation to one another, as a pivot point. (Suzanne 2009: 22).

Suzanne's critiques of the interpretation of Algerian musicians' pathways in terms of social position or ethnic framework are worth thinking about in relation to art and migration more generally. This is because they remind us that artists' migration pathways and creations cannot be homogenized or defined as the simple product of their social conditions or their ethnicity. Furthermore, he points out that social scientists need highly complex and flexible frameworks to grasp the ambiguous nature of these art worlds and cultural networks in motion, as they are neither deterritorialized, nor bounded and influenced only by the states and cities where artists work. Following Suzanne's perspective, Algerian musicians' worlds in migration must not be conceived as a simple ethnic enclave, nor as a reflection of migrants' social position: 'formed much more by the impact of social and aesthetic contiguity than the impact of ethnic concentration', these musical networks articulate a complex set of social and spatial spaces and constitute the foundation of a cosmopolitan ethos of creation (Suzanne 2009: 27).

[5] Karim Hammou provides an analysis of the similarities and distinctions between the notions of social worlds and art worlds (Hammou 2012).

[6] Further to the Chicago sociologists, several sociologists have used the approach in terms of migratory careers to account for the processual aspects of migration (Martiniello and Rea 2011; Debonneville 2015). Even though I cannot expand on this question in this paper, those art worlds in migration provide interesting lenses through which to view the complementarity of migratory careers and artistic careers.

As I will show in the next section, my ethnography of Senegalese dancers' migrations and activities between Europe and Senegal benefits greatly from these recommendations. I hope to complement Suzanne's observations about the transnational making of art worlds in migration by confirming how each art world constitutes a complex and flexible set of entangled networks, actors, and influences.

Moving (*sabar*) to Europe

In Senegal, the word *sabar* refers to a musical instrument, a dance and a moment of performance. Often characterized as a women's dance circle among the Wolof,[7] its fame has grown in recent decades. In particular, it became an emblem of Senegalese nationhood, it infused different sorts of popular music genres emerging in the recording industry, and it stimulated tremendous interest among the youth of Dakar. In the meantime, the 'end of development expectation' (Coumba Diop 2008:19) and the pauperization of daily life in Dakar's suburbs, as well as the growing number of connections with Europeans who are passionate about African dances, increased a trend to engage in travelling dance experiences and to take the opportunity of an 'adventure' abroad.[8]

Consequently, since the 1990s, a growing number of *sabar* musicians and dancers have travelled out of Senegal,[9] sometimes settling in European cities, but also in the United States, Japan, Australia or South America. Due to the small number of paid concerts for dancers in the field of 'traditional' and *sabar* dances, these artists often become dance instructors teaching African dance classes to Europeans, mainly women interested in African dances and cultures. Through their dance classes and activities, they create a new transnational network, which is gathered around the production and promotion of *sabar* and Senegalese dances in Europe, and connected digitally and by the occasional organization of large workshop events.

Diverse motives and means of migration can be observed throughout careers mixing dance and migration. Some dancers settle in Europe after the tours of their dance troupes have ended, others after marrying a European citizen, and yet others thanks to previous collaborations with contemporary dance institutions or associations promoting African dances. Artists who settle clandestinely after the tours of their ballet companies often have to travel between different towns and places as a first step in their migration careers, following the opportunities offered by their social networks to give classes, shows, and festivals. In their journeys they rely on kinship ties, solidarity within their previous dance troupes in Senegal, religious *murid* networks, and friendships and love relationships they have created in this new European context with their students (as expanded below), associations or audiences.

Furthermore, in many cases the decision to stay in Europe is the consequence of previous mobilities and travels, and of their career progressively becoming anchored in transnational spaces. Some took the decision to stay in Europe after already doing several tours and travels because they felt the call to provide an opportunity for their peers back in Senegal to travel in their turn and to experience the social success that travel has represented for them. Others opted to stay in Europe after their very first trip there, influenced by their families and neighbours pushing them to stay in Europe in order to find more rewarding incomes and recognition as dancers. Even for those artists whose first steps in settling in Europe were followed by severe periods of precarity or illegal settlement, the experience of

[7] *Sabar* music and dance characteristics have been described by several ethnomusicologists and anthropologists of dance, such as Tang 2007, Dessertine 2010, Neveu Kringelbach 2013a and Seye 2014.

[8] Whether it is for short-term travel or longer pathways of migration, the experience of having been abroad is generally regarded as a proof of achievement and success in dancers' and musicians' careers.

[9] It would be difficult to provide quantitative or statistical data to support this statement, but most *sabar* artists in Dakar state that an important part of the dance scene has moved through out-migration in the last two decades.

migration was regarded as a merger between a piece of 'destiny' and a chosen step in their artistic career. For example, a *murid* and *baay fall*[10] dancer I interviewed explained that, when he was in Senegal, his main aim was not to settle in Europe but just to undertake short journeys as a proof of his success. However, unexpected events led him to stay and to achieve his 'destiny' in migration in order to give another boost to his artistic and cultural projects:

> I have to say that leaving Senegal was part of my destiny. […] My brother who owned a homestead wanted to make me move out of Senegal, but I said no. My brothers who lived in Italy wanted to make me to go there, and I said 'No, I won't come'. But you know, if someone's destiny is to leave…' (Interview with N., April 2018)

After his visa expired, he stayed in Europe thanks to his relatives and acquaintances among Senegalese artists, and started giving classes with different associations before getting married and regularizing his situation. He now owns an association that organizes cultural activities in the region where he settled, as well as in his hometown in Senegal.

For this interlocutor, as for other dancers I met in the field, mobility is not just considered a migration project, but a life destiny that is tightly entangled with one's artistic destiny and engagement in the country's artistic development. As such, these artists' pathways are far removed from stereotypical representations of migrants as the 'passive' subjects of hegemonic forces (Leclerc-Olive 2018). Observation of their trajectories proves the intricacy of the links between artistic and migratory careers.[11]

Despite variations in the first steps in their migration careers, the ability of *sabar* dancers to settle for longer periods in France or Switzerland appears to be constrained and limited to a small range of possibilities. Due to the restrictions of immigration policies in many European countries introduced in the 1980s and particularly in the 1990s, with the establishment of the Schengen regulations, long-term residence visas for people coming from outside Europe have mostly been permitted for family reunifications or for the spouses of European citizens alone (Maskens 2013; Neveu-Kringelbach 2013b; Wray, Agoston, and Hutton 2014). For these reasons, even though some dancers might rely on their family networks or solidarities with their Senegalese dance groups when they arrive in Europe, many will settle for longer periods thanks to a marriage or family reunification. As a consequence, encounters with Swiss and French women through teaching activities are not incidental, but become a core underlying component of dancers' migration and artistic careers.

Altair Despres' in-depth analysis of Afro-contemporary dancers' mobilities in Europe has already provided similar input with regard to the important contribution of women who have intimate relationships, friendly or romantic, with artists to the latter's careers (Despres 2011; 2015). Anchored in the sociology of gender, her ethnography of contemporary dancers' careers between West Africa and Europe highlights the peculiarities resulting from the (cultural and economic) domination of women in this art field and the logic of the mobilization of women's capital to support men's careers (Despres 2015). In Afro-contemporary dance worlds, the participation of contemporary African dancers in choreographic activities depends on their capacity to adapt themselves to the institutional and aesthetic rules of European dance institutions. In this context, the assistance of European partners and the 'acculturation' produced through intimate relationships happens to be crucial (Despres 2015).

The *sabar* world observed in my research reveals at first sight a similar engagement of European partners (friends, lovers, spouses…)

[10] The term *baay fall* refers to members of *Baay fallism*, a marginal brotherhood within Senegalese *murid* Sufism, which has become very popular among urban artists and youngsters in the last decades (Pézeril 2008).

[11] I give more detailed examples of these overlapping careers in my forthcoming book (Aterianus-Owanga forthcoming), where I recount several life stories of dancers I met during my fieldwork.

and a similar overlap between 'art migration' and 'marriage migration.' Yet, unlike the Afro-contemporary dancers' mobilities described by Altaïr Despres, *sabar* dancers' careers are not an adaptation to a set of rules and institutionalized laws dictated by Northern institutions. On the contrary, these artists expand their pathways through 'ordinary' individual mobilities and informal spheres of performance, rather than through official cultural institutions and networks. Rather than institutionalized systems, these intricate routes of migration and artistic careers expand on what Alain Tarrius fruitfully conceptualized as 'circulatory territories' in order to qualify the knowledge and skills that are shared in informal circuits of migration, as well as the collective memories built into mobility in a variety of interconnected spaces (Tarrius 2002; Tarrius 2010).

Dancers' migration journeys rely on common underground routes which are not often investigated by research focusing primarily on the cultural industries of music and dance, and they are also hardly understandable if we just perceive them as an aspect of 'Senegalese migration' in general. Contrary to contemporary artists or musicians, the *sabar* dancers I met in France and Switzerland evolve partly out of official dance and music institutions and markets, and they rely on small associations and interpersonal networks to become involved in dance teachings and performances. Certainly, in some exceptional cases, collaborations with famous singers, dance schools or choreographic centres helps some of them find more institutional support for their performances and broadens their spheres of activity. But this possibility is only accessible to the few dancers who master a broader repertoire of dance genres besides *sabar*, and who can use their skills in Afro-beats, Afro-contemporary dance or their training in recognized contemporary schools in Senegal to develop collaborations out of the niche of *sabar* and African dance classes.[12] This weak access to institutions reflects the hierarchies of the French and Swiss art markets, which relegate traditional African dance forms to a lower position than Afro-contemporary dance, which is more valued for its 'creativity' (Fratagnoli and Lassibille 2019).

Except for those few artists who have trained in contemporary dance, most of the *sabar* artists I met develop an important share of their collaborations in the realm of African dances, with other dancers from Senegal and Western African countries, in the unofficial market built around those practices in their own localities and beyond. Depending on the nature of black and African music and dance markets in the cities where they settle, these artists are pushed to collaborate with different spheres: in French-speaking Switzerland, *sabar* dancers recently supported black struggles by holding joint performances with other West African artists during 'African cultural days.' In some cases, these collaborations resulted from connections and engagements with associations acting to boost the visibility of black people in their city, and they witnessed a current social movement in French-speaking Swiss cities that aims at giving more voice and visibility to black and African cultures, as a consequence of Black Lives Matter global mobilizations.

As in the case of their participation in these mobilizations, these artists navigate in both a transnational network of *sabar* activities with their peers from Senegal or *sabar* adepts, and smaller-scale spheres of dance performances during festivals or political mobilizations in support of black and African cultures in their localities. Rather than fixed positions in a set 'field' of power, they permanently negotiate their positions through various kinds of moves in different European and Senegalese cities, different aesthetic and dance styles, different types of relationships with their partners, and different types of collaboration and involvement.

[12] For example, artists who have graduated or experimented with training in the famous 'Ecole des sables' often find more opportunities to give courses in dance schools, as their experience in Senegal is more recognized, and their cultural capital is reinforced by the experience of this international dance academy.

As for Algerian musicians in migration, *sabar* dancers' artistic and migratory careers play permanently on an articulation of different configurations. At the intersection of their personal artistic orientations and knowledge, they negotiate the encounters they experience with other actors involved in the promotion of *sabar*, the field of possibilities existing in 'African dance and music' markets in the cities where they settle and, last but not least, the immigration policies that only partly determine their range of possibilities. Considering these networks as a complex multiscalar 'art world' highlights the intricacies of the different types of relationships, networks, markets and forces at stake in these worlds, rather than compartmentalizing the analysis. This broad transnational system of cooperation and interaction connects people with different forms of social and cultural capital in Europe (artists in mobilities, associations, promoters of African dances, students of dance classes, etc.), but gathered around the same interest in *sabar* dance and its promotion in Europe.

In his analysis of the transnational art world of Algerian music, Gilles Suzanne noticed that migrants come to develop urban, social and artistic creations in migration 'as long as they nourish in turn the local social worlds in which they are anchored and their activities are deployed' (Suzanne 2009:29). In the case of my research, the approach in terms of art worlds and collaborations can help to tackle these complex transnational networks of musicians and dancers, and to overcome the local/global divide through a multiscalar analysis of the varied forces involved in different spaces and networks within art worlds.

However, the understanding of how *sabar* dancers make sense of their art forms for their audiences and the spheres of activities in which they settle need to complement the perspective on art worlds with a more micro-ethnographic analysis of the experiences, emotions and interactions that emerge from concrete situations. Indeed, can we understand how art worlds hold together despite, within and through migration if we do not pay special attention to the community of meanings, aesthetics, and emotions that they create among the participants and with the audience? Can we provide an in-depth comprehension of the dance world if we do not take into account the specific images and emotions that are created among the participants through dance in situation?

The understanding of these 'communities of practice' (Eckert 2006; Wenger 2009) — bringing together *sabar* artists and other actors of this art world who enter into sensitive and emotional transactions with one another — requires, I suggest, recourse to a more grounded and sensorial perspective on music and dance performances that supports the perspective in terms of social situations, as described in the next section.

Grasping *sabar* meanings through the analysis of social situations

The concept of situation emerged from an anthropological school born in the 1930s-1940s around the study of African cities: the Rhodes-Livingstone Institute. Suggested by scholars such as Max Gluckman and James Clyde Mitchell, the idea was to use a micro-local description of situations in order to shed light on a broader system of social relations, hierarchies, and cultural dynamics in a context of intense urban transformation. Through the analysis of a dance ritual (Mitchell 1956) or the opening ceremony of a bridge (Gluckman 1940), the concept of situation has offered a pioneering way to think about the articulations between the different scales, meanings, and social hierarchies that occur in a given time and place, which provided a groundbreaking critique of racial segregation during the colonial era (Schumaker 2001).

Situational analysis has represented a foundation for the elaboration of the extended case-study method and network analysis (Kempny 2005), and its legacy can be traced in several schools of thought, such as symbolic interactionism, migration studies, and the globalization of

culture (Hannerz 1992).[13] The analysis of social situations therefore brings together scholars who share a common criticism of structuralist perspectives, and who tend to pay attention to the 'imponderabilia of actual life' (Malinowski 1963 [1922]: 75), and the '"real stuff" of the social fabric' (Garbett 1970:214). However, situational analysis has long been divided between two contradictory views about how to produce abstract knowledge from ethnographic situations. A first perspective conceptualized social space as a field of relationships, institutions, resources, and events that is heuristically bounded and from which events[14] are abstracted to constitute a system for analysis. A second perspective adopted 'an actor-oriented approach and abstract in terms of ego-centred networks' (ibid.). With the development of social network analysis, the second view tended to take on more importance. From the 1960s, social scientists have attempted to distance themselves from the structural perspective in order to provide more flexible frames for conceptualizing social situations. As described in my introduction, one of the debates relating to globalization replays this antagonism between the system- and actor-centred views.

The analysis of music-dance performances and their circulation can thoroughly contribute to this reflection on the situated making of meanings in the social and art worlds. In her long-term study of the reception of hip-hop in French suburbs, Virginie Milliot built an inspiring model of analysis in order to understand the different steps of appropriation of hip-hop aesthetics and culture in France (Milliot and Noûs 2020). In her model, she paid particular attention to two aspects. On the one hand, she analysed the roles of ciphers and dance circles as first steps in the reproduction and recreation of hip-hop meanings in the social circles of French youth. On the other hand, she notes that, before being a set of representations or meanings, hip-hop dance was appropriated as a 'technique of the body' (Mauss 1936, cited in Milliot and Noûs 2020:), that is, as an 'attitude' and a style. The observation of the logics of improvisation, performance, and challenge in dance circles allows her to understand how this globalized dance culture has 'resonated in the French working-class suburbs as a way of being to oneself and of being in the world that is specific to the cultures of the "'fragile life"' (Milliot and Noûs 2020:). Before the institutionalization and inclusion of hip-hop in cultural industries, the situated bodily practices and embodiment of hip-hop moves, relations and attitudes accompanied the development of a subculture (Hebdige 1979) allowing resistance to be expressed to dominant values, while remaining 'vertiginously polysemic and labile' (Milliot and Noûs 2021).

Although I investigated the circulation of a very different type of music and dance genre, I also noticed the core importance of dance circles as moments in the simultaneous reproduction and recreation of bodily techniques. For instance, *sabar* dance practices are mostly shared and transmitted through concrete face-to-face encounters and performances. The sounds and images of this music-dance genre certainly circulate via digital means, through documentary films or reportage, and more recently through social media and YouTube, which participated in the diffusion of *sabar* activities and moves at least from the end of the 2000s. The Covid pandemic, with its ban on social dance activities and dance schools, further increased the trend for

[13] Bruce Kapferer contributed greatly to renewing the understanding of this epistemological perspective. Noticing how social situations were often used as a simple illustration of the processes being described, he advocated going 'toward the exploration of the event as a singularity in which critical dimensions can be conceived as opening to new potentialities in the formation of social realities.' Following this 'Deleuzian perspective,' the social is 'a complex emerging and diversifying multiplicity that is enduringly open and not constrained within some kind of organized, interrelated totality of parts, either as real (existent), imagined, modeled, or projected' (Kapferer 2010: 214).

[14] The notion of social situations itself is often used interchangeably with the notion of an event by some heirs of the Manchester school and situational analysis, including Bruce Kapferer (Kapferer 2010). On the relevance of event analysis in multicultural contexts, see Amiotte-Suchet and Salzbrunn 2019.

online classes and the digitalization of connections within this network. However, a majority of dancers also rejected the idea of learning or teaching dance online. They were convinced that online events could not replace the sensitive and physical connection occurring through dancers' and musicians' strong kinesthetic interactions, and they did not see this as an efficient way of learning. For *sabar* as for other music-dance genres, performance moments contribute to the permanent making of communities of practice and the transmission of dance meanings and conventions.

Here, as in the case of the hip-hop dance described by Virginie Milliot (Milliot and Noûs 2020), the embodiment of *sabar* body techniques and knowledge is a means of learning and asserting certain 'attitudes,' values, and modes of interaction that are considered properly 'Senegalese' among the participants. However, contrary to hip-hop, *sabar* dance circles are not only moments of socialization among peers — i.e. Senegalese dancers and musicians in the diaspora — as they also represent sites of encounter, teaching and the co-construction of meanings between participants of different origins, often categorized by participants themselves as 'Senegalese' and 'Europeans' (even though artists and students will both establish more national and regional distinctions within this broad category).[15] The analysis of dance situations highlights how the improvisational dance system that is *sabar* is not only reproduced, but also recreated through and for the inclusion of these French and Swiss participants.

In Senegal, *sabar* dances are performed during dance meetings that take place in the streets or courtyards, during the day or at night (Seye 2014, Neveu-Kringelbach 2013a). Already in Dakar, these performances gather together a wide number of participants – amateurs and professionals, men and women, local and foreigners – and they constitute core events in the making of this art world. These moments of performances have been moved by *sabar* artists and by the Senegalese themselves through their migrations, to be launched as one of the meetings of diasporic associations, or in dance workshops and lessons (Aterianus-Owanga 2018). Dance classes and *sabar* ceremonies, such as *tànnëbéer*,[16] thus become sites of the permanent adjustment of meanings and gestures in order both to respect the core conventions of the dance and to transform them so they make sense to the new audience. I will elaborate further on these aspects in the following section by providing a concrete example.

Adapting *sabar* meanings in situations

In October 2020, a small village in French-speaking Switzerland hosted a *sabar* dance weekend during the Covid-19 pandemic. The three-day workshop was presented as an 'immersion' into Senegalese culture and *sabar* by means of dance and drum workshops, a night performance and party, and the serving of Senegalese dishes. Whereas *sabar* workshops often occur in Swiss cities downtown, the idea here was to provide an intensive learning experience based on a mixture of Senegalese dances, music and food in a traditional Swiss landscape. The organizers, a Senegalese dancer and his Swiss wife, had the novel idea of playing music and dance as late as they wanted by holding the workshop in a nuclear bunker, of which there are a number in Switzerland.[17] Furnished with a large amount of bedding in common dormitories, a kitchen and a room that could be used as a dance hall (despite the concrete floor), the location allowed the different participants to come together to play music, teach dance, and forget the problem of the sanitary restrictions for three days.

[15] See, for example, an online video where solos are presented as a battle between 'Europeans' and 'Africans' (Yaye Dib TV 2020).

[16] The word *tànnëbéer* refers in Wolof to a night ceremony where *sabar* is played and danced, generally in the streets or in a courtyard.

[17] Swiss law requires the provision of a nuclear bunker for each dwelling construction.

The main elements of this immersive *sabar* weekend consisted in the dance workshops that occupied the three days and the evening party, which included a *sabar* ceremony on the model of a *tànnëbéer*. They both proved to be interesting moments to observe the entanglement of meanings at stake during the event and the adaptation of *sabar* rules to new social situations. During one of the daily workshops, the dancer Khadim Thioune, who lives in the south of France, started his class by reminding his students that in Senegal he used to be the choreographer of a famous group. There, he directed many dancers who now live in Europe, including Mbaye Sall, the organizer of this weekend. Through this reference to his status as a respected choreographer in Senegal, he displayed his professional status and wide experience of dance to his European students. He also summoned the memories of the long-term friendship, solidarities, and connections he shared with other Senegalese who were present at the workshop, and who now live in European countries (namely Switzerland, Germany, and France).

Later, he explained his commitment to teaching students how to improvise in dance circles, as Senegalese people do in 'real' Senegalese *sabar* parties and *tànnëbéer*, rather than just demonstrating choreographies. Khadim is one of the *sabar* teachers in Europe who have changed their teaching in order to give more importance to improvised dance and solos. Rather than just transmitting choreographies, these *sabar* instructors teach the moves with which to enter into the circle with the right steps and attitudes, to select the appropriate moves according to the rhythm being played, and to develop and end their dance sequences smoothly by having a playful relationship with the musician. This teaching reform is based on two main elements. First, it results from the teachers' interactions with some of their students who had travelled to Senegal and were willing to engage more closely with the genuine performances observed in Senegalese dance circles. Second, it emerged from the impulse given by teachers who criticized the 'Western' conception of teaching that was based on the centrality of choreography (Aterianus-Owanga 2021).

This new impulse was demonstrated during the workshop mentioned above and entangled with the social dynamics of this local dance network. At one point in the class a circle formed, and students tried their improvisatory skills with the musicians. One white Swiss woman, married to a Senegalese dancer who was present, was applauded by the musicians for her successful solo. It was full of play with the musicians and of the dance tricks that the musicians enjoy, as it allows them to play with musical phrases. She and her husband were both acclaimed for her successful solo, proof of the progress in her dance and her ability to use *sabar* as a playful language and self-expression with her Senegalese 'brothers in law.' As often during similar events, parts of the workshop and the solos were recorded and shared on Facebook, which helps to promote events and dancers in the broad network of *sabar* that is split between Europe and Senegal.

Later that day, the evening party also encapsulated moments of performance: the party began with a contemporary dance creation by a Senegalese male dancer and a Swiss female dancer, followed by a music session by a Swiss DJ who played popular African songs like Youssou Ndour's hits, or the popular South African song 'Jerusalema'. The main event at the party, however, was the *tànnëbéer*, which partly reproduced and respected the structure of a Senegalese *tànnëbéer*. In particular, it had in common the preliminary musical phrases that are supposed to protect the drums and drummers, the succession of rhythms — as in a Dakar ceremony — and the same type of oral speeches from the musicians. In addition, both the Senegalese dancers and their Swiss students wore same glossy and elegant outfits that the Senegalese used to wear during *tànnëbéer*s, whether in rich African *bazin* or tailor-made waxed clothing, and they trained to perform solo improvised interactions with the musicians. At one point, a dancer

stood up and explained that it was customary in Senegal to thank the musicians' and griots' families by giving them a money note. To comply with this tradition, he gave fifty euros to his friends; he was then followed by some Swiss and French students, who ended their solos by giving small notes to the musicians.

Despite some similarities, as the students were not all familiar with *sabar* dancing, the ceremony did not last as long as parties in Dakar, and after most of the participants had tried their skills once or twice, the *tànnëbéer* came to an end. The party finished with the usual rhythm '*Lëmbël*', which is accompanied by a sensual hip roll. On this occasion, one of the Senegalese female dancers called the European women onto the dance floor to show them how to roll their hips properly to the rhythm. After the *tànnëbéer* the DJ's performance continued, and some couples consisting of Senegalese artists and their Swiss students started to get closer to each other on the dance floor.

This short description offers some elements to envisage the transmission and arrangement of meanings and relationships at stake during performances of *sabar* in migration. While the music and dance structures or bodily aesthetics partly remain the same, their meaning and the social relationships established in the *tànnëbéer* are different. In this context, *sabar* events are not a means of the construction of Senegalese female identities as in Dakar, nor an expression of Senegalese nationhood as in community events in the diaspora. Instead, they become a site of inclusion for the new members of this art world, leading to a social situation in which different experiences and understandings of the dance overlap. For some of the Swiss and French women involved, learning *sabar* and successfully executing their solos is conceived as proof of an impulse to seek 'self-achievement', of learning about themselves through dance, building their confidence and self-esteem so that they know how to enter into the circle and 'speak' through their dance moves with the musicians. For other students who emphasize their African origins, the experience of dance might be related to an impulse to return to their 'African roots' and culture. For the Senegalese musicians and dancers involved, these moments are synonymous with a mixture of memories of Senegal encapsulated in the listening and synaesthesia of *sabar*, of fun and pleasure related to dance, of pride in seeing their knowledge of the dance being promoted and enjoyed by foreigners, and of a more pragmatic professional duty of teaching their skills. Thanks to the agreement on common codes of dance and music interactions, *sabar* dance performances ultimately become the mediating cement of a community of practices that is bonded by diverse transactions: economic, kinaesthetic, emotional, and intimate.

In addition to the tracking of mobilities, collaborations, and interactions that are played out in *sabar* social networks and worlds, in-depth descriptions and observations of social situations provide a precious understanding of the reinvented meaning of these dance practices, a crucial entry into the mechanisms of the transmission of codes, emotions, and relationships that are replayed through performance. As such, an analysis of social situations nuances our understanding of the 'real stuff' that allows this art world to connect.

Conclusion: art worlds in the interstices of the local/global debate

This paper has described how the study of music and dance in migration might contribute to long-lasting epistemological and methodological debates about the ability to address the links between the 'here and now' of fieldwork and the broader networks, scales, institutions, and forces that contribute to shaping the social spaces we investigate. Even though I do not claim to give a clear-cut answer to this complex issue, I have attempted to show how current ethnographies of the 'ordinary' networks of artists in mobility could provide some elements of discussion that overcome the pitfalls of a simple conception of music and dance circulation in terms of the local-global dichotomy.

Having recalled the existence of ancient connections between the social sciences of migration and the anthropology of music, I described how recent research on music and dance tackled the making of art worlds in transnational migratory contexts. Whereas institutionalized music and dance worlds tend to be considered as fields structured by issues of power and domination, the approach that is centred on collaborations, interactions and circulations between different actors, places, networks, and values allows us to consider the complex overlapping of the different values that are articulated in this transnational network as variously organized, depending on their local rooting. Finally, I suggested that, beyond the social space of the art worlds, the understanding of cultural meanings, aesthetics, and knowledge that are shared within these spheres require a conceptualization of art worlds that is complemented with a more grounded approach to the events and 'generic moments' (Kapferer 2010) that make those art worlds 'hold together,' particularly in the case of dance.

In conclusion, I would like to revisit the initial discussion: Do we really need the local/global 'concept-metaphor' (Moore 2004) to understand the social groups, the dynamics of cultures and the power issues that are at stake in art worlds in migration? It is by investigating the realm of ordinary, underground and inter-individual dance worlds that we see how the ideas of the local and the global might eventually remain present as emic notions in the field. Besides, in some cases, the concept of the 'local' might remain relevant in addressing some of the 'phenomenological property of social life' (Appadurai 2018:107). As for the global, this could still be used to describe a certain level of the spreading of cultural forms, paradigms, and ideologies that have been sunk 'globally,' such as neo-capitalist economies and industries. However, most of the time the idea of a world-system looks inefficient, if not inadequate, if we aim at understanding the complex social and cultural makings of social worlds in everyday life, as this creates more vagueness and shortcomings than understanding the different configurations and forces involved. Conversely, the anthropology of migration, and even before that, the pioneer anthropologists of social transformation, devised tools and reflected on mediating the opposition, without shrugging off the issue of power relationships and systemic inequalities. With these tools (art worlds and social situations), the anthropology of music and dance in migration might find the methodologies and epistemologies it needs to overcome the local/global dichotomy and explain how art worlds are built in its interstices.

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West African performers and the art of navigating interrupted mobilities

by **Hélène Neveu Kringelbach** (University College London)

Abstract

In the 1990s and early 2000s, much of the scholarship on the performing arts celebrated the new insights afforded by the transnationalism paradigm and the 'mobilities' turn. There was both enthusiasm and concern about the intensified global circulation of people, things, ideas, and capital, as well as art forms. New research questioned whether these 'mobilities' reinforced the postcolonial world order, or whether they had the potential to make more visible previously marginalized artistic forms, a case in point being the debates on who 'world music' really empowered (cf. Stokes 2004). Since then, there has been a growing recognition that a focus on mobility in its multiple forms risked obscuring important aspects of the 'social life' of art worlds. There is a need to reconsider the relationship between mobility and immobility, between moving and 'staying put' at different stages of artistic lives. How have migration regimes, which have increasingly aimed at keeping people from the Global South away from the Global North, shaped what performing artists do? How have West African dancers and choreographers in particular addressed the migration issue? Do we need to rethink the temporality of our studies? Drawing on ongoing research with performing artists in Senegal and in migration contexts since 2002, this article argues that much can be learned from the ways in which artists deploy long-term strategies to navigate a world in which their work is valued, but from which their bodies are largely excluded.

Keywords: West African dancers, immobility, migration regimes, performing arts, Senegal

Introduction

In 2019, I took a small group of students to an event organized by my colleague Jenny Mbaye at the City University in London. As an expert on musical industries in Senegal, she had invited one of Senegal's most experienced rappers, Keyti, to come and speak about an initiative he and fellow rapper Xuman had launched some years previously, namely the *Journal Rappé Télévisé* (JRT). The JRT is a televised news programme performed in rap style, alternating between Wolof, Senegal's main language, and French. To everyone's disappointment, we ended up watching Keyti virtually from Dakar: he had applied for a UK visa a month earlier, but had yet to receive a reply. In a subsequent conversation, Keyti gave me his interpretation of European immigration regimes: for him, making it difficult for even well-travelled musicians like him to obtain a visa was part of a broader strategy to maintain the illusion of Europe's dominance in the world order by staging the performance of an 'invasion' from the Global South. The reality, he explained, was that Europe was falling behind and that, when migrating, Africans were increasingly looking to other destinations, including within the continent. I was reminded once again of the many occasions when performers I knew had had their touring plans either curtailed or destroyed altogether by visa refusals or delays.

Of course, there are many other factors involved in the gradual creation of 'Fortress

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Europe' since the 1970s, with its radical tightening of travel restrictions and immigration rules from the early 2000s onwards. Migration scholars have analysed these different factors, from economic imperatives and a desire to protect welfare regimes for citizens in times of fiscal austerity to the control of borders being perceived as one of the few remaining domains through which states can exercise national sovereignty (Guiraudon and Lahav 2000; Dauvergne 2004). What became especially dramatic for West African citizens and others was the emergence of coordinated, increasingly restrictive EU-wide migration policies from the 1980s onwards, a domain soon legitimised by a growing discourse linking migration with threats to the security of European nations (Guiraudon 2003). Within this context, especially relevant are the analyses of anthropologists like De Genova (2013), who have argued that border enforcement in the contemporary period involves a strong performative dimension which then conceals the exploitation of migrants classified as 'illegal.' De Genova (2013: 1183) adds that the spectacle of border enforcement, with its multiple actors and 'choreography of images,' also serves to naturalize the idea that some foreign bodies, especially those racialized as non-white, deserve to be excluded on the grounds that they are likely to have violated the law. Artists like Keyti produce their own theorization of border regimes, which draws on a combination of lived experience, conversations with peers and their own research. Keyti may have a point, then, when he speaks of migration control as 'performed.' For performance has its own agency: as De Genova argues, it naturalizes and conceals, but it also has the power to shape reality by showing possible alternatives, as well as expand the boundaries of the possible – which is what musicians and choreographic artists do.[1]

Other scholars have written about migration regimes and the spectacles deployed by states to legitimize them. As Salzbrunn and Rodriguez Quinones suggest in the introduction to this special issue, however, much less has been written on how performers may attempt to subvert these regimes. In recent years, studies have emerged which focus precisely on artistic responses to restrictive migration regimes. In her work on Palestinian contemporary dance, for example, Rodriguez Quinones (2022) has shown how, in a global context in which artists who find themselves in the status of refugees or asylum-seekers find it almost impossible to cross borders to engage in collaborative projects, choreographers such as the Palestinian Farah Saleh have drawn on personal stories of flight and dispossession to engage audiences in the lived experience of refugeehood. The present contribution situates itself within this growing strand of work. The questions I ask are the following. How have migration policies, which have increasingly aimed to keep people from the 'Global South' away from the 'Global North,' shaped what performing artists do? How have West African choreographic artists in particular addressed the migration issue? And do we need to rethink the temporality of our studies? Drawing on ongoing research with performing artists in Senegal and in migration contexts since 2002 and on recent interviews with West African choreographers, this article argues that much can be learned from the strategies artists deploy both on- and offstage to navigate a world in which their work is valued, but from which their bodies are largely excluded. I also ask whether approaching the topic through different temporalities, rather than through a snapshot, may better illuminate the relationship between mobility and the arts.

Conceptualizing mobility, immobility and the performing arts

Following the initial boom in studies of transnational migration in the 1990s, more recently migration scholars have become concerned with barriers to mobility. This is not only because it has become increasingly difficult to cross national borders, but also because mobility is a relational

[1] In this paper, the term 'choreographic artist' refers to both dancers and choreographers. In contemporary dance in particular, performers are often, to some extent, the creators of their own movement.

category which can only be properly understood in relation to its opposite. As a result, our understanding of the relationship between migration and the arts must integrate the absence of mobility too.

As Martiniello (2022) has explained, until the 1990s artistic practices were relatively neglected in Migration Studies. For him, this gap reflected the focus on migrants as workers in Europe since WWII, when migrants' 'cultural activities and participation were almost totally ignored.' In this context, 'the idea that [migrants] could have artistic tastes or that they could be artists, in addition to being manual workers, was not taken seriously' (Martiniello 2022: 1). This began to change radically with the explosion of studies of transnationalism, globalization and mobility from the 1990s onwards.

Where music and dance are concerned, scholarship has been articulated around two key concerns. First, scholars have looked at the circulation of musical and choreographic practices, and that of the artists themselves, as the very embodiment of globalization (Toynbee and Dueck 2011; White 2012). In the 1980s and 1990s, this strand of studies was mostly focused on music, for the creation of the World Music phenomenon raised obvious questions of power, appropriation and copyright. Did the creation of globalized markets for musics from the Global South help to redress the historical inequalities caused by centuries of colonialism, or did World Music simply reproduce exploitative relationships, often inadvertently? Following heated debates on the matter, many studies found that both aspects could co-exist within the same context.[2] Studies of globalization and transnationalism in dance generally came a little later, one of the most influential being Helena Wulff's (1998) study of transnational culture in the world of classical ballet. More recently, Altaïr Despres (2016) has looked at the emergence of contemporary dance in Africa from the early 1990s onwards as an instance of cultural globalization driven by a combination of French foreign policy and the specific interests of individual African and European choreographers, performers, French state officers and festival organisers. Despres (2016: 16) rightly points out that, although contemporary dance on the continent largely owes its success to the ways in which Africans have appropriated it as a set of 'dispositions' through which social and spatial mobility can sometimes be achieved, there is also continuity with older forms of colonial domination in the ways in which French interests have driven much avant-garde choreographic work in Africa.

Secondly, and in a closely related way, this scholarship has focused on how migration shapes musical and choreographic production (Baily and Collyer 2006; Ramnarine 2007; Kiwan and Meinhof 2011; Toynbee and Dueck 2011; Reed 2016; Aterianus-Owanga, Djebbari, and Salzbrunn 2019). This body of work has built on an enduring concern with processes of transformation and continuity in migration contexts: how do cultural practices become transformed by the migration of individuals and communities throughout the entire transnational space with which they engage? Why is it that music has been 'one of the most resilient aspects of migratory and immigrant cultures' (Bohlman 2011: 156)? It has become increasingly evident that artists and their practices shed new light on the very ways in which transnational lives are created, maintained or interrupted. For example, several of the contributions in Aterianus-Owanga, Djebbari and Salzbrunn's (2019) special issue entitled 'Danses, musiques et (trans)nationalismes' show that, as choreographic genres, performers or dance participants circulate across national borders, processes of national identification and feelings of national belonging may be either reinforced or, on the contrary, undermined. In a different field, the papers in Capone and Salzbrunn's (2018) special issue on 'Sounding religious transnationalism' address a glaring gap in studies of religious transnationalism and demonstrate how music and sound have a specific agency in reconfigur-

[2] See Stokes (2004) for an excellent review of this field up to the early 2000s.

ing religious expressions and belonging in new territories.

Within these two intertwined themes, scholars have increasingly turned their attention to the critical agency of states (through migration regimes as well as arts funding), institutions and corporations in shaping both artistic production and the lives of artists. Despres's (2016) work, mentioned above, is a case in point in the anthropology of dance. My contribution situates itself within this growing strand of studies, but with a particular focus on the interplay between migration regimes and the artistic practices and personal tactics of West African dancers and choreographers. This perspective brings to the fore the question of what artists do when the kinds of mobility to which they aspire are out of reach, or when they experience periods of forced immobility in between journeys. In other words, my focus is on how performers from the Global South use their creativity to respond to the shared experience that the ability to travel, or even migrate, has become a scarce resource. Making the cruelty of Northern migration regimes visible from different angles (as though through an imperfect mirror) enables them to cope with the indignity of being treated as second-class citizens of the world.

In a broader sense, this contribution speaks to the relationship between the performing arts and the political. What kind of politics do performing artists from the Global South deploy when their work is directly shaped by personal experiences of forced immobility and racism? What does their work tell us about the current state of the postcolony? My aim here is to introduce a shift in focus from the agency of states to the agency of the performers themselves.

Migration regimes and the performing arts in Africa

The growing scholarly concern with immobility undoubtedly reflects an institutional environment for African performing artists which is best described as a paradox. On the one hand, state-controlled agencies like the French Institute, the OIF (Organisation Internationale de la Francophonie), the EU or Africalia (for Belgium) promote artistic practices which are inherently transnational and require individuals to travel and present their work outside the continent. On the other hand, these institutions operate within states which deploy increasingly restrictive travel and immigration policies. In many ways, these policies undermine the work of their own states' agencies. But perhaps this appears less surprising when considering the fact that state bureaucracies are by no means monolithic, and that different state agencies often develop competing or contradictory agendas. Patronage of artistic practices has thus been used strategically in French diplomacy since the early twentieth century at least (Piniau 1998), often to serve very different sets of objectives simultaneously. The involvement of the French state in the contemporary performing arts in Africa follows a similar heterogenous pattern and is in continuity with a long history of French soft diplomacy around the world. Other European states, such as Switzerland, Belgium or Spain, use funding of the arts strategically in similar ways. Seen in this light, French and other European support of contemporary performance is perfectly compatible with restrictive immigration policies: to promote artistic and cultural activities in Africa may be seen as part of a broader 'containment' agenda.

Since the 1980s, artists from the Global South have been among the casualties of the gradual death of labor migration programs. Senegal has long acted as a crossroads for contemporary dancers and choreographers from all over Africa thanks to the presence of Germaine Acogny's Ecole des Sables in Tubaab Jallaw, on the Atlantic Coast south of Dakar, and beyond this as the result of a long history of artistic exchanges going back to the colonial period or even earlier (cf. Neveu Kringelbach 2013). Doing fieldwork with performing artists in Senegal between 2002 and 2012 was therefore an ideal location from which to observe the paradox in which many were caught. On the one hand, they were more

likely than many other categories (e.g. work or tourist visas) to justify the need to travel, especially when selected to take part in festivals abroad or international tours. On the other hand, they were under ever-growing suspicion that they might be using performing circuits as migration routes. Group managers, who were often choreographers or musicians themselves, since few groups could afford the services of a professional administrator, spent considerable amounts of time filling in visa applications, gathering the required documentation, and making repeated visits to the relevant consulates for interviews,[3] sometimes from distant regions. They all lived with the anxiety of not knowing until the very last moment whether all the performers contracted for a tour would be able to leave. Several managers reported filling in group visa applications ahead of international festivals, only to be summoned to consulates and asked to 'remove migration candidates from the list', as one of them put it. They had no choice but to remove some names, regardless of the accuracy of the suspicion.

Decisions were felt to be opaque, inconsistent and arbitrary. Often visas were refused, not because the artists did not fulfil the criteria, but simply, it was rumoured, because previous applicants to a given destination had overstayed. Consulates were then mandated to reject anyone who applied for an artist visa to the same destination, at least for a quarantine period of several months. As one musician explained to me in the mid-2010s after two members of a band had stayed behind following a tour in Italy: 'You can be sure that no Senegalese artist will be given a visa to Italy for the remainder of this year.' Managers could also find themselves 'blacklisted' with specific consulates if some of their artists had failed to return home in the past. West African performing scenes brim with stories of dancers or musicians being interviewed for visa applications in consulates, only to face the humiliation of being asked to perform on the spot so that officers could check if they really *were* performers.

This general atmosphere of suspicion is not specific to performing artists: football players and other athletes have been viewed similarly as potential migrants. More generally, it has long been extremely difficult for any young African individual to obtain a visa for Europe or North America without having either significant savings in their bank accounts (one of the key requirements for most visa applications)[4] or a history of back-and-forth travel.

I only had the opportunity to interview one former French consular employee who worked in the region in the 2000s. From their testimony and from conversations with a large number of dancers, musicians and group managers, it seems clear that, for consulates, performing artists epitomized the figure of the deceitful, undeserving migrant. Whereas it is indeed the case that many performers have overstayed visas and 'vanished' during tours abroad since the early 1980s, this can be explained by the gradual tightening up of migration rules during the same period. According to my older research participants, in the 1960s and 1970s, when travel was freer, most artists returned home after touring. From the 1980s onwards, however, when it became more difficult to secure touring visas, performing artists and other young Africans began to see any opportunity for travel as potentially the last one.

This uncertainty about future mobility, combined with social expectations that young men from the region can only achieve social adulthood if they have proved themselves in distant destinations (Gaibazzi 2015; Hannaford 2017), has encouraged growing numbers of performers to run away during international tours. In Dakar I was told that, in the late 1990s, the National

[3] Nowadays visa applications to European destinations are mostly handled by private companies operating from locations separate from consulates. In the 2000s, however, consulates were still in charge of handling applications, including the individual interviews which were sometimes required before a visa could be issued.

[4] Given the high entry requirements to banking across Africa, few artists except the most successful have their own bank accounts to begin with.

Ballet of Senegal had collapsed following a US tour because most of the performers had run away and remained in the country. When I visited the National Ballet at the Théâtre National Daniel Sorano in Dakar in 2003, the then director, Bouly Sonko, told me that the rate of defection during tours abroad had become so high that the troupe was sometimes barely able to honour all its engagements. He had therefore taken to collecting the passports of performers on the way to the airport. Even without their passports, some chose to disappear anyway. Reports of such defections have in turn fuelled the suspicion that any young African artist applying for a visa might be a concealed 'migration candidate.'

By now, several decades of the tightening up of immigration policies across Europe, North America and increasingly Asia, Oceania and Latin America have left many African performers deeply frustrated with their marginalization on the global stage. On the one hand, their creative skills and artistic voices are in high demand, especially in contemporary arts circuits. This is evident in the global success, since the late 1990s, of African contemporary dance (Neveu Kringelbach 2013; Despres 2016) and that of the contemporary visual arts of Africa, fashion, and popular music from various parts of the continent. On the other hand, they deeply resent being excluded from the kind of mobility to which their artistic peers from the Global North have access. It might be slightly easier for some of them to obtain visas than it is for labour migrants or asylum-seekers, but this matters to them less than the difference from artists from Europe and North America, for after all, these are their peers. As I discuss in the remainder of this article, this sense of exclusion through forced immobility – or interrupted mobility, when journeys happen haphazardly – shapes what many performers do, both on- and off-stage. Most of my examples are centred on West Africa, since this is the context with which I am most familiar, but the portrait I sketch could be extended to other parts of the continent as well.

The rise of solo and duo work

Since the early 2000s, more and more of contemporary choreography on the continent has been focused on solo and duo work. To reflect this, the main contemporary dance event on the continent, the French-funded African Dance Biennale[5] – known as the Rencontres Chorégraphiques de l'Afrique et de l'Océan Indien from its inception in 1995, then Danse l'Afrique Danse from 2008, and now Biennale de la Danse en Afrique – created a solo category in 2008. That same year, Senegalese choreographer Alioune Diagne and his dance company, Diagn' Art, started a biennial festival of solos and duets, Duo Solo. Like the Rencontres, the festival is supported by the French Institute, the main driver behind the expansion of contemporary dance in Africa. The central place given to solos and duets in these major events has in turn fostered more small-scale choreographic work. Here I suggest that the success of this type of performance in Africa does not simply reflect broader global trends in contemporary dance, but that it is also linked to the fact that, given the context sketched earlier, artists are aware that small-scale work may, over time, facilitate mobility.

Solo and duo work have long been at the heart of contemporary dance around the world. This is largely linked to the history of this movement, which is not so much a genre as a set of creative processes through which artists do choreographic work. Although contemporary dance, sometimes designated as 'postmodern dance' in the US, has crystallized into different styles, and although choreographers have positioned themselves against different movement traditions in different countries, contemporary dance everywhere has followed post-WWII experiments in the US with an emphasis on experimental and individualized work happening generatively in the studio (Foster 1988). Contemporary choreographers generally insist that their work exists to make audiences think, to generate discomfort

[5] For a history of the African Dance Biennale, see Neveu Kringelbach (2013) and Despres (2016).

which can be transformative for the individual as well as on the social level, and not simply to entertain. Breaking norms and boundaries established within previous genres has been at the heart of the genre since Merce Cunningham and composer John Cage's groundbreaking pieces in the 1940s, and later the New York-based Judson Theatre's collective experiments in the 1960s. This kind of work has generally foregrounded the choreographic agency of the individual performers involved, with the choreographer doing preliminary research. In contemporary dance, the choreographer often acts more as a generator of ideas and a creative guide than as someone who creates all the moves, though their degree of creative control varies considerably depending on individual inclination. In West African dance scenes, the creative agency that performers enjoy is one of the reasons behind the attractiveness of contemporary dance, particularly the explosion in solo work (Neveu Kringelbach 2013, 2014). But there are other factors at play too, some of which pertain to the question of mobility.

Globally, one of these factors has been a move away from states subsidizing the arts from the 1980s onwards, following the neoliberal reforms imposed by major multilateral institutions such as the World Bank and the IMF (International Monetary Fund). If this has represented a radical shift in postcolonial nations where the arts had occupied a central place in nation-building projects, such as in Senegal, Guinea, Nigeria or Tanzania, similar developments have happened more discreetly around the world, where the performing arts have been pushed further into the 'gig economy.' This has been felt particularly keenly in such liberal economies as the US and the UK, where artists have been forced to reinvent themselves as mobile, nimble entrepreneurs able to work on time-limited projects. In African contexts, these neoliberal developments have combined with the impossibility for bigger groups to travel, and have fostered the emergence of solo and duo performance.

In addition to this broader political and economic context, even more significant perhaps is a factor that is more specific to African choreographic scenes: the agency of European funding institutions like the French Institute and of international presenters such as festival organizers, theatre directors and choreographers in search of fresh performing talent. These all act as gatekeepers, and one of the key venues for them to spot talent is the African Dance Biennale. It is at such events that they enjoy watching solo or duo performances, and speaking to choreographers about the creative process afterwards. In the words of a French festival organiser with whom I spoke at the 2012 Biennale in Johannesburg (then called Danse l'Afrique Danse):

> I come here because I want to see a solo, and then I want to be able to sit with the choreographer for 2-3 hours and find out what kind of person they are, what they've got in the stomach. That's what I can't do with videos, that's why I'm here.

Undoubtedly, such small-scale, intimate pieces also address a desire to express individual creativity and to comment on the state of the world; but the gaze of international presenters has also fostered the production of solo and other small-scale pieces for international audiences.

Burkinabé dancer and choreographer Serge Aimé Coulibaly, for example, created his first solo, *Minimini*, a piece on the topic of freedom of expression, in 2002. Four of the twelve pieces in his repertoire are solos, some of them among his most recent creations.[6] Congolese choreographer Andreya Ouamba, established in Senegal since 1999, where he set up dance company 1er Temps in 2001, won the first prize at the 2006 'Rencontres' in Paris with a duet called *Improvisé 2*. The piece was performed with Senegalese dancer-choreographer Fatou Cissé, now herself an established choreographer with several solos to her name. In subsequent years, Ouamba was one of several choreographers who drew my attention to the link between small-scale work

[6] An overview of Coulibaly's repertoire is available at **https://www.fasodansetheatre.com/fr/serge-aime-coulibaly/**

and the question of mobility. After an unfortunate experience during a European tour, when some of his dancers vanished along the way, Ouamba declared that he would now focus on solos and duets so as to avoid the anxiety-inducing uncertainty of being able to honor his engagements abroad.

Solo choreography has also worked as a calling card for performers aspiring to do residencies at choreographic centres in Europe or at dance departments in North American universities. Such residencies are highly desirable, not only for the income they may generate, but also because they represent some of the best opportunities to engage with global performing networks without actually settling abroad. Invitations often materialize after centre directors and university dance practitioners have witnessed someone's solo work during an event or a visit to the choreographer's home environment, where solo work showcases the kind of work an artist might perform during a residency. In North American university settings, choreographic residencies are usually structured around a principle of exchange, with the guest dancer-choreographer being given the time, facilities and payment in return for master classes, choreographic work with students, and sometimes developing a piece of their own.

The rise of solo and duo work since the early 2000s, then, was fostered by a combination of a desire to showcase individual agency on the part of choreographic artists and the power of funding bodies and the infrastructures of neoliberal capitalism to push artists into reframing their work as a kind of small-scale entrepreneurship. It is a development that is best observed by following artists over longer periods of time, rather than viewing just a snapshot of their work at any given time.

Mobile pieces

Similarly, since the mid-2000s, like their European counterparts, West African artists have developed what I call 'mobile pieces.' This is choreographic work designed to be relatively quickly adapted to different contexts. This is a strategy Daniel Reed (2016) also observed in his monograph on the trajectories of four Ivorian performers in the US, *Abidjan USA*. Some Senegal-based choreographers whose work I have followed over the years have become increasingly explicit about this.

In 2011, I returned to Dakar as I was finishing my book manuscript on dance in the city. In the mirror-clad room near the port of Dakar where they usually rehearsed, I found Jean Tamba's Dakar-based 5e Dimension, a dance company I already knew well, at work on a piece for two dancers, a female singer and a small group of drummers. Entitled *Double Je*, the piece was an exploration of the duality Tamba explained as being present in each of us: good and bad, extrovert and introvert, and more subtly, male and female. Tamba had choreographed a number of pieces since first setting up La 5e Dimension with fellow dancer Pape Sy in 1995. But unlike his earlier, full-length pieces, this work had been conceptualized from the outset as 'mobile:' *Double Je* was fairly abstract, and did not have a linear narrative structure. Rather, it was made of up shorter sections so that each performance could be expanded or retracted according to location, type of audience, and the materiality of the stage. The musical score was only loosely connected to the choreography.

The plan was that, if the company were invited to perform abroad, only Tamba and the two dancers would travel. They would then recruit musicians at their various destinations, either among the Senegalese they already knew, or by making new connections. They were open to the possibility of modifying the score and using other instruments than the *djembe* drums they had used so far, which would have radically transformed the piece. *Double Je* was performed at the French Institute in Dakar, but never abroad; and yet, it was significant that this project came after a period of several years when most of the company's members had migrated to Europe and North America. Tamba and his remaining

dancers had no desire to leave Senegal, but they still believed that success at home required that their work be appreciated abroad. Moreover, without international touring, they struggled to make ends meet.

This approach to choreographic work resonates with widespread West African cultural values according to which making one's way in the world requires adapting one's creativity to the context. In *The Generation of Plays*, for example, a very detailed, in-depth ethnography of Yoruba travelling theatre in Nigeria, Barber (2000) shows how this genre, which emerged in Lagos in the post-WWII period and went into decline in the 1980s, drew on older Yoruba principles of open-endedness, flexibility and community participation. The plays would be expanded, contracted and otherwise transformed depending on the social context, the response of audiences, the personal experiences of the performers and the success of other plays by competing troupes. Drawing on Margaret Drewal Thompson's (1992) earlier work on Yoruba ritual, Barber argues that elements of improvisation lie at the heart of all Yoruba cultural production, albeit within the aesthetic rules of specific genres.

Over time I have observed similar principles in cultural productions in Senegal, regardless of the artists' ethnic affiliation. The Senegalese contemporary dance world, which is fairly small and only really emerged in the mid-1990s, is not divided along ethnic lines; it is more of an urban phenomenon, to which artists from different cultural backgrounds and from other parts of Africa contribute their own embodied experience. There, the open-endedness and flexibility analysed by Barber, Drewal Thompson and others in different West African contexts is thriving. Within a genre that is too often mistaken for a simple imitation or appropriation of European choreographic tools (Neveu Kringelbach 2013), therefore, choreographic artists continue to mobilize regional cultural principles to develop new art forms. The experience of forced immobility feeds into creative work in multiple ways. In the next section, I suggest that, since the mid-2000s, this has also inspired West African performers to address the enduring coloniality of migration regimes as a central theme in their work.

Centering stories about migration

For a while now in their work, West African choreographers have centered the multiple consequences of the increasing exclusion of African bodies from the Global North. Despres (2019) is among the dance scholars who have documented this phenomenon. In this section, I want to build on her analysis to suggest that African choreographic work on the theme of migration may be seen as more complex than a critique of migration regimes in the Global North: this critical work also helps African choreographers to position themselves as creative subjects who both address and disrupt what international presenters and audiences have come to expect of them.

Centering global inequalities on access to mobility does more than give artists a critical voice on one of the major issues of our time: it also allows them to make sense of their experience or that of others, while at the same time taking some distance from it. Indeed, from ongoing conversations with choreographers over the years, it seems to me that they find therapeutic value in focusing creative work on a collective experience of pain. There is a risk, however, that politically engaged, critical work may restrict the creative agency of choreographers on the continent. Although many artists want to use their creativity to provide a critical commentary on global inequalities, they do not wish to be bound by the duty to act as political commentators.

In the 1990s, many French, other European and American contemporary choreographers turned to Africa for creative renewal, travelling to Francophone West Africa in search of performers trained in different techniques, as well as creative inspiration and political critique (Neveu Kringelbach 2013; Despres 2016). Together with the French-funded African Dance Biennale launched

in 1995, these early talent seekers have helped to foster 'African contemporary dance' as an artistic movement that is partly designed to help refresh a French choreographic scene whose critical power had run out of steam (Neveu Kringelbach 2005; Despres 2016). Alongside this movement of choreographers in search of fresh inspiration and black bodies, and perhaps in a related way, there was a sense in which white European audiences, and to some extent funding bodies as well, came to expect African artists to hold a mirror up to their own discomfort about the colonial past and its legacy (Sörgel 2020). As I show later, some African choreographers, like Qudus Onikeku, have been explicit about this. But how have the dancer-choreographers who were promoted in the wake of this movement responded to what was expected of them in their turn?

In their work on migration, some of these artists have drawn on their own experiences of interrupted and sometimes traumatizing journeys. In 2008, the Senegalese dancer Pape Ibrahima Ndiaye (better known as Kaolack) won the first prize in the new solo category at the 2008 *Rencontres* in Tunis. His solo, *J'accuse,* was inspired by a painful experience of racialized border control. As he explained while introducing the piece, to apply for a visa for the Czech Republic, where he had been invited to perform, he had travelled to Morocco with a newly delivered Senegalese passport. The local authorities promptly deemed the passport a fake, and he was jailed for two days before being deported back to Senegal. The anger he carried from this experience fed into the powerful, hyper-masculine movement style which characterized his dance at the time. The score was a mix of electronic music, drumming from a Senegalese talking drum (a *tama*) and Kaolack's own spoken words, as well as his heavy breathing and verbal sounds. Kaolack performed the piece at London's Dance Umbrella festival in 2009, which had this text on the programme:

> *J'Accuse*, Danse L'Afrique Danse prize-winner (2008), is a physically and emotionally charged solo which asks important questions about the condition of the African person in a global context. Based on personal experiences of prejudice, travel restrictions and ignorance, Kaolack has created a polemical response which celebrates an African identity and confident stance in the face of an unfair world. (Dance Umbrella 2009)

In 2008-2009, with the support of the French Institute (then CulturesFrance), Kaolack performed the solo at several international venues, including the prestigious Montpellier Danse Festival. For the most part, critics raved about his expressiveness as a performer, and loved his rags-to-international-success story. His narrative about racialized travel restrictions clearly aligned itself well with a desire for heavy-hitting political criticism from the continent. When I attended the Danse l'Afrique Danse Biennale in Johannesburg in 2012, I heard two French festival directors speak in glowing terms about his stage presence in the solo (one of them had previously invited him to perform at her festival) and his critique of European neo-colonialism in Africa.

However, when I saw the piece in Dakar a few months after Kaolack had won the prize, I was struck by what I saw as a more sideways critique of European migration regimes. This was also a story about personal growth and about overcoming suffering to become a fully-fledged person. He seemed to express feelings not only of anger but also of humiliation, shame and pride combined. There were *sabar*-inspired[7] movements which I took to refer to Senegalese culture, especially since Kaolack included a spoken text in which he indicated his pride about being Senegalese, but also simply African. Moreover, the critique was not exclusively levelled at European states, but also at the complicity of African regimes. Kaolack himself made this explicit in his spoken text and in some of the press interviews he gave:

> And yet African immigration is legitimate, for neocolonialism and French policy in Africa are responsible for the very difficult situation in which we

[7] Sabar is a dance and drumming genre that I usually performed at neighbourhood events and women's gatherings throughout urban Senegal. It is strongly associated with urban culture.

> find ourselves today. The French army is still here, European companies exploit our resources and put idiots as heads of [African] governments who only think about filling up their Swiss bank accounts (Ndiaye 2008).

Similarly, in a version of the solo presented at Germaine Acogny's Ecole des Sables choreographic centre in Tubaab Jallaw around 2014, Kaolack was explicit about distributing responsibility for the repeated humiliations he and other young Africans suffered not only to Northern regimes, but also to African ones:

> As soon as an African is being deported, people usually accuse white people of racism. […] But when travelling to the Czech Republic, I had to go through Morocco to get a visa. I got my visa! But I was deported because of my passport. This same passport that had travelled all over the world thanks to my dance landed me two days in jail… and deportation back to Senegal like a simple *sans-papiers*.
> […]
> I accuse Africans of being cowardly. I accuse Africans of being stupid. I accuse Africans of everything and nothing! I accuse the Africans, the Americans, the English, everybody! […] I accuse Africans because I love Africa. I am an African. […] But one isn't born African, one becomes African. (Kaolack Arts Company 2014).

Both at the French Institute and the Ecole des Sables, Kaolack interrupted his solo halfway to walk among the audience, introducing himself by his real name, shaking people's hands, and repeating that he needed a passport and a visa before returning to the stage and resuming the dance. The piece was both playful and serious. When he did his sabar moves, I saw something of the playful teenager with an excess of energy I had seen when I first watched him dance in a schoolyard in Dakar in 2002. His text was ambiguous: on the one hand he drew on a familiar critique of Europe and its exclusion of African bodies, but on the other hand he seemed to urge Africans to replace puppet governments with regimes that would actually have their best interests at heart. There was nothing radically new in Kaolack's critique, but it was certainly more complex, and his performance was more playful than its written presentation to international audiences suggested.

West African choreographic artists have deployed very different strategies and styles in centring migration in their work. Whereas Kaolack has drawn on a specific incident to reflect on the place of Africa in the world order, Nigerian choreographer Qudus Onikeku, another key figure in the African contemporary dance movement, has chosen to address the issue of migration in a kaleidoscopic way: since 2010, he has created a range of pieces which each work as a reflection on a different aspect of mobility. Onikeku's work, which is highly conceptual and emerges out of a substantial research process, reaches far beyond his own experience. In addition, one of the underlying principles in all his pieces is an attempt to decentre the agency of Europe, whether addressing the issue of migration or other themes. In his own words, his work aspires to go beyond the postcolonial nature of the critique deployed by many of his peers. In his view, postcolonial critique all too often addresses a need for Europeans to atone for the violence of colonialism, rather than focusing on addressing the future aspirations of Africans today. In an interview in the spring of 2023, and in an uncanny echo of Keyti's words, he expressed his desire to move beyond narratives that always place 'the West' at the centre of history:

> They do not understand how that kind of past [colonialism] must have a repercussion on the present. Then they look for different ways of going around the subject. Either it is postcoloniality, postmodernity, post-dadaism, there is always a kind of -ism that we are 'posting,' always, just so we continue to go against, you know… not having the real conversation. So I said to myself, the real problem that the West is having is that it's having difficulty realizing that it's no longer the centre of the world.[8]

In this interview, we discussed two pieces Onikeku had explicitly created with the theme of

[8] Interview with Qudus Onikeku, 21st March 2023 (zoom).

mobility/immobility in mind. The first was his first ever solo, 'My Exile is in My Head', in 2010. The piece was inspired by what Onikeku describes on his website as a failed attempt to return to Nigeria from France in 2009, choreographed 'when it became clear that Nigeria had become unviable for [him] after [his] first attempt at homecoming in 2009' (The Q, n.d.). he piece was also inspired by Wole Soyinka's 1971 prison notes, 'The Man Died', in which the writer exposes the effects of solitary confinement on his own mental health. Onikeku's solo, performed to the sound of a single guitar, beautifully conveys a sense of how the deep solitude of exile can bring someone to the edges of madness. Is this a reflection on the loneliness of the person in exile, or on the impossibility of return to a place which no longer exists as those who left had imagined it? Onikeku does not give his audiences a clear answer, for this is not, in his view, what choreographic work does best. But the piece does speak to the solitude and sense of dislocation that exist in the lives of many migrants.

When we discussed the creative process, Onikeku explained that he had started with the sense of dislocation he had felt when, as a very young man, he travelled to France to study performing arts. Feeling alienated in a context in which dance was viewed more as a theoretical project than a practice and a culture, he found solace in Soyinka's writings and those of other Nigerian writers. In 2009, he returned to Lagos and tried to establish himself as an artist there, but found that the real Lagos was a far cry from the place he had cherished in his memory. He went back to France and started working on the piece. 'My Exile is in My Head' won the first prize at the 2010 Rencontres in Bamako, Mali, and subsequently toured extensively. Over months of touring, Onikeku said, he realized that the solo had enabled him simultaneously to heal the wounds of his experiences of dislocation in France and Nigeria and to find his own artistic voice.

Years later, in 2018, Onikeku followed up with Yuropa, a piece for three dancers (two men and a woman) and a musician. The title was an obvious word play between 'Yoruba' and 'Europe,' but the piece was in no way playful. Much less personal than 'My Exile', it was inspired by the highly mediatized, tragic deaths of Africans trying to reach Europe by land or sea. In Yuropa, the three dancers are dressed in rags, and it is obvious that they are migrants on a journey. The woman wears trousers and a hoodie, just like the two male dancers; they all carry small backpacks, which seem to evoke the shrinking to which their very lives have been reduced. The piece opens with the three performers looking at long lists of papers under a torch, reading the names of deceased migrants (or reading 'no name') in louder and louder voices which end up overlapping, sounding increasingly shattered by tragedy. These, Onikeku revealed, were the real names of deceased migrants. Having been deeply moved by the refugee crisis of 2015-16, when millions of Syrians were forced to flee a devastating war, he felt compelled to address the migration issue in a different way from what he had done previously, but 'without being overtly political about it.' He explained that doing research to find these thousands of names, and knowing that many more deaths remained nameless, was the first step towards humanizing the tragedy of Europe's rejection of migrants from Africa and the Middle East:

> When we politicize it [the issue of migration], then we don't even see the human inside of it. So those lists they were reading at the beginning […] these are real people, these are not numbers! Because when you say, 59,000 people have died so far in the Mediterranean Sea, it's just numbers. […] So, I said, let's find a way to humanize this story, and let's embody it, and I believe that is the only thing dance can do with any subject matter.[9]

Throughout the 45-minute piece, the dancers make their way further into the unknown, trying to stick together, but each suffering in their different ways, each isolated in their own ordeal, each at risk of losing their mind and dignity. By the end, all three are covered in blankets and

[9] Interview with Qudus Onikeku, 21st March 2023 (zoom).

have arrived somewhere, but we do not know where – have they been rescued after capsizing? Is this Europe at last? We do not even know whether these are the same individuals we saw leaving their homes at the beginning, or if they are, whether their minds are still intact. But we suspect they are not, for now their gaze is empty, and their backpacks, it turns out, were filled with nothing but worthless pieces of paper (Onikeku, Q. 2019).

What I saw in the piece before my conversation with Onikeku resonated surprisingly well with his original idea. He explained that he had conceived of the narrative as a 'combination of Yoruba and European mythology.' In the distant past, he said, Yuropa was a princess who had been kidnapped in Nigeria and forcibly brought to Europe. Subsequent generations were then compelled to go on a journey to find out what had happened to her. But they knew nothing of the journey, and nor did they know where she had been taken. The reference to the transatlantic slave trade seemed evident there, but Onikeku himself did not mention this. However, he did mention being inspired by magical realism, and also by Nigerian writer Ben Okri's notion of a journey as a metaphor, of a spiritual as much as a real journey. For Onikeku, Yuropa captures the tragedy embodied in the desire of many young Africans to make a long journey to become real persons and to acquire wisdom. Ultimately, however, in today's world their quest is likely to be denied through the closure of borders. And just like the dancers in Yuropa, they may capsize and never arrive anywhere. Should they 'finish that journey,' Onikeku says, they will be 'a completely changed person for ever.' Indeed, by the end of Yuropa, the performers are so transformed that we are no longer sure whether they are the same people who left in the first place.

Less explicit than Kaolack's, and invoking both mythology and magical realism, Onikeku's migration-inspired work seems to address the fundamental loss of humanity border regimes impose on Africans attempting journeys to Europe, or even travelling back (for example, through deportation). But both have produced work that is meant to unsettle audiences and make them reflect on migration and immobility in a different way. In both cases too, the pieces are more complex and open-ended than a cursory look at printed programmes might indicate. As suggested at the start of this section, West African choreographers like Kaolack and Onikeku put forward a critique of the immobility that is forced upon many young Africans, but in their own view, at least, it does not follow the kind of straightforward postcolonial commentary which has come to be expected of them. They play with the expectations of largely white international audiences, fulfilling them while also disrupting them, and they attempt to regain creative agency by grounding their work within their own lived experience and cultural heritage.

Home returns and longer-term trajectories

The final thread I wanted to draw from the interplay between migration regimes and contemporary dance in Africa is that of the spatial trajectories artists develop to navigate a world of interrupted mobilities. Whereas some develop longer-term tactics to achieve mobility, others simply make choices on the basis of previous experiences.

When I first started fieldwork in the dance world in Dakar in 2002, I had not anticipated that my research would have much to do with migration. It soon became clear, however, that this was an outward-looking world in which most artists aspired to be free to travel and return home rather than migrate permanently. Given the difficulty of achieving this collectively, some dance groups discussed plans to make their way abroad as individuals, and to re-group when the opportunity arose (Neveu Kringelbach 2013). What I had not fully appreciated at the time was how long it would take for some of them to achieve their dream and how it would affect those who had failed.

The fate of one dance company whose work I have followed over many years is instructive in this respect. During one of the group's regu-

lar meetings in 2002, they all agreed that they would not achieve success until they had established a base abroad. In the previous two years the group had missed several opportunities to perform at festivals abroad after visas – sometimes simple transit visas through France – were refused. The solution to their growing feeling of being 'stuck,' they argued, was to make their way abroad individually; from wherever one of the members would manage to establish a stable base, they would then help the others by arranging tours and teaching opportunities, and the group would be freer to move. However, having witnessed many of his peers leave during international tours and end up unable to do serious work as artists, the choreographer discouraged them from leaving undocumented. If they were to leave, he explained, they ought to avoid 'going on an adventure' (*partir* à *l'aventure*), for this would undermine their artistic careers altogether. Twenty years later, it seems to me that the strategy laid out all those years ago has worked well for some individuals, but failed for the group as a whole. Within the ten years following the original meeting, all of the eight to ten original performers except two had settled in various European and North American countries. From there, most had managed to resume part-time careers as dancers or musicians, all the while retraining in other professions to make ends meet (painter-decorators or construction workers for the men, and childminders, cleaners or retail assistants for the women). The two members left in Dakar recruited and trained new, younger performers, some of whom eventually made their way abroad as well, but the original group never reformed. As I returned to Senegal over the years (most recently in February-March 2020, at the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic), it seemed to me that the vitality of those left behind was ebbing away. Of course, we had all aged, but there was also resentment towards those who had left but had failed to help their peers be invited for artistic residencies and other engagements. Even worse, those who had chosen to stay sensed that their families and friends, as well as younger performers in Dakar, wondered why they had not left when there had still been time for a career abroad. 'People talk behind my back about how I'm stuck, how I never get anywhere,' one artist confessed with sadness.

Other groups, however, have managed to continue to work together after some of their members migrated individually. Senegalese dancer-choreographer Simone Gomis, for example, established her own dance company, Tenane, in Dakar in 2007. The company then consisted of Gomis and her three sisters, dancers Marie-Pierre, Evelyne and Marie-Agnès. Over the years, three of the four sisters moved to different European countries through marriage, but the group continued to perform together at various international festivals and art fairs such as the MASA (*Marché des Arts du Spectacle d'Abidjan*) in 2018.

In many ways, these trajectories are in continuity with historical strategies of mobility in much of West Africa, which have intensified from the 1980s onwards: in this region, migration has long been a collective project funded and facilitated by families. Where performers differ from other categories of migrants, however, is that in order to develop their artistic careers they need to do far more than simply move abroad and stay put: they need to achieve the kind of legal status and resources that will allow them to travel freely, either back 'home' or to other destinations. As Onikeku explained, had he not been able to leave Nigeria in the 2000s, 'there would be no Qudus today; [he] would have done something else.' In many cases, this precious ability to come and go is achieved through marriage with a resident abroad. That is not to say that artists marry for the exclusive purpose of moving to their spouse's country of origin, but most of the performers I have encountered in Senegal since the early 2000s and who have since settled legally outside Africa were able to do so through marriage. In the absence of alternative routes, marriage and artistic projects are often closely intertwined.

Alongside these movements away from the continent, since the early 2000s a growing num-

ber of West African performers who had left previously have moved back in ways that are somewhat different from the more permanent kind of return policy-makers usually envisage when devising return incentives. Their movement fits well with recent research on return migration, which argues that decisions to return often hinge on the possibility of remaining mobile in the future (e.g. Flahaux 2017). In other words, where the home country enjoys relative political stability, migrants are more likely to return if they know that they can leave again or continue to travel back and forth without losing their right to do so. But for them to trust that this will be possible, there must be avenues towards permanent settled status in the country to which they had migrated.

Some West African choreographic artists have managed to establish choreographic centres in their countries of origin, all the while maintaining a home abroad. Looking at individual trajectories, this movement seems to have been facilitated by the emergence of contemporary dance on the continent. In the 1980s and 1990s, those West African neo-traditional dancers and musicians who had legal status and had been travelling back on a regular basis and funding their trips by bringing groups of European students for workshops settled in Europe. This was especially popular in places like Senegal and Ghana. But a handful of contemporary choreographers have been able to perform a return of a different kind: by setting up their own artistic structure 'back home,' they have returned with a far higher status among their peers than the workshop organizers had ever managed.

In 2006, for example, Burkinabè dancer-choreographers Salia Sanou and Seydou Boro established their Centre de Développement Chorégraphique (CDC) La Termitière, in Ouagadougou. This followed a decade during which both dancers had been employed at French choreographer Mathilde Monnier's prestigious, state-funded Centre Chorégraphique de Montpellier. With the technical, administrative and financial support of Monnier's company, the CDC La Termitière soon became one of the main centres for contemporary dance in Africa (Despres 2016). The centre has organised regular professional workshops, as well as its own biennial festival, Dialogues de Corps, one of the key events in the African choreographic circuit.[10] In 2018, migration under the heading 'Territoires Imaginaires et Migration' was the festival's main theme, and the event received support from the UNHCR (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees). Both Sanou and Boro share their time between Burkina Faso and France, which allows them to continue to work with French artists, administrators and funders, while at the same time training new generations of dancers in Africa (the CDC attracts performers from all over Africa, as well as from outside the continent) and enjoying the status that comes with this position of 'elders' in the profession. Other choreographic artists have taken parallel initiatives in other countries. Congolese choreographer Faustin Linyekula also returned to the DRC (Democratic Republic of Congo) in 2006 and established a choreographic centre there, the Studios Kabako in Kisangani. In 2014, Qudus Onikeku set up his own centre, QDance Center, in Lagos. Onikeku describes the centre as a 'social enterprise, an incubator, which applies artistic competence, human resources, innovation and creativity, as capacities for development solutions in a changing world.' (The Q. n.d.).

These artists are all male, reflecting the ways in which young men were given the best opportunities in the early days of contemporary dance on the continent, in the 1990s and 2000s. Moreover, they all draw on the resources and networks they have developed during prolonged stays in Europe and North America. And through the workshops they now offer, their initiatives expand the boundaries of choreography to also include music, theatre, the visual arts, pedagogy,

[10] The latest edition, the 13th of its kind, took place in December 2020 in spite of the travel restrictions caused by Covid-19: **https://www.artistesbf.org/dialogues-de-corps-13eme-edition/**. Accessed 5th June 2022.

or such practical skills as conceptualizing a project and applying for funding.

Many of these initiatives to establish structures on the continent have benefitted greatly from the artistic networks and newly gained management skills migrant dancers brought back with them. In some cases, these networks were facilitated by the additional skills of their spouses or partners. It also matters, of course, that many European festival organisers, theatre directors and other presenters, as well as funding agencies, now insist on supporting artists with a base in Africa. In conversations I had with such presenters at the 2012 'Rencontres' in Johannesburg, several of them explained that they wanted to support choreographers on the continent rather than in the diaspora. What counts as being established 'on the continent' is, of course, ambiguous, but having an active centre usually reassures presenters and funding agencies that their support will help to train future generations of artists in Africa and will therefore continue to make fresh talent available to them over the longer-term. Similarly, in a conversation in Brussels in 2015, then the then director of Africalia, Frédéric Jacquemin, explained to me that the Belgian agency's Africa programmes focused on funding the kinds of costs that arts structures on the continent found nearly impossible to fund elsewhere, thereby acting in complement to the French Institute. This kind of support of Africa-based structures also fits well with a broader agenda on the part of most European states to prevent further migration: according to the logic that is increasingly deployed across Europe, aid to Africa must now contribute to the imperatives of security and the 'containing' of migration.

From the perspective of choreographic artists, however, return is not simply about attracting funding. Setting up a permanent structure in one's place of origin is hard work, it is costly, it generates huge expectations from families and peers, and it comes with a great deal of uncertainty about future sustainability. Artists therefore invest their energy and resources in these projects because they are vital to their own sense of accomplishment and to their own creative development. In addition, many are genuinely concerned with issues of transmission to the next generations of Africans.

Conclusion

In the introduction, I asked how migration regimes in the Global North were shaping what West African choreographic artists did, both on and off-stage. I also asked whether we needed to rethink the temporality of our studies altogether.

Drawing on ongoing research with West African dancers and choreographers, in this article I have argued that much could be learned from the tactics artists deploy to navigate a world in which their work is valued, but from which their bodies are largely excluded. These tactics are relevant to other areas of life too, for artists often imagine and anticipate alternative scenarios for the future. Moreover, the kind of mobility performing artists aspire to also prefigures more general aspirations. In this case, artistic aspirations to be able to move freely between Africa, Europe and other parts of the world, and to achieve career development through mobility, are not very different from those to which many other young Africans aspire. But this kind of mobility is even more urgent for choreographic artists: to them, success means having the ability to show their work live to audiences across the world and to collaborate with their peers in other places. The emergence of contemporary dance in Africa from the 1990s onwards, largely promoted by French, Belgian and other European state agencies, as well as individual choreographers and presenters, has offered new avenues and generated new expectations in this respect, albeit in a gendered way which has largely favoured male choreographers. At the same time however, contemporary performers on the continent have found it increasingly difficult to travel legally.

In this context, choreographic artists have addressed what I call their 'interrupted mobility' in various ways. It would have been impossible to do justice to them all in a short article,

and so I have given selected examples of these responses. *Firstly*, focusing on small-scale work more generally has allowed some choreographers to showcase their individual talent and to travel more easily than they might have done with larger groups; but it may also have pushed them further into the 'gig economy.' *Secondly*, some have specifically developed 'mobile' pieces composed in modular ways with a variable number of performers that are easily adaptable to new contexts. *Thirdly*, many contemporary choreographers have created pieces which directly addressed the issue of immobility in subtle ways, often quietly subverting the role of postcolonial critics that was expected of them. And *fourthly*, some have achieved a 'return' of a different kind, using the resources and networks accumulated during their time abroad to establish arts centres in their home countries. These forms of return are especially illuminating because they undermine the instrumentalizing narrative to which the first three tactics could easily be reduced. In fact, looking at the journeys of African choreographic artists over the longer term, rather than as a snapshot, shows that the tactics they deploy to achieve mobility are also about much more than migration: they are about becoming mature artists, social adults in transnational communities, and about the art of crafting lives worth living. It is only through longstanding engagement with artists in the region that such a perspective can emerge to help us deconstruct conventional narratives about dance and music in Africa.

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Power asymmetries on the Senegalese Rap Music Scene: Migrants, the Mobile and the Immobile

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Abstract

Drawing on the results of an ethnographic study conducted among artists, music producers and cultural entrepreneurs of Rap in Senegal, this article aims at exploring how migration, mobility and immobility, considered within a mobilities framework, can enlighten power asymmetries within a socially and culturally diverse 'music scene'.

The author proposes to revisit the concept of the 'music scene' in order to articulate how music is constructed as deeply rooted in a particular place, while at the same time being the site of multiple forms of mobility, revealing the dynamics between locality and mobility and the making of hierarchies of place.

Keywords: mobilities, power, music scene, Senegal, Rap

The Senegalese Rap Music Scene and Mobilities: A Brief Overview

Emerging in the late 1980s, rap gained momentum in Senegal at the end of the 1990s through acts such as Positive Black Soul, Rapadio, Wa BMG 44 and Daara J. Inspired by their American counterparts, these artists have also defended their music as being rooted in Senegalese society and as being deeply concerned with Senegalese political and social issues. The production of rap in Senegal is also affected by an intricate network of physical, social, political and economic factors (Cohen 1991) that lead local artists to produce music described as 'Senegalese rap,' an issue I will not address in detail here.[1] One of its main characteristics is being sung in Wolof, a language spoken in Senegal and the Gambia. Senegalese rap, or as it is commonly known *rap galsen,* is the product of a 'music scene,' which I define as a group of people (rap artists, producers, journalists, cultural entrepreneurs, fans, etc.), structured as a network, who collectively, but not equally, define their music in opposition to other types of music (American rap, French rap, other Senegalese music), according to norms related to the different experiences of the spaces invested in the framework of their musical practice.[2] Amidst the rapidly evolving geographies of Senegalese rap, notably due to mobility and the growing importance of the internet, Dakar and its suburbs still act as its core locality, being a space characterized by not only the concentration of artists, but also the means of production (studios), promotion (media) and performance (concert venues).

My definition of the 'music scene' has allowed me to take into consideration how *rap galsen* is collectively defined as deeply rooted in Senegal, while being the site of multiple mobilities, inter-

[1] These aspects are extensively explored in Navarro (2019a).

[2] This definition is inspired by contributions from the 'music scene': the works of Becker (1984) on art worlds as a chain of cooperation between actors, and of Bourdieu (1992) on the structure of positions in art fields.

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rogating the intricacies between locality and mobility.

Studies of Senegalese rap and migration have highlighted how Senegalese rappers use their songs as a means to warn their audience, mostly young Senegalese men, against the dangers of 'clandestine migration.'[3] In Navarro (2019b), I show how, in so doing, rappers silence their own desires to migrate and the ambivalent relations they entertain with the Western World, which they seek both to differentiate themselves from and to emulate. Most notably, the West remains the main model for music production standards, and mobilities to the United States and Europe have proven to be instrumental in achieving such standards. Many Senegalese rap artists have succeeded in setting up their own studios by buying instruments and machines (microphones, speakers, keyboards, etc.) abroad. Being signed by an international label has also implied that artists benefit from better conditions to produce, promote, perform and earn a living from their music. For many, 'exporting' Senegalese rap to the West is thus the only way to achieve some sort of success. As pointed out by Moroni (2017), geographical mobility is a valued experience in the art world, 'to such an extent that it contributes to establishing the value of an artist or a career' (Moroni 2017, 358).

Many of the rappers I interviewed in Senegal used to be part of a rap group whose members have gone abroad, whether as documented or undocumented migrants. Some of them have stayed abroad after touring with their group, while others have left Senegal for matters unrelated to their music, most notably by marrying Western women. As a result, Senegalese rap artists are now scattered in multiple countries (Moulard 2014).

Similarly, my entry to the field of Senegalese rap started in Switzerland, when I managed to speak to one of the members of Senegalese rap group Wagëblë, called Eyewitness. He gave me the phone number of his little brother, a member of the rap group Da Blessed, who was still living in Senegal. When I met him a couple of months later, he was accompanied by his Austrian wife and told me that he was moving to Austria in a few days. The group had installed a little studio in their neighborhood of Thiaroye, on the outskirts of Dakar. From the little window of the studio, one could see the beach from where fishing boats frequently departed on their way to the coasts of Spain at the peak of the mass undocumented migrations, known as 'Barça walla Barsakh' (Barcelona or death). As a scholar interested in rap and mobilities, I sought to target renowned mobile rap artists or groups. When I met the group, however, I also had to immerse myself in the field and thus agreed to meet people they wanted to put me in contact with, without being sure if it had any relevance to my study, while pursuing other contacts in order not to be co-opted by a particular network. During a period of five months, I met with artists, journalists, producers and cultural promoters, who, I soon discovered, had all experienced mobility in one way or another. Between 2015 and 2017, I encountered abroad informants I had got to know in Senegal in countries like Switzerland, Germany, the United States and France, which in turn led me to meet rappers living in those countries who were continuing to make music with Senegal in mind.

It is by looking for mobilities through informants involved in a particular activity, namely the making and promotion of Senegalese rap music, rather than by starting from a particular migratory status or national belonging, that I managed to encompass a diversity of existing mobilities, real and imagined, within a 'music scene'.

Drawing on the results of an ethnographic study conducted among rap artists, producers and cultural entrepreneurs[4] in Senegal, the aim

[3] 'Clandestine migration' (*migration clandestine*) is the term commonly used by rappers in interviews as well as in songs. See for example the compilation " Les Pirogues du Hiphop contre la Migration Clandestine" produced by Africulturban in 2008.

[4] By 'cultural entrepreneurs', I refer to people involved in the development of the music scene without being involved in processes of musical creation.

of this article is to show how the focus on diverse mobilities[5] such as migration, mobility and immobility, has allowed me to underscore the diversity of social and artistic positions within a music scene.

After briefly discussing the literature on migration and mobility, I will define the various mobilities encountered in the field, focusing on migration, mobility and immobility. In a second section, I will present three case studies that will allow me to show the intricacies between the practices of mobility and the power dynamics within a 'music scene,' as well as revealing the dynamics between locality and mobility and the making of hierarchies of place. I will conclude by discussing how the study of the 'music scene' allows one to think critically about mobility and migration studies.

Looking at mobility through the prism of the music scene

Since the 1990s, the mobility paradigm has made it possible to rethink migration, most notably by attempting to break down the distinction between 'mobility' and 'migration.' Mobility refers to the great capacity for movement of populations who benefit from reliable and rapid means of transport. It is associated with freedom, the ability to act, transgression and cosmopolitanism (Cresswell 2006). On the other hand, migration is usually associated with vulnerability and coercion. The mobility paradigm proposes to approach migration as one form of mobility among others in a field of research that 'encompasses research on the spatial mobility of humans, non-humans and objects; the circulation of information, images and capital; as well as the study of physical means of movement such as infrastructure, vehicles and software systems that enable movement and communication' (Sheller 2014: 791). Mobility is thus not only about physical practices, it also involves a dialogue between practices, perceptions and imaginary representations of movement (Ortar, Salzbrunn and Stock 2018). Nevertheless, as these authors have pointed out, research on migration and spatial mobility actually intersect very little. Furthermore, despite the desire of theorists of the 'mobility turn' to break with the dichotomy, 'mobility' and 'migration' still appear as two different and useful descriptive categories, including in my own research. I return to this topic later.

A second criticism addressed to mobility studies resides in the focus on mobility as normality, while the ability to move is still very unevenly distributed among individuals and societies (Salazar and Smart 2011). For Cresswell, inequality of access to mobility derives from 'social relations that involve the production and distribution of power' (2006: 14). Urry (2007) develops the notion of 'network capital' to emphasize the social relations to which mobility gives access. In Le Menestrel (2012), mobility provides access to different social worlds that are sources of professional opportunities. A critical approach to mobility studies also allows to pay attention to the diversity of practices and lifestyles associated with movement (Ortar, Salzbrunn and Stock 2018) and the meanings of mobility anchored in sedentariness (Adey 2006).

My doctoral dissertation (Navarro 2019a) attempted to address these criticisms while applying mobility studies to a less studied field of research: music studies and the concept of the 'music scene.' In music studies too, research has kept apart the study of mobility, as an integral part of the professional life of artists and cultural professionals, from the study of music produced in the context of migration or by migrants. In contrast, I have chosen to highlight the diversity of movements and explore them together in order to show that they can result in different outcomes in terms of prestige, power and resources. They therefore (re)produce social inequalities among individuals belonging to a 'music scene,' who already have different access

[5] I have chosen to speak about 'mobilities' in order to avoid the confusion between mobility referring to the ability to move, and mobility studies that seek to encompass other types of movement or absence of movement. Furthermore, the plural of 'mobilities' more significantly underlines its diversity.

to mobility. The concept of the music scene, first used in the work of Will Straw (1991) in relation to the study of 'popular music' in the American context, focused on the relationship between a definition of 'locality' and the production of a specific music (Bennett and Peterson 2004), allowing it to shed light on how musical universes 'originate within, interact with, and are inevitably affected by physical, social, political and economic factors which surround them' (Cohen 1991: 342). Probably because of this attachment to locality, the concept of music scene has also carried the potential to examine how art worlds (Becker 1984) exist beyond their local roots and to question their ramifications in other spaces (Le Menestrel 2012).

Migrants, the Mobile and Immobile

Distinguished according to the specifics of movement and of the time spent outside Dakar rather than in destination countries,[6] the mobilities considered in my research derive their meaning from the dynamics between spatial anchorage and displacement, between the sedentariness of some and the mobility of others, and produce transnational formations located between locality and mobility (Dahinden 2010). The three types of mobilities further distinguished in this article are migration, mobility and immobility. In the next part, I aim to define each of these mobilities as they made sense in the field, since these categories are neither natural nor permanent. Each category serves to describe the moves of a particular informant at the time of the study. Needless to say, mobilities often vary in the life course of the same informant as does his place in the music scene.

Of relevance to this study were therefore those who could be considered migrants because they did not have a permanent residence status in the core localities of *rap galsen*, namely Dakar, its suburbs, or more generally Senegal as a whole. As such, migration involves a different status compared to the other types of mobilities that are considered: the identification of the individual with migration is accompanied by a different relationship to otherness (feeling like a foreigner) and an assignment to a legal status (residence permit, student permit, etc.) (Ortar, Salzbrunn and Stock 2018).

Unlike migrants, mobile people move without changing their status as residents. Therefore, the category of mobility has been applied to informants who frequently travel abroad while keeping their residence status in Senegal. Among the mobile informants, I encountered some who travelled frequently between two states, which I call 'pendular mobility.' Others, more rarely, were involved in circular mobilities, travelling from place to place, frequently as part of a world music tour. The majority of my mobile informants were involved in 'star mobility' (Moret 2020), travelling back and forth between Senegal and diverse destinations. These diverse mobility practices imply different anchors both in Senegal and abroad, as well as different resources and outcomes. Moreover, mobility does not always imply the same freedom and ease of moving. Despite their artistic status, variously acknowledged by different visa-issuing offices, and mainly because of their nationality, these mobile informants strongly relied on the support of foreign institutions (governmental, inter-governmental and non-governmental organizations) to fulfil their travel requirements and find them accommodation.

Finally, it has not been straightforward to label certain artists as 'immobile.' Indeed, all those interviewed for this research could be considered 'mobile' in one way or another, if not through physical movement on an urban, regional, national, African or international scale, then at least through their imaginaries. Furthermore, just as no one can be perpetually in motion, some people also choose to remain immobile for a period of time. Some of my otherwise mobile informants sometimes refused to

[6] Mobilities at the local (Dakar), regional (Dakar region), national (between Dakar and other urban settings) and finally international levels, whether continental or intercontinental, were also considered, but are not the focus of this study.

engage in mobility until they had achieved something in Dakar. Mobility and immobility can thus appear as transitional phases that can replace each other. According to Mincke and Kaufmann (2017), the criteria according to which individuals are qualified as 'mobile' or 'immobile' often remain uncertain because the notion of mobility is based on a conception of space as a material entity, where space is above all the result of a spatialization process, understood as 'the attribution and characterization of positions to the objects under consideration'. Mobility is often conceived as involving the crossing of borders. However, borders are only the result of a certain spatialization of space among other possibilities. In other words, the conceptions of the 'mobile' actor and the 'immobile' actor are rooted in hierarchical representations of movement and spaces crossed among the actors concerned, while embodying two sides of the same coin. For Frello (2008), the meaning of immobility also raises questions about differentiated forms and hierarchical meanings of movement, involving representations of 'good' and 'bad' mobilities. Immobility, however, remains an important category of mobilities that grasps the obstacles people must face in their desire for mobility: it embodies feelings of being stuck, unable to achieve what could be achieved, in their eyes, through mobility. In other words, raising the issue of immobility is not only about criticizing the focus on mobility as normality, it is also about addressing desired and undesired mobilities and the consequences of these social dichotomies in the field.

On the basis of these definitions, migration, mobility and immobility are further exemplified by the trajectories of three informants: Gladiat'Or, a Senegalese rapper living in France; Keyti, a 'mobile' rapper; and the 'immobile' rapper Fla the Ripper.

The 'Migrant:' Gladiat'Or

Like most rappers in Senegal, Gladiat'Or began his artistic journey in Dakar as a member of an underground rap group at the end of the 1990s. The group separated after one of the members left for Italy and Gladiat'Or's own departure for France in 2006. For Gladiat'Or himself, migration did not imply the end of his rap career, and he imagined that his new resources (provided by a job in France, could help him produce the group's first album. In Paris, he linked up with various Senegalese rappers, such as Nitdoff (who later returned to Senegal and is now a renowned rapper) and Mao Sidibé (a producer and singer who also returned to Senegal). They all collaborated in the making of Gladiat'Or's first solo album, called *Niax du feñ ci taw* (Under the rain, sweat is invisible). In order to promote his album, which was rapped mostly in Wolof, the artist returned to Senegal for the first time in 2010, but he didn't manage to convince Senegalese media to broadcast it. He explained why during our interview in Paris in 2017:

> When I released my single in 2010 with the video clip, I went to promote it. It was very difficult, there were a lot of TV stations that didn't even want to take the clip, or they didn't want to book me for a show because I wasn't known and I came from somewhere else. They said, here's another guy from Europe who thinks he's allowed to come from anywhere else, so there's already this barrier, this prejudice, which is unfavorable to entry.

Gladiat'Or gave me two reasons for his inability to promote his single in Senegal: a lack of recognition (he wasn't known – indeed, it was his first time promoting an album), and the fact that he came from 'somewhere else.' His experience shows how the status of 'migrant,' with its implications of him being an outsider, affects his ability to be accepted in Senegal. Furthermore, Gladiat'Or, like other migrant artists, points out how the Senegalese music industry, which mostly relies on social networks, favors those who remain in Senegal. In order to make sure that their music is broadcasted, most artists rely on interpersonal relationships with DJs and program hosts, or, in the absence thereof, on bribes. Both strategies are more efficient if one is present in Senegal long-term.

In addition, he explained how his music was perceived differently because of his migrant status. Following a definition of rap in Senegal as

a means of expression addressing social issues, Gladiat'Or used his music to talk about the difficulties of being a migrant in France, a message which was conceived differently:

> The audience is much more demanding with us because they say we are here [in Europe], we are making demands, but are we really rightful? Since when I say that life is hard, etc., people think you make a lot of money, even if it is not always the case, they say, are they really rightful? (…) We have a rather ungrateful position just because we are no longer there [in Senegal], so our work is undervalued, and there is a de facto intransigence.

Thus, Gladiat'Or's status as a migrant not only makes it difficult for him to promote his music, it also plainly disqualifies his music in the eyes of the Senegalese rap audience.

Two years later, Gladiat'Or went back to Senegal with the finished album, led by the single 'hip-hop galsen made in Paname,' a declaration of love to *rap galsen.* According to the lyrics of the song, *rap galsen* allowed the artist to 'grow wings' (*ba ngi saxi laff*) and to pull him out of 'the pot where he was conceived' (*jeul nak cibir cin bi nga dëppé*) 'until he became number one' (*ba nga doon pé*) and was able to cross international borders. However, the aim of the song is not only to assert superiority in the rap game by proclaiming oneself the best, in line with the 'rhetoric of excess' that characterizes rap according to Diallo (2014). As the chorus suggests (Gladiat'Or 2012), the song is also a call for unity:

> hip-hop galsen/made in Paname/
> *galsen hip-hop made in Paris*
> Lep ngir push up/for sunu rap jem ci Kanam/
> *All this to move our rap forward*
> And niodi doon keen/fexe bokk funiu jeum/
> *Unite together and go in the same direction*
> Noopi don ben jeum/rek lanu wara jeem/
> *We should try to keep our mouths shut and unite*

In the second verse of the song, he proclaims that rap should not know any borders, a reference to two districts in Dakar that are only separated by a road: Castor and Front de Terre, thereby addressing the territorial boundaries present in *rap galsen*. In continuation of the demarcations at work in Senegal, it is the demarcation between '*rap galsen* made in Dakar' and '*rap galsen* made in Paris' that the artist wants to overcome in view of the recognition of *rap galsen* artists living in Paris[7]. In this context, the artist's self-glorification discourse in the song serves to assert his respect for the conventions of *rap galsen*, and even to celebrate them. Thus, the song was his response to the processes of exclusion and marginalization of migrants and artists such as himself in the rap music scene in Dakar.

Stemming from the example of Gladiat'Or and other artists who have migrated, it appears that the status of migrant makes it difficult to continue pursuing a career in *rap galsen* for reasons concerning both their new lives abroad (a lack of resources, of social networks, of the time available for music for artists who have to both work at regular jobs and spend time with their families), but also, as shown here, because of their tenuous relationships with other actors who have remained in Senegal. Their marginalization on the music scene as outsiders, which parallels the marginalization of migrants in Senegalese society (Timera 2014), leads them to be called out in order to demonstrate their attachment to the music scene despite migration, for example, through development projects, and does not allow them to speak on certain themes. Few are the artists who can maintain their activities in Senegal from abroad in the long run. If most artists in migration have given up on their careers, many others have made the choice to return to Senegal, albeit with different results (Navarro 2019a). The prolonged absence of migrants from Senegal, unlike the absences of mobile actors, renders them unable to benefit from the opportunities provided by being abroad, which they seek to invest in Senegalese rap.

The 'Mobile': Keyti

Despite not having released new music since 2005, the rapper Keyti, a former member of the legendary group Rap'adio, is still one of the most

[7] There are a handful of musicians in Paris who know each other and participate in the same events. We could mention Neega Mass or Pul Art Bi, as well as Mao and Nitdoff, who both returned to Senegal.

renowned Senegalese rap artists in Senegal and one of the few to earn a living as an artist.

Between 2005 and 2007, together with fellow Senegalese rap artists Didier Awadi, Xuman and Moona, he took part in A.U.R.A (United Rap Artists for Africa) and went on a tour to promote respect for children's rights in collaboration with UNICEF. This took them to France and to many countries in West Africa. Starting in 2013, together with Xuman, he co-hosted Journal Rappé, a YouTube series (JT Rappé 2013) with rapping of both national and international news in French and Wolof.[8] The Journal was conceived as an alternative source of media to counter how the information is processed by the government, the opposition and international western media. The Journal was a great success and was soon supported by OSIWA (Open Society Initiative for West Africa), part of the network of the Open Society Foundations founded by philanthropist and financier George Soros, which, according to their website, give out grants, 'towards building inclusive and vibrant democracies'. Keyti is also a frequent collaborator of Africulturban, an association that works for the promotion of 'urban cultures', namely rap and other related practices, in Senegal. He is a notable teacher for their program Y.U.M.A program (Youth Urban Media Academy), also undertaken with the support of OSIWA, which works for the reintegration of former prison inmates through the practice of Djing, writing, language (French, English) and various other courses. In 2015, a year when I followed him thoroughly on social media, Keyti undertook a number of short trips that exemplify the scope of his activities in Senegal and his importance on the 'music scene.' I first met him in Munich, Germany, in March 2015, with other artists and members of Africulturban, as part of an event called 'Dox Dajé[9]. Sponsored by the Goethe Institute and the Siemens Foundation, the event showed how *rap galsen* acted as support for the expression of different registers of meaning created between the artists and the audience (in this case mainly German) while showcasing the importance of social networks for mobility (Navarro 2018).

Prior to Munich, Keyti had travelled to Washington, D.C., and other countries, while his partner in the Journal Rappé had gone to Switzerland and Ivory Coast. Later that same year, Keyti and Xuman were invited to the Banlieues Bleues festival in France to promote Journal Rappé and made a short trip to Japan. I met him again in September in New York, where he had been invited to speak about Y.U.M.A at the United Nations. A large number of Keyti's trips are based on his ability to 'represent' Senegalese rap by taking part in conferences where he testifies to its history of political mobilization. The excellence of his performances at these conferences, which take place in both academic and cultural spheres, prompted further invitations to various conferences, although he claimed he does not 'like to do that' (personal fieldwork notes, 21.03.2015) and would prefer that someone 'more competent' personal fieldwork notes, 21.03.2015) would take over. Nevertheless, he still accepted such invitations because they allowed him to 'do the organizer a favor' (personal fieldwork notes, 21.03.2015).' Keyti's mobility is thus partly based on his belonging to social networks that work by 'recommendation' (personal fieldwork notes, 21.03.2015).

I have described mobility such as that undertaken by Keyti as 'star mobility,' consisting of trips between Senegal, where he resides, and countries in which he is called to perform a particular activity, whether speaking during a conference, as it is often the case, or promoting the Journal Rappé. The predominance of this type of mobility among actors who make a living from their activities in the rap scene illustrates the mostly subsidized nature of rap careers in Senegal. These mobilities are mostly financed by foreign foundations, NGOs, governments or individuals that

[8] After four seasons, the Journal Rappé has changed its formula and has seen fellow rapper Xuman more invested in the show.

[9] Dox Dajé evokes the cultural exchange which was supposed to take place between German rappers and Senegalese rappers and could be translated by 'get together'.

pay for the costs of travel and act as guarantors for acquiring a visa. Depending on different projects, which are part of different networks, conditions for mobility can vary: sometimes adequate (hotel accommodation, remuneration), mobility arrangements are more often tenuous (administrative problems in obtaining visas, problems with hotel reservations or other accommodation arrangements) depending on the resources of the networks that are mobilized to organize these trips. For some actors, these mobilities are frequent enough to ensure regular funding. The more frequent they are, which stems from the number of networks in which these actors are inserted, the more social prestige these mobilities have, with consequences for their social status. For artists such as Keyti, mobility enables them to be the only ones who can earn a living by engaging solely in their artistic activity, and to escape the constraints linked to making rap music in Senegal. Finally, for the mostly 'immobile' actors of *rap galsen*, examples such as Keyti showcase the opportunities and prestige associated with mobility.

The 'Immobile': Fla the Ripper

Fla The Ripper is a Senegalese rap artist who is relatively unknown in Senegal. He nevertheless gained some appreciation after the release of three solo albums in the last ten years, which can be considered quite a feat in Senegal: *The Renaissance* in 2012, *Kanka Musa* in 2016 and *B4 Playlist* in 2019. At the time of my fieldwork, he was able to produce his music thanks to his work as an employee in a telecoms enterprise.

Fla The Ripper started his career by rapping mostly in English, which is the language through which he discovered rap and developed his rapper abilities. However, not using Wolof, rapping about subjects deemed foreign and exhibiting a materialistic attitude can cause Senegalese rap artists to be condemned as 'imitating Americans' and as not being true to the conventions of Senegalese Rap (Navarro 2020).

When we met in 2014, he strongly defended his choice of language as illustrating his desire to speak outside the barriers of Senegalese Rap:

> If you rap in Wolof, who will understand? Only the Senegalese. And you say you want to talk to the world? It doesn't make sense. (…) Now, you want your message to get out of Senegal so that it can touch, so that it travels, you have to give it a visa.

Other elements pointed to this desire to 'talk with the world' in his album *The Renaissance*: a production, for example, that combined the speeches of historic figures with rap beats, or the frequent collaborations with the Senegalese group Alien Zik, with which he shares some aims, and with the Norwegian amateur singer Lillian Iversen, whom he met through the Internet. For artists like Fla the Ripper, 'talking to the world' also means escaping from musical constraints that render the music they want to make invisible in Senegal. Deprived of positions of power and the social and geographical mobility which gives access to them, these artists find other ways to be mobile, even if only through their imagination, by portraying a kind of cosmopolitanism they can convey through attitudes and language alone.

The production of his first album by his childhood friend Mistamase, who lives in France, reveals the efforts undertaken by these actors to live up to international standards that are difficult to achieve, and that lead to minimal results in the artists' careers:

> The album *The Renaissance* I did it here. In this studio [Alien Zik Studio, located in Dakar, where we conduct the interview]. We had to master the album to have a standard quality, but we encountered difficulties somewhere because here most studios don't have mastering equipment, it's very expensive and they master with software. And at the end the product has losses. So the sound is not at its best. So we said to ourselves, we can't have that here, we have to go where we can find it. So, to tell you [the truth], we're stuck. We are not going to say, 'Yeah we are Africans, we are going to be 100% African.' If we can get the right things, we will go elsewhere. So we left to master the album in France, and we saw that there are radios internationally, if you burn the CDs and you copy, you print photos and you paste them, and you go out like most artists do here, you don't play on the radio internationally. So we said we're not going to do all this work and be disqualified just by our equipment. […] We didn't have a record company behind us to make an album of this quality. There wasn't

> anyone behind it. So we worked, we recorded here, we paid, we … how should I say, we collected the maximum of money, mastered in France and pressed our album in France to have this standard quality that allowed us to be at the same level as international artists.

Like most artists of *rap galsen*, Fla the Ripper only relies on his own means and networks to compete with both national and international artists. As the artist puts it, artists in Senegal feel 'stuck' and are compelled to 'go where we can find it.' Thus, mobility appears as a resource, and the lack there-off presents itself as a disadvantage. Apart from the lack of equipment, Fla the Ripper points to a lack of support from an organization like a record company, which he uses to maintain his independence, but which once again explains his lack of resources besides his own. It is telling that the only resource that finally allowed him to publish his album in the format he wanted was through a relationship he has with someone who has migrated, his friend the producer Mistamase. The example of Fla the Ripper further demonstrates how African artists without access to mobility cannot compete with international artists in a global music industry.

In 2017, in the midst of promoting his new album, *Kanka Musa,* Fla The Ripper explained to a journalist with Senegal's daily *Le Quotidien* that he had revised his marketing strategy after the poor sales of *The Renaissance* by working with Rock Izar Records, a Spanish independent label and recording studio. However, he soon ended this collaboration for his next album, which he produced using his own independent label Right Handz Music. His shift from English to Wolof as the main language for his raps could also signify his current willingness to build a Senegalese audience, rather than directly pursuing his ambitions on the international stage.

Discussion: mobilities and the 'music scene'

If the practice of Senegalese rap music has given rise to mobilities, the analysis cannot be satisfied with considering them as another illustration of how integral they are to the professional life of artists and cultural professionals. While most studies emphasize the key importance of mobility in the making of artistic careers, relatively to immobile artists that are deprived of it, no study in music has, to my knowledge, considered it in relation to migrant artists.[10] As Martiniello (2015) states, the migrant artist is still an underdeveloped subject of study that has been mainly limited to 'conceptions of the migrant as an immigrant and of circulation as immigration' which 'still conceal the diversity of the migratory reality of world music actors' (Gilles 2009: 13).

Studies of the circulation of African artists have also been interested primarily in understanding processes of cultural globalization. They discuss the role of the circulation of objects and ideas, and to a lesser extent of African artists themselves, in the transformations of artistic practices and contemporary identity productions (Andrieu and Olivier 2017; White 2002, 2011). This literature has also focused more on inequalities between North and South (Andrieu 2012; Despres 2011; Marcel 2012), rather than on inequalities produced on the local level, between artists who move and those who do not.

Considering migration, mobility and immobility within a 'music scene' has allowed us to understand how different mobilities work differently to sustain power dynamics.

As the examples of Gladiat'Or, Keyti and Fla the Ripper have shown, different mobilities result in different positions within the music scene: from the marginalized status of the 'migrant' to the prestige and opportunities associated to being 'mobile' to finally, the feeling of being 'stuck' associated with being 'immobile.' Power asymmetries within the 'music scene,' defined as a group of people structured as a network, mostly stem from unequal access to important actors, which work hand-in-hand with access to mobility. Indeed, as many mobility scholars have stated, unequal access to mobility derives from unequal access to social relations that involve the produc-

[10] Such is also the ambition of an issue of the Journal *Ethnologie française* on transnational music worlds, published with Alice Aterianus-Owanga and Armelle Gaulier.

tion and distribution of power. The example of Keyti has shown how he manages to be mobile by being inserted in specific social relations. In turn, mobility gives Keyti the means to build a 'network capital' (Urry 2007) that allows him to stay mobile. On the other hand, examples like Fla the Ripper show how resources can be out of reach without resorting to mobility. Obstacles to mobility and unfulfilled desires for international exports, or in other words immobility, are an aspect of the daily lives of most Senegalese rap actors. Gladiat'or, as a migrant, has trouble being accepted and having access to the resources possessed by key actors, not knowing in whom he can confide to help him promote his music. These difficulties underline the role of networks in the realization of artistic activities in Senegal, networks into which migrants, even when they are former local celebrities, are no longer inserted when they return to Senegal after too long an absence. These examples also show how the status of migrant implies the status of outsider, not only in one's new country of residence, but also in one's country of origin.

Addressing mobility not only in contrast to immobility but also to migration also leads us to acknowledge how mobiles gain power from their unique position between mobility and locality. As intermediaries between the music scene in which they are imbedded and their foreign networks, these actors can invest the capital gained from mobility where it matters most – in Senegal. The perception of mobiles as actors who use mobility in order to invest in the 'music scene' is precisely why mobility is considered 'good' while migration, seen as the action of leaving behind, or breaking up with the 'music scene,' is considered as 'bad.'

I have stressed elsewhere (Navarro 2019a) how my results indicate that access to social networks is closely related to the acquisition of prestige and professionalism. The professionalism that appears to be derived from mobility is a source of prestige, and the prestige associated with mobility makes artists who have travelled appear more professional. On the other hand, it is the notoriety and the recognized professionalism of actors like Keyti and others that allow them to position themselves within networks that work 'by recommendations,' which in turn enables them to increase their reputation as professionals. Access to mobility is therefore a producer of social inequalities in that it determines access to social positions and resources. Nevertheless, while mobility allows rappers to earn a living and to achieve and consolidate a certain social status, permanence in Senegal is necessary to maintain links with the networks of the rap scene.

Another enquiry in the analysis of various mobilities within a music scene, so far neglected, could start out from the observation that mobility reveals itself as a resource to establish and maintain a definition of the music. Because mobile artists mainly travel by virtue of their recognition as social rappers, mobility participates in enforcing a certain vision of *rap galsen*, which in turn benefits artists who are already mobile while bearing on the artistic livelihoods of migrant and immobile artists.

To make a space for their artistry, migrants challenge the processes of inclusion and exclusion from *rap galsen*. This is the case, for example, when Gladiat'Or proclaims he still does *rap galsen* although it is made in Paris. Considering how belongings of *rap galsen* are reimagined outside Senegal interrogates the making of a 'translocal music scene' built as a 'translocal social space' defined as 'the result of new forms of delimitation which consist in part of, but also go beyond geographical or national borders' (Salzbrunn 2004), being composed of both local and global references. Moreover, through translocal practices, other mobile actors reconfigure the territories and actors involved in the making of *rap galsen*. Through musical practice, transnational and translocal practices can be grasped beyond the manifestation of national and religious affiliations, which dominate the study of Senegalese transnationalism (Bava 2003; Kane 2011; Mbengue 2008; Riccio 2003, 2006; Salzbrunn 2005), while reflecting the same

dynamics of economic and social transfers, as well as political, economic, and religious transnationalism.

Asserting that a 'music scene' is translocal has worked as a way of resolving the apparent paradox between the definition of a scene in relation to a territorialized locality and the increasing globalization of the processes of the production and reception of music, allowing music that refers to a particular locality to be produced outside this territory and to arouse feelings of belonging beyond its borders.

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

by **Christian Rinaudo** (Université Côte d'Azur, France)

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 cosmopolitism' (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 (Boccagni 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). Moreover, 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 Otovalo 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 deconstruct such naturalizing categories that scholars sometimes take for granted. More broadly, their practices incite us, along with Janine Dahinden, to 'de-migranticise 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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Through the lens of salsa: im/mobile careers in transnational dance worlds

by **Joanna Menet** (Associate Researcher, University of Neuchâtel)

Abstract

The social sciences have long been criticized for their nation-state-centred epistemology and use of static categories in research methods. This paper presents empirical material and methodological reflections to shift our approach to studying and researching transnational dance worlds. Starting from current debates in migration and dance studies, it explores how these two distinct fields of research might fruitfully be combined. Based on ethnographic research with salsa dance professionals in Europe and Cuba, this paper introduces the notion of im/mobile careers. It explores ways in which global inequalities affect dance professionals and illuminates the intersections of gender, ethnicity, race and class. The paper highlights the contributions of a methodological approach which includes mobile research and a focus on individual life stories as well as performance. It argues for a reflexive approach to challenge the epistemological and methodological limits of current research. The paper contributes to the growing body of literature that studies social phenomena through the lens of im/mobility and empirically adds to our understanding of contemporary social processes.

Keywords: dance research, im/mobility, ontology, qualitative research

Introduction

> 'I don't speak so many languages, but because I know how to dance, I can connect with everybody; it's a huge tool of communication. Regardless of who you are, or where you're from. (…) It's a great tool, and it's making me travel all over the world.'

This quote from a salsa dance professional whom I met at a large salsa event addresses the topics of this paper, which brings together research on the circulation of dance practices with current debates in migration and mobility studies to address problematic biases in social science research.

In an article entitled 'Enacting the Social,' Law and Urry (2004) argued that the social sciences and their research methods do not simply describe the world but also enact it. According to these authors, our research methodologies often reflect 19th-century, nation state-based preoccupations, and thus also tend to reproduce such realities. Research methods (help) make social realities, and by acknowledging this performativity, we enter the realm of 'ontological politics' (Law and Urry 2004: 396). We therefore need methods to address 21st-century social realities, which are adapted to deal with, among other things, the sensory, the emotional and the kinaesthetic (Law and Urry 2004: 403). Starting from current epistemological and methodological debates in migration and dance studies, this paper explores how these two distinct fields of research might fruitfully be combined, using an empirical case study with salsa dancers.

As stated in the introduction to this special issue (Salzbrunn and Rodriguez-Quinones 2023),

research on dance and music contributes to current debates in the studies of migration, mobility and diversity in many ways. Recent scholarship focusing on the circulation of artistic practices has shown the importance of dance and music for the study of (trans)national identifications on different scales (Aterianus-Owanga, Djebbari and Salzbrunn 2019). Dance research takes moving bodies seriously, moving beyond theories which treat the body primarily as a site of inscription and testifying to the multiple identities which can be performed through movement (Reed 1998). Dance researchers have thus demonstrated the importance of bodies for social science research as a means of overcoming the Cartesian mind-body dichotomy and enabling a more holistic approach. Building on earlier studies on dance and nationalism and dance and migration, anthropologists have recently combined a focus on the movements and meanings of dance for its carriers such as migrants and tourists (Neveu Kringelbach and Skinner 2012). Using this perspective, this article focuses on dance as a phenomenon, which, insofar as it is inscribed into and at the same time performed by moving bodies, can shed new light on current topics such as im/mobility, gender, racialization and global inequalities.

Based on ethnographic research with salsa dancers, this paper presents theoretical and methodological reflections for the study of dance worlds. The argument is twofold. On the one hand, the paper introduces the notion of im/mobile careers to explore how global inequalities affect dance professionals. It sheds light on differences in accessing resources such as mobility and the importance of gendered roles and racialized representations of dance practices. On the other hand, it highlights the contributions of a methodological approach which includes mobile research (Büscher and Urry 2009) and a focus on individual life stories as well as performance. By following three dance professionals' careers, it illustrates how a focus on actors from different backgrounds can be helpful in moving beyond static categories. In summary, this paper contributes to the growing body of literature studying contemporary social phenomena through the lens of im/mobility.

The article first clarifies problems with the 'container thinking' of migration studies and social science research, exploring some of the main critiques and proposed methodological avenues to address the challenges. Second, it presents the context of the study, the salsa circuit, often described as a paradigmatic space of diversity and inclusiveness. In line with recent research on salsa, I argue that a closer look reveals manifold power dynamics that contradict the inclusiveness narrative. Third, I present a research design that considers some of the above-mentioned critiques and introduces the notion of im/mobile careers. Fourth, the im/mobile careers of three differently positioned salsa dance professionals are described, completed by, fifth, a discussion of their stories. In conclusion, I highlight three key advantages of the approach I present here.

Beyond methodological nationalism and sedentary visions of society

Contrary to the increasing political project of naturalizing the association of culture with place, social scientists have criticized the idea of an isomorphism between a specific territory, ethnic community or nation and culture. This container model of society has also been criticized with regard to the analysis of migration, where often the boundaries of the nation state are taken as a natural unit of analysis in research. Wimmer and Glick Schiller (2002) disclosed the reproduction of such nationalist thinking in social science research as a form of 'methodological nationalism'. Dahinden (2016) challenged the nation state- and ethnicity-centred epistemology which often informs migration studies and which risks reifying categories.

Since the rise of this critique of methodological nationalism, there have been several efforts to move beyond it. Vertovec's (2007) notion of 'super-diversity' features prominently, calling for greater attention to the bases of differentiation within ethnic or national groups. This concept

captures the increasing diversification connected to immigration within and between specific localities. While super-diversity has mainly been used as a lens to analyse everyday diversity in urban neighbourhoods, the related literature often remains focused on ethnic differences in immigration contexts. According to Foner, Duyvendak and Kasinitz (2019) super-diversity's theoretical potential for overcoming the ethno-racial lens therefore often remains unfulfilled.

Another approach to overcoming the nation-centred epistemology of migration studies stresses the importance of transnationalism. Scholars in this field claim to move beyond the vision of unity between the state and its population. They suggest that, contrary to classical assumptions in assimilation theory, 'transmigrants' become rooted in their new country while maintaining ties to their countries of origin, making their home and host societies a single arena for social action. New concepts have been coined to account for social relationships sustained across national borders, such as 'transnational social space' or 'transnational social field'. Contemporary approaches argue for a transnational perspective as an epistemological lens rather than a theoretical framework (Dahinden 2017).

Scholars associated with the 'mobilities turn' have also criticized the sedentarism of much social science research and developed concepts that have normalized movement and mobility rather than stasis. However, such positive accounts of mobility have also been questioned, as scholars have been reminded that mobilities need moorings and that they are both productive of and produced by unequal relations of power, or what Cresswell (2010) calls the 'politics of mobility'. Glick Schiller and Salazar (2013) propose a framework of 'regimes of mobility', which addresses the barriers to movement in terms of the state and international regulatory regimes.

These epistemological reflections have inevitably led to shifts in research methodologies, with researchers considering ways to render migration unexceptional in research designs and as a unit of analysis. Dahinden (2016) suggests several strategies to 'de-migranticize' research on migration and integration, for example, starting from a spatial unit such as a school or an urban neighbourhood, based on the idea that, when taking a part of the whole population as a starting point, migrants and non-migrants alike necessarily form part of the research sample. Similarly, Salzbrunn (2017) argues that entry through an event is helpful in shifting the focus from a predefined group to the plural affiliations of the people involved in the event. This is precisely where research with a focus on the im/mobile careers of a 'community of practitioners,' such as dancers, comes into play.

The salsa circuit, a paradigmatic space of diversity?

Numerous studies investigate cultural and artistic practices linking people in different places within translocal, transnational or global networks. While these practices differ starkly in their outreach, funding, and embeddedness within various national and international networks, the 'art worlds' in which they develop share some commonalities. Most importantly, in the case of many of the dance practices now being consumed by middle- and upper-class citizens in urban centres around the world, commodification has also led to a professionalization of teaching, which in turn has created new career opportunities for many dancers (Andrieu and Olivier 2017).

Salsa, a couple dance that has proliferated in many urban centres around the world, has been described as constituting the largest percentage of social dance commerce worldwide (McMains 2015: 311). Numerous salsa studios, weekend events in hotels, salsa holidays and tourism all form part of this market. Some dance professionals earn a living by teaching salsa dance to students all over Europe, North America and Asia, some as part of a local studio, while others, the so-called 'travelling artists,' move several times a month to teach and perform at events. They build and maintain social networks spanning the globe, with several important hubs on the imagi-

nary salsa map, such as Cuba, New York, Los Angeles and Milan. This transnational art world or 'salsa circuit' (Menet 2020) constitutes the unit of analysis for this study.

The dance floor has been analysed in previous literature as a space of inclusiveness, where the usual social hierarchies are reversed, and competence in the dance is the only factor that counts (Gilroy 1991). Also, when it comes to salsa dancing, several researchers have supported dancers' strong belief in salsa's openness to everyone (Skinner 2007). My empirical data also show that one of salsa's attractions lies in its alleged ability to overcome social markers of difference, such as race, ethnicity, class and age. As stated in the opening quote of this paper, salsa dancers often describe salsa as a kinetic language that opens up possibilities to travel and meet people who are linked in a transnational 'salsa community.' In the words of a US- based travelling salsa artist:

> I think the beauty of salsa is its diversity and how accepting it is to all demographics, all different cultures, age groups, income levels, education levels, whatever. (…) And I think that the range of people actually contributes to what this dance is. It's nice to have different cultures represented; they make it richer.

Many dancers see the salsa floor as a space where the boundaries of class, ethnic and religious categories are blurred, allowing differently positioned dancers to meet and embody different identities or a 'cosmopolitan subjectivity' (Hutchinson 2014).

However, scholars have also criticized salsa's inclusive narrative for several reasons: first, Boulila (2018) highlights the racialized underpinnings of 'salsa cosmopolitanism' and the power processes that inform salsa's commodification. She writes: 'Although salsa as an individual movement can be interpreted and performed by *any body*, not all bodies have the same access to symbolic and material systems of power' (Boulila 2018: 6). A second critique of salsa's celebratory diversity narrative is formulated by Hutchinson (2014: 13), underscoring the importance of class in an analysis of salsa: Although the dance floor at salsa festivals 'may create an ethnically inclusive community, it is one with little class diversity.' Indeed, the possibility of connecting with other salsa dancers in the circuit is limited to those who have access to the necessary time and economic means. That said, in a transnational social field, class also needs to be discussed in relation to mobility, which this article sets out to do through the analysis of dancers' im/mobile careers. In focusing on their underlying im/mobilities, this paper contributes to the debate on salsa cosmopolitanism by adding nuance to its image of inclusiveness.

Existing studies of salsa often focus on dance students or the development of local dance scenes in what could be termed a 'methodological localism' (exceptions are McMains 2015 and Djebbari 2019). Many of these studies tend to conceptualize salsa through a global/local dichotomy, ignoring the ties between these sites and the diverse mobility practices of salsa dance professionals. Hence, less is known about dance professionals who build careers and transform salsa (mainly through teaching) into a lifestyle and livelihood. This paper sets out to ask what a different research approach could add to similar studies in order to broaden our understanding of current global processes.

A research design with a focus on im/mobile careers

This paper argues that an exploration of the im/mobile careers of (migrant and non-migrant) artists has several advantages, allowing us to move beyond nineteenth-century binary categories. Similar concepts have been used in studies with artists. Kiwan and Meinhof (2011) suggested a transnational and translocal network model as appropriate in studying African musicians' careers between different 'human or spatial hubs' in the Global North and South. Martiniello and Rea (2014: 1081) developed the notion of the 'migratory career' to illuminate the importance of arts and culture in the lives of migrants and to open up 'perspectives to make sense of the specific migration experience and circulation of

artists who very often connect different parts of the world with their artistic practice.' This fruitful approach allows the simultaneous study of incorporation processes in both country of origin and destination. However, while these approaches illuminate the importance of music and dance in social life, they often focus solely on people categorized as migrants.

Navarro (this issue) illustrates how a focus on artists' various mobilities is helpful in analysing the diversity of social and artistic positions within a 'music scene.' Other mobility scholars have developed an interest in migration routes and journeys. Studying im/mobility trajectories is particularly fruitful for acknowledging the dynamism of these journeys to overcome 'the simplistic notion that the outcome of migration solely depends on a momentous go/non-go decision in a country of origin' (Schapendonk, Bolay and Dahinden 2020: 3243). Based on these reflections, I conceptualize the im/mobile career as potentially characterized by a continuous process of development, transnationally or translocally, including the possibility of numerous stays in different places.

I include a transnational perspective in the analysis of careers to allow for a combination of a focus on individual action with a focus on social structural dynamics. In a transnational social field, the question of who can travel and under what conditions is co-constituted by class. Glick Schiller and Salazar (2013: 196) state that class has often been defined based on differential access to a range of resources. Instead, they put forward a regimes-of-mobility approach' to 'expand this understanding so the ability and legal right to travel become one of the criteria by which class is defined and class privilege upheld.' Class is therefore not only defined as financial access, it also relates to people's legal status and their associated rights to travel. This argument is in line with a politics of mobility perspective, which theorizes mobility as an unequally distributed resource that individuals may access and mobilize under certain conditions (Moret 2016). For salsa dance professionals aspiring to participate in the salsa circuit, travel is an important practice in accessing symbolic and material resources.

The empirical data presented in this article were collected during a multi-sited ethnographic research project with salsa dancers in Europe and Cuba between 2013 and 2017. The paper focuses on three case studies chosen from 23 semi-structured interviews I conducted with salsa dance professionals, defined as dancers making a living mainly from teaching activities. I conducted multi-sited fieldwork including participant observation at salsa festivals in European cities and tourist dance spaces in Cuba, thus following the social practices of a diverse set of actors in multiple contexts using a mobile research strategy. Inspired by a grounded theory approach, I chose interviewees based on a theoretical sampling strategy (Glaser and Strauss 1967). In theoretical sampling, cases are chosen based on their relevance to the 'theory' that is to be developed, rather than for their representativeness of the population under question (Flick 2014: 173). The dancers I spoke to included male and female dancers from various countries of origin who were at different stages of their salsa careers.

Im/mobile careers of salsa dance professionals

In this section, I focus on the im/mobile careers of three salsa dance professionals to examine the obstacles these dancers must overcome, as well as the ways they position themselves to take part in the transnational salsa circuit.[1] The stories reveal some of the ongoing power struggles within the salsa circuit that unfold at the intersections of gendered and racialized bodies, salsa's commodification and issues of class (which includes access to mobility). The three stories shed light on the career possibilities available to differently positioned dancers by virtue of salsa's global diffusion and popularity. I chose the three cases for their diversity in terms of the danc-

[1] This section draws on and enhances a chapter of my book *Entangled mobilities in the transnational salsa circuit* (2020).

ers' positions in the transnational field of salsa. However, it is important to note that this choice is not representative in terms of the gendered mobility dynamics of salsa dancers in general. In other words, while this article discusses the im/mobility stories of two women and one man, this selection of case studies is not meant to suggest that female dancers are more mobile than male dancers. I will start with Melanie, a German salsa dance professional in her mid-forties at the time of the interview; then present the story of Yanet, a Cuban salsa dance professional in her twenties, circulating back-and-forth between Cuba and Europe; and finally develop the case of Frank, a Cuban salsa dance professional in his forties, based in Cuba.[2]

From travelling artist to local dance studio owner

Melanie was born in a German city and started ballroom dancing at an early age. In her twenties, she encountered salsa on holiday in Miami, caught the 'salsa virus' and started regularly attending the few clubs that played salsa music back home. As she recalled during the interview, she was soon asked to share her dancing skills and started teaching others alongside her daytime job as an industrial management assistant. For Melanie, salsa allowed her to tap into an energy, joy and passion that she now wanted to transmit.

> I no longer felt German; I never felt German. Suddenly I found my vocation, truly, in dance, in passion. And indirectly or directly I also passed this onto my students in class; they learned much more than just steps with me, but also learned to feel themselves, to achieve self-worth. They were seeking something in the somewhat boring German everyday life, and discovered through dance and music a joy of life that fulfilled them, that fulfilled me.

Melanie embodied an 'alternative sense of self' (Bosse 2008: 60) that she perceives to be more vibrant than her German self. Smiling, she told me that people often thought she was 'a Latina or Spanish'. For Melanie, dancing salsa provides her with a space in which to perform an alternative set of identifications in terms not only of national identity, but also gender, as described below.

Once Melanie had found her calling, she proceeded to dance at events, where she met her dance partner, and together they slowly established a name in the transnational salsa circuit. Here her German passport, which allows her to travel freely to many countries, was helpful. During the 1990s, salsa events started to be established in cities all over Europe and North America, and Melanie and her dance partner were invited to perform their show and teach paying salsa students at these events. For salsa dancers, partnership is central, because in the heteronormative space of salsa events, couples are invited to teach men and women, while solo dancers are rarely invited. There was, however, one exception: Melanie proudly told me that she was one of the first to teach ladies' styling, a set of movements that focuses on specific body parts such as the hips, upper torso and arms, mostly performed by female dancers. As she mixed salsa movements with movements from other dances such as tango, she was soon asked to teach her special styling at events. Melanie thus found herself occupying a niche in salsa teaching even after breaking up with her dance partner.

After ten years working at events in many places and countries, Melanie decided to settle down and open her own dance studio in her native city. In her mid-forties at the time of the interview, she had successfully been running the studio for many years, employing several dance teachers alongside herself. She had stopped travelling to events when she became a mother a few years previously. She believed that, besides her passion, developing a specific teaching concept 'for the Germans' was key to her success.

> They teach very badly, the Latinos. Yes, Cubans are great dancers, but they don't have any idea how to teach Germans. I know how Germans think and I can get a feel for them, and I developed a method so they can learn and feel themselves better.

[2] All names and some personal details have been changed to preserve the anonymity of participants.

The proliferation of dance studios and salsa events with paying guests in the 1990s meant that formalized teaching and specific methods of teaching became more important. As McMains (2015) shows, dancers at this time implemented teaching techniques they had learned in standardized ballroom dancing. Put simply, salsa dancing was presented as a series of steps on counts that need to be acquired in the specific context of a dance lesson (Urquía 2005). Here Melanie draws on this vision and a set of culturalist ideas of methodical Germans versus less organized Latinos/Latinas or Cubans. When she presents the latter as great dancers, she repeats a common discourse that assumes that racialized people are naturally endowed with dancing skills, though lacking the necessary teaching skills. This argument relies on a problematic construction of 'the other' that not only reproduces colonial categories but is also particularly dangerous in an immigrant context, where the association of emotionality or excessive sexuality with non-white bodies may serve to legitimize unequal treatment or exclusion (McMains 2016). I observed several European-born dancers using this argument as a way to distinguish themselves from Cuban dancers, who might be better positioned in terms of the 'authenticity value' attached to their dancing.

Back-and-forth between Havana and Europe

Among dancers in the salsa circuit, the origins of salsa music and dance are hotly debated, though on the imaginary salsa map, Cuba holds a special place as (one of) the place(s) from which today's commercialized salsa originated. Many European dancers told me that they had been in Cuba at least once to take dance or, occasionally, percussion lessons. For some adepts of *Salsa Cubana*, or what in Cuba is called *casino*, the trip to Cuba is seen as a 'rite of passage' in an individual's salsa career. In this, the rumba plays a particularly important role as a marker of authenticity. Rumba is a dance with a complex history of colonial repression and stigmatization before its institutionalization by the socialist government after the revolution of 1959, and later its inscription on the UNESCO List of Intangible Heritage in 2016. Despite its increasing public recognition, not least at salsa events around the world, practitioners of rumba in Cuba are still often racialized and associated with low social status (Ana 2017). At European salsa events, rumba movements are often taught by Cuban salsa instructors who found that stressing the so-called 'Afro-Cuban' origin of their dance proves a fruitful marketing strategy in the competitive field of teaching opportunities.

One of the successful teachers of this style was Yanet, whom I first met when she was teaching a workshop in a big dance school in a Swiss city. One and a half years later, I joined her and a group of students on a dance trip to Havana.

Yanet was born in Havana and grew up in a family of musicians and dancers, identifying as Afro-Cuban. As a teenager, she assisted her family members in teaching groups of European students. Later, she danced in several performance groups and continued teaching tourists as opportunities arose. Nevertheless, as she stated in the interview, she wanted to see something else: 'I always wanted to travel, get to know cultures, people, and I was always very interested in culture. So I said to myself, I could show them my own culture; I've always wished to do that.'

With no economic means, no official diploma from any of the state's dance academies and without the necessary travel documents, leaving Cuba and following such a cosmopolitan lifestyle was not possible for Yanet, as is the case for many other street dancers in Havana. Travel was only made possible when she met and fell in love with a German man who eventually became her husband. As she remembered during the interview, her future husband had invited her to Germany before their marriage, but she was not able to obtain the required visa. Instead the couple married in Cuba, after which the German authorities allowed her entry to the country. Another six months passed before she could leave Cuba because she had to wait for authorization to live

in a foreign country. Finally, she moved to Germany at the age of 23.

Once there, Yanet started to learn German and started teaching salsa and rumba in an established salsa school, building on her teaching experience in Havana. At the same time, Yanet was introduced to the festival circuit through an old Cuban friend of her family who already performed at several festivals annually. She performed with him and in this way started her career, performing and teaching at salsa festivals at weekends. She was now able to obtain a residence permit and thus travel to other European countries with no restrictions. In this way, through her dancing, her dream of travelling and participating in the cosmopolitan lifestyle of the salsa circuit came true.

As for many other non-European dancers I talked to, personal social networks such as friends or family members were decisive in dancers launching a career at European festivals. Making contacts and then organizing the necessary documents to obtain the right to travel and stay are barriers few dancers are able to overcome. For Yanet, her German husband proved to be pivotal, allowing her to obtain a residence permit and access the local salsa scene in Germany. At the same time, she relied on contacts her family had established previously to access the salsa circuit and perform at festivals.

Once in Europe, Yanet quickly recognized a growing interest in the Afro-Cuban and folkloric dances she knew from her childhood. Parallel to her teaching and performance activities in Europe, she therefore started to organize teaching opportunities at European festivals for family members and friends still in Cuba. However, this proved to be difficult and financially prohibitive. Therefore, she decided to take her European dance students, whom she had met at workshops at salsa events all over Europe, to Cuba. Yanet advertises her dance holidays with slogans such as 'authentic experience' and 'cultural roots'. In doing so, she builds on a specific understanding of 'Cubanness' that she performs on particular occasions.

She describes herself as a cultural broker, enabling friends and family in Cuba 'to have a job and transmit their culture.' At the same time, she emphasizes that dance students from Europe 'also get something,' as they strive to learn the dances in the Cuban context. These tourists from Germany, France, Italy, Switzerland, Norway and other North and West European countries have the financial means to travel to Cuba and pay for dance lessons, simply requiring a tourist visa. The direction of movement here and Yanet's insuccess in organizing for Cuban dance students to come to Europe point to unequal global power dynamics. Yanet's trajectory shows how dancers, once participating in the salsa circuit themselves, may try to include other individuals, thus connecting the European salsa circuit with localized, immobilized dancers elsewhere.

Teaching incoming tourists

Since the 1990s, tourism in Cuba has been growing as a result of the authorities' efforts to develop international tourism as a path out of the economic hardship Cuba faced after the collapse of the Soviet Union. Many musicians and dancers engage in the informal tourist economy, attempting to share in the opportunities offered by the growth of cultural tourism. Tourists in Havana often seek a genuine experience of learning and dancing salsa in Cuba 'with Cuban dance partners'. Organizers thus advertise dance holiday packages, catering to the visitors' wish to dance with Cubans on Cuban soil.

One of the dancers teaching visitors in Havana is Frank, a man in his late forties who has been dancing and teaching *casino* for over twenty years. I met him during an organized salsa holiday where he was acting as a dance partner for female participants during lessons.

Frank learned to dance 'in the street,' as he told me, and never had any formal training. During his interview, he nevertheless insisted that he was a professional dance teacher, keen on passing his knowledge on to motivated people. Describing a French student who believed he knew the steps better than his Cuban teacher,

he stated: '*casino* is mine, it's Cuban. Nobody can take that away from me, it comes from my country.' Frank thus positioned himself as the rightful owner of Cuban dances, mobilizing a symbolic resource available to him in an otherwise restricted space for manoeuvre. While he enjoyed teaching European tourists, he also referred to the organizational challenges of his dependence on the seasonal rhythms of tourism. Whenever a befriended dance holiday organizer or a student called him to work, he had to drop everything else. At the same time, during the low season there was practically no work for dancers like him. Frank thus managed his life in Havana based on the influx of tourists and their requests.

Frank told me that he did not approve of the numerous young Cubans who left the island with tourists they had met in Havana's salsa space. He himself rarely had the opportunity to leave the country. The first time he was able to travel was when he was working as a tourist animator on a cruise ship, and the second time when he travelled with a performance group to several countries in Europe. He returned to Cuba and continued teaching salsa to tourists at a dance school in Havana, as well as working as a dancer for organized salsa holidays. His second attempt to teach at a small salsa event in Europe, organized by a dancer he had befriended, failed because he could not get the necessary visa: 'It's not that I don't like to travel, it's just that I haven't been given the opportunity yet. One day it will come, I don't despair.' Although Frank would like to travel to festivals in other countries and partake in the salsa circuit, he told me that he could only imagine travelling to another place if he could also work there: 'I'd like to travel, but for work. I don't like to go on holidays. You know why? The moment I go on holidays, I depend on another person (…) The bills go on you. (…) No! I have two hands and two feet.' He was conscious of the economic disparities between himself and his European students and discouraged by stories he had heard of men living abroad without work. Instead of becoming mobile himself, Frank remained in Havana, where he has been building up his professional career on the incoming flux of tourists. Facing asymmetric power dynamics, dancers like Frank find themselves at the edge of the salsa circuit, with no opportunity to partake in the transnational mobility of travelling artists, but capitalizing on the mobility of others.

Entangled mobilities and negotiated categories of difference

While the diversity narrative in salsa prevails at events that take place in Europe, the cases presented demonstrate that this diversity is built on differential access to resources and embedded in global inequalities. The careers of these three individual dance professionals shed light on some of the resources mobilized in the unfolding of im/mobile careers in the salsa circuit.

First, all three careers are built on cross-border mobility. Melanie initially travelled to many events, a fact that she still uses in the marketing of her local dance studio, and settled in a German city. Yanet built her mobile career based on her own back-and-forth mobility between European cities and Havana, while Frank's career and livelihood strategies in Havana depend on the mobility of European salsa students travelling to Cuba as tourists. Some dancers face considerable challenges when they wish to follow the routes of salsa's transnational dissemination, in particular Cuban dancers. These challenges are revealing of the barriers to physical mobility in our contemporary world, with its exclusionary migration regimes. Yanet's story demonstrates the importance of having access to mobility, which can be used strategically to generate other mobilities: once she had travelled to festivals, she met dance teachers at other schools who wished to organize dance trips to Cuba for their students. In this way, she uses her own mobility in the salsa circuit to trigger new mobilities, those of European salsa students visiting Havana, connecting the salsa circuit with her family and friends in Cuba. Once she had acquired the necessary legal status, she could convert her geographical mobility into social mobility (Moret 2016) and include her Cuban family in her success. Nevertheless,

Yanet's reflections on how to bring together her Cuban relatives with her European students are also revelatory in terms of the connections between mobility and immobility: as the mobility of one group (Cubans to Europe) proved to be too expensive and difficult to organize, Yanet decided to reverse the trajectory. However, this move was not possible for Frank because of his own immobile status.

The empirical material showing how the im/mobile careers of differently positioned dancers develop reveals the entanglement of dancers' mobilities. It sheds light on an often-neglected aspect of salsa and other artistic careers: while mobility is a central aspect of accessing salsa events and building a career, access to mobility is not distributed equally among salsa dancers. While some dancers of non-European citizenship manage to build mobile careers in Europe, the conditions under which this mobility occurs are quite different from that of dancers with European citizenship. At the same time, not all dancers do engage in mobility, as in some circumstances it is also possible to build a career in salsa without being mobile oneself.

Second, the im/mobile careers of salsa dance professionals illuminate underlying social processes as they develop along the lines of intersecting categories such as gender, ethnicity, race and class. All the presented dancers' careers were shaped by gendered representations, not least due to salsa's predominantly heteronormative character, which defines a dancers' role and movement vocabulary, and thus also teaching opportunities, from the outset. The so-called 'leader' role in salsa dancing is most often gendered as male, while the 'follower' role is mostly performed by female dancers. Elsewhere I have discussed in detail how these gender arrangements may affect dancers' careers, with female dancers having fewer opportunities to acquire a reputation in the teaching business (Menet 2020). Against this backdrop, it is interesting to consider how the three dancers discussed in this paper negotiated such challenges. While in Europe, Yanet successfully teamed up with an already well-established dance partner, and together they stressed their Cuban origins, Melanie was able to perform a specific type of femininity to establish a niche based on the teaching of ladies' styling. Frank, on the contrary, was able to capitalize on the numerous female European salsa students who travelled to Cuba, serving as a dance partner for them. Gendered performance and identifications thus always intersect with ethnic and racial identifications.

Both the German and the Cuban dancer in Europe stressed national belonging as a form of symbolic capital, drawing on common clichés of German methodical ways of being and Cuban authenticity in salsa and particularly rumba. Reference to such reifying elements may also have harmful effects. In particular, Cuban dancers are confronted with mystified representations of their Cubanness, with a celebration of a supposedly Cuban 'joy of life' and 'sense of rhythm.' At the same time, they are excluded from recognition in the realm of teaching methods. In these unequal relations, dancers like Frank redefine their position as legitimate dance teachers through reference to their Cubanness. As seen in the salsa circuit, Cubanness (and sometimes so-called 'Latinness') forms a powerful marker of distinction. However, this valorization of difference also always transports a reifying element, as dancers are never recognized for their individual dancing style (in a show) or teaching methods (in a formal class setting). Rather, they are treated as part of a static group, leaving them with little room to manoeuvre. In a paper based on research with Palestinian contemporary dancers, Rodriguez Quinones (2022: 248) reveals how the professional recognition of these dancers is often based on discourses and representations of otherness, pointing to 'the subtle essentialization that underlies diversity celebration.' Such constructions of a 'radical difference' (ibid.) between dancers of Latino/a or Cuban origin and dancers of European origin, intersecting with other categories of difference, thus also influence dancers' career opportunities.

Conclusion

In this paper I have shown how fruitful it may be to bring into dialogue research in dance with studies of migration, mobilities and diversity. Through the im/mobile careers of three differently positioned salsa dance professionals, this article has explored the routes opened up by salsa dancing, connecting people on both sides of the Atlantic in many transnational practices. Interpretation of the empirical data has shown that, indeed, cosmopolitan subjectivities are available not only for an elite class but potentially for many differently positioned people (Reed 2016). However, it also demonstrates that salsa's success as a worldwide kinetic language is only one side of the story. When considering a diverse sample and shedding light on the unfolding of im/mobile careers, it becomes clear that global inequalities such as unequal access to mobility, ethnicized and racialized representations and gendered roles do not stop at the edge of the dance floor.

In terms of the reproduction of harmful biases in social science research, this discussion raises a series of questions regarding research design, the unit of analysis and the analysis of actors' discourses and embodied doings. If our methods do not simply describe the world, but also enact social realities, then the choice of our tools becomes a question of ontological politics. In this paper, I have therefore asked how we could approach issues of migration, mobility and forms of global inequalities from a dance-based perspective, and how this could be helpful for overcoming essentializing accounts and a sedentarism bias. Applying a multi-sited research approach and following the im/mobile careers of artists has undoubtedly some limits, not least regarding the common critique of multi-sited research as risking the sacrifice of depth for breadth (Salazar, Elliot and Norum 2017: 10). However, as this paper has argued, such an approach – as one example among many – has the potential to add new perspectives to familiar issues in several ways.

First, approaching the social world through the lens of dance allows us to work with a sample including categories of people that we do not usually consider together, thus addressing the problems of methodological nationalism. It becomes possible to move beyond static notions of migrancy, including the migrant-non-migrant dichotomy. Thus, my research sample included dancers who could otherwise be categorized as refugee, migrant, expat, tourist or local. Using this approach, a range of im/mobilities were considered in one single analytical framework, thus rendering visible relational aspects that would otherwise have remained hidden. It also made it possible to understand better how categories of difference are made relevant in the construction of careers.

Second, a focus on dance offers a salient frame for the analysis of performances and articulations of multiple categories of difference. Research on dance has amply shown its potential to grasp the seemingly contradictory identifications that dancing individuals embody (Aterianus-Owanga, Djebbari and Salzbrunn 2019; Djebbari 2019). In the salsa circuit, meanings circulate along with travelling bodies, and the salience of these categories may change within different contexts. This paper has explored how three differently positioned salsa dance professionals negotiate their legitimacy as professionals and build their careers, taking into account the intersections of gender, ethnicity, race and class. Much research on dance focuses on the staged performance as a site of 'heightened reflexivity' and a venue for the mediation and reification of difference (Reed 2016). This study, however, has focused on such performances beyond the stage or dance floor while keeping the same ontological openness in terms of how categories of difference and expressions of belonging are negotiated in the development of dance careers. Instead of simply applying categories on to individuals, this approach shows empirically which categories are made relevant in which social contexts.

Following the im/mobile careers of artists enables us to see connections and frictions that

would otherwise remain invisible. In his poetic ethnography of four Ivorian dancers in the US, Reed (2016: 280) convincingly argues that individual life stories and performances are 'effective frames for understanding the mobile, transnational lives' of his research participants. Similarly, in this paper I have followed the social practices involved in dancers' constructions of their im/mobile careers with the aim of shedding light on the im/mobilities of otherwise less studied individuals. This approach illuminated how the lives of my research participants are entangled through a common dance practice, without losing sight of the barriers and boundaries that govern movement in our contemporary world.

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Wuppertal: Becoming a *Haut Lieu and Symbolic Space* of Dance through Diversity

by **Marion Fournier** (University of Lorraine)

Abstract

The *works* of the Tanztheater Wuppertal Pina Bausch constitute an *œuvre* that has won widespread global renown since the 1970s. After joint productions and tours in cultural capitals, the company has become more and more cosmopolitan and has attracted international audiences. Consequently, the city of Wuppertal has come to occupy a position of centrality in the dance world. The concept of an *haut lieu* in French—translated into English by "symbolic space" and originating in geography (Debarbieux 1993)—allows us to grasp such a phenomenon. In this article, Wuppertal is considered to be an *haut lieu* for four reasons: it is a real and located space; it has a strong symbolic dimension and is highly valued by dancers and audiences; it generates a flow of people; and it is experienced collectively. How do these aspects intersect with diversity? The analysis discusses this nexus by focusing on the city of Wuppertal, the Lichtburg dance studio, the Pina Bausch Foundation and Tanztheater Wuppertal, as well as the theaters where the company performs.

Keywords: *haut lieu*, geoaesthetics, mobility, diversity, dance

Introduction

The German choreographer Pina Bausch was born in 1940 in Solingen, in North Rhine-Westphalia (NRW). She was largely responsible for developing Tanztheater, a particular dance style stemming from Expressionist dance, in Germany as well as abroad. After her dance education and her first works, she became the director of Wuppertal Ballet in 1973. Up until 2009, when she passed away, Pina Bausch created more than forty works with the Tanztheater Wuppertal, her dance company. The rise of the Tanztheater phenomenon within the confines of Wuppertal, both as an artistic genre and as an institution deeply rooted in a specific cultural heritage encompassing norms, practices and narratives, can be analyzed comprehensively because it includes different disciplines, such as aesthetics, geography and history. This analysis can also be viewed as an addition to the field of innovative geography. Despite the fact that the Tanztheater company has met with very great success worldwide and has traveled a lot, its choreographer and dancers have always been based in Wuppertal, a city of 350,000 people, which explains why the choreographer's name is very often linked with that of Wuppertal.

This paper aims to elucidate the process whereby Wuppertal has established itself as a prominent cultural hub for dance. While this case study represents just one example among many in the art world, it offers a compelling opportunity to delve into the intricate mechanisms underlying the emergence of an artistic center and its consequential renown. Specifically, it allows us to examine the pathways through which a work diffuses across space, as well as a dance company's inclination to both root and uproot itself, thereby facilitating an exploration

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of the dialectic between artistic mobility and immobility. These two aspects, despite appearing as seemingly contrasting facets, are mutually supporting, like two sides of the same coin.

Wuppertal has consequently experienced a growing influence way beyond its boundaries. From the mid-1970s, the city has attracted dancers and spectators of many nationalities. This centrality incorporates suburban zones not only around the city but also around the world. Wuppertal occupies a particular position in the dance world, given the fact that Tanztheater refers to a German territory and that it has become this genre's emblematic city. From a specific local dimension, globally Wuppertal has come to be seen as an inescapable place that embodies the artistic genre called "dance-theater." The company's functioning and critical reception intersect very closely with the notion of an *haut lieu*, which appears to be the most relevant in explaining how this local space has become a symbolic space beyond its borders. If Wuppertal is a dance *haut lieu* and a central and symbolic place for the Tanztheater company, Pina Bausch in fact took artistic mobilities from the north (Germany) to the south, with a pronounced attraction for southern countries (Italy, Spain, Portugal, Brazil, Chile), at the center of her creation through travels and joint productions abroad. From 1986 to 2009 we can observe this process as an "idealized artistic decentralization" (Barriendos 2014: 157; transl. Fournier) and a centrifugal flow from Wuppertal to other, mostly southern countries. The example of Wuppertal refers constantly to the idea of mobility but emphasizes immobility as well. This mechanism also highlights an interesting link between the French word *dépaysement* (escape or disorientation) and the notion of rooting, a link that is placed at the heart of the aesthetics that Pina Bausch proposed through her works. The notion of an *haut lieu* can help us grasp this paradox.

The mechanisms of the *haut lieu* have been theorized by Bernard Debarbieux. In geography, this concept refers to a place that has a high position on a scale of values. According to Debarbieux's minimalist definition, an *haut lieu* is a "place deliberately and collectively erected as the symbol of a system of social values" (Debarbieux 1993: 5-6; transl. Fournier). The symbolic dimension comes with other aspects: it is a located space, it generates human flows, it is identified by a social marker, and last but not least it is identified collectively (Clerc 2004). This last point already makes it evident that an *haut lieu* interacts closely with mobility and diversity. The combination of all these criteria can make a place an *haut lieu*. Therefore, in those terms, Wuppertal can be considered as such. This article shows how Pina Bausch's works have contributed to making Wuppertal an important place for the dance world. We start by presenting Wuppertal as a local and symbolic spot for a global travelling company. Next, we describe the dance company's studio and explain its particular dimensions, which emerge from its status as a shelter. We then discuss the power of translocal and transnational influences, acquired through two organizations that have collected and conserved the company's archives. Finally, theaters in which the plays in Pina Bausch's repertoire are performed illustrate a collective investment represented by dancers who are no longer seen as cosmopolitan but also as "cousins from Wuppertal" (Sirvin 2001; transl. Fournier). This sheds light on the complex interplay of emotions between the audience, the dancers, and the urban environment, thereby forging a unique emotional dimension.

The corpus analyzed in this paper comprises works from Tanztheater's repertoire. It is based on press archives, video archives of public representations (from the 1970s to the 2000s), semi-structured interviews[1] with dancers and spectators in France and Germany, and a databased created with the cartographical tool/software showing circulation of the works from the 1970s until today. It exhaustively covers France and

[1] The interviews quoted in the text were conducted in French and German and have been translated by the author.

Germany, which are our study's precise fields, as well as, more partially, the works' worldwide circulation. Press articles serve as primary sources of reception, offering valuable insights into the expectations and aesthetic experiences that are situated within a specific time and place. These articles provide important interpretive frameworks that must be considered in order to grasp the nuances of audience reception and the broader cultural context surrounding the artistic works. In a cultural approach, working on the works' reception is relevant because cultural and social representations of space are very often mentioned in newspapers. Combined with aesthetics, this approach builds on cultural history and cultural geography in order to create an enlightening analytical device.

Methodological Approach: A Contribution to a Geoaesthetics of Reception

This article is part of a larger study in the arts and defines its method by crossing an aesthetics of reception, as formulated by Hans Robert Jauss (1978) in reception theory, with the geoaesthetics of Joaquín Barriendos (2009). The notion of a geoaesthetics has several aspects. First of all, it studies the influence of every geographical factor—the ensemble of spatial conditions such as territory, country or place—on the reception of an artistic work. The term then refers to the study of the effects of cultural geography—nationality or language, for instance—on theatre plays (here called works) and their reception, as well as on the artistic and international relations that are central to the circulation of an artistic work (Quir**ó**s and Imhoff 2014).

A few words should be mentioned here about the theoretical background to this study. In the columns of the scientific journal *L'Espace géographique*, Jean-Marc Besse highlights one of the presuppositions that leads the cultural disciplines to deploy spatial approaches, a reference to the work of Dario Gamboni and Thomas DaCosta Kaufmann. "Artistic creation," writes Besse, "isn't realized apart from the conditions of space and place" (Besse 2010:212-13; transl. Fournier). An analytical grid is here excerpted from a cross-disciplinary literature review in cultural history, cultural geography, and aesthetics. An exploration of common objects of research is needed to maintain a theoretical balance between these three fields. This interdisciplinary approach certifies the specificity of the thesis, which aims to describe the cosmopolitan spatial contexts of Bausch's works in order to enlighten the terms of the conditions of their emergence. Artistic recognition and notoriety are components of a geoaesthetics. The work's diffusion, intrinsically linked to expressions of notoriety, is to be considered by tracking its circulation. This approach reflects the increasing presence of spatiality in the history field. In his historical and aesthetic approach to performance, Roland Huesca mentions that the inclination toward space comes from the geohistory of Marc Bloch, Lucien Febvre and Fernand Braudel. He uses the term "*geo-esthétique*" (Huesca 2010: 46) to remind us that history is about circulation, the circulation of people, knowledge and expertise, as well as intercultural situations. Huesca states that geography is the "guiding principle for economics and politics" (2010: 46; transl. Fournier). Can the same apply to the arts as a way of catching the evolution of artistic works? The present article follows this direction by choosing to present the impact of a specific place on a larger and a global dance scene. It also takes Tanztheater Wuppertal Pina Bausch out of dance studies. The existing specific scholarly literature often focuses on the creative process of the works and provides a brief analysis of their reception, while giving relatively less attention to the intricate mechanisms associated with their journeys, trajectories, and mobilities. However, Tanztheater Wuppertal deserves to be regarded as an object of comprehensive study, employing conceptual tools from diverse disciplines. Such an approach allows us to demonstrate its status as an example that explores migration processes within the arts, highlighting the interplay between global trajectories and local re-anchoring. Additionally, it contributes to the discourse on the ascent of

notoriety through global itineraries, shedding light on the complex dynamics at play in the field of cultural recognition.

What is exactly a special place in our research fields? In the collective publication *Géoesthétique*, the historian Piotr Piotrowski (2014: 123) shared his ambition to do a "horizontal" history of art and proposed to focus more on cities that might be seen as marginal. From this innovative point of view, we could highlight new aspects of what is a research object. At first sight, Wuppertal doesn't appear to be an artistic capital, more often than not being relegated to a peripheral rank, mainly by French audiences and their critical reception. Nevertheless, Wuppertal has progressively built up a form of cultural centrality. It is worth noting that Germany's cultural policies are organized at the federal level, allowing medium-sized cities to achieve significant symbolic value and centrality within the art scene. Such cities, such as Wuppertal and Essen, both former industrial areas, have established themselves as cultural hubs with renowned schools, museums (in Essen), and strong support networks locally, regionally and nationally (the *Stadt, Land*, and *Bund*). Examining the development of this phenomenon in a medium-sized town is crucial for documenting such occurrences in federal countries and dispelling the notion that innovation is solely confined to large metropolises. Furthermore, it provides insights into the distinctiveness and strategic reflexes that are inherent in iconic projects. While the notion of an ecosystem could also have been employed to comprehend the innovative nature of Tanztheater from a socio-economic perspective, our focus lies on the concept of the *haut lieu*. This concept not only elucidates centrality in terms of its symbolic nature, it also allows us to delve into the realm of the imaginary and to see how it influences the perceptions and representations of a place. The aim here is to specify the driving forces and benefits of Wuppertal's constructed position in the dance world. Moreover, it is also about providing the tools of a specific study of dance that is largely influenced by geography.

Constructing this geoaesthetics of reception questions the emergence of an *haut lieu* through the link between artistic circulation and artistic recognition. Our hypothesis follows three steps: first, foreign cities give artistic recognition to works; second, recognition conferred on an *œuvre* eases and expands its circulation; finally, once acquired, this recognition can reach a global scale, and a process of reterritorialization can start by keeping the *œuvre* in a very symbolic place that we propose to call an *haut lieu* of dance.

Wuppertal: A Local and Symbolic Spot for a Worldwide Travelling Dance Company

Within this framework, the word "circulation" will be understood by considering the incessant back and forth between Wuppertal and other places of the production and diffusion of Pina Bausch's works. From city to city, the company's circulation created a strong sense of notoriety. Hence a first stay of the company in France, in Nancy in 1977, gave the work significant artistic recognition. The initial visit to Nancy demonstrated the Tanztheater Wuppertal's ability to identify Nancy as a vector for cultural exchanges and transfers, thereby establishing a spatial strategy in which Nancy assumes a crucial role in its international success. During the following years, various joint productions abroad confirmed the company's reputation beyond Germany. By the end of the 1970s, critics from metropolitan and other renowned places were starting to praise the choreographer, and the company was welcomed in a city that multiplies artistic centralities, namely Paris, and more precisely the Théâtre de la Ville. In the early 1980s, Paris became the first place to see a work by Tanztheater. In fact, since the World Premiere in Wuppertal, Paris has usually been the second venue for the company's creations. In 1986, the ensemble initiated works in joint productions with theatres abroad: Rome in 1986 with the play *Viktor*; Sicily in 1989 with *Palermo Palermo*; Madrid in 1991 with *Tanzabend II*; and *Masurca Fogo* in Lisbon in 1998. Tanztheater's notoriety allowed its circulation by

increasing the number of its international tours, privileging cooperation with other countries, and diffusing filmed images of the works all over the world. The easy and stable relationship with other theatres in the world offered Bausch the opportunity to relocate her company to a city with more artistic influence several times during her career, but she always declined it (Meyer 2016: 88). Nevertheless, this situation presents an enticing opportunity for a dance company to capitalize on. The decline signifies a yearning for local grounding, driven by the potential for local inspiration and the ongoing pursuit of a harmonious balance between a change of environment and a return to familiar routines. This oscillation is widely regarded as fertile ground for artistic creation and finds spatial embodiment through the symbolic positioning of the Lichtburg studio. Thus, the *œuvre* experienced a reterritorialization back to its birthplace. Dancers' and works' starting and arrival points have always been Wuppertal.

In fact, the company's mobility has to be understood in relation to a constant local rooting. These two dimensions might appear paradoxical, but they depend on each other. The more the company travels outside Germany, the more Wuppertal expands its symbolic dimension and its centrality. First of all, the fact that dancers keep returning to this location in order to create, rehearse, and perform gives Wuppertal a privileged status regarding works' creation and diffusion. Second, the connections abroad in European as well as North American, South American and Asian cities have given Bausch's works worldwide artistic recognition over decades. In fact, the reverse is also true: the more the company considers Wuppertal a rooting space, the more networks abroad and travelling devices are strengthened. There are a number of reasons for this. Wuppertal's prominent position as a venue for the creation and premieres of dance performances can be attributed to its unique approach. While the company had the opportunity to produce its works jointly abroad during its inspirational journeys, the choreographer and dancers consciously chose to prioritize Wuppertal as the primary site for their productions. This deliberate decision aims to enhance the city's symbolic and emotional significance for both the creators and the audience. By fine-tuning their creations on site, they strengthen the bonds between the city and the artistic works it stages, despite their extensive artistic mobility. This choice highlights the company's commitment to Wuppertal and reinforces the city's role in the creative process.

Let us now illustrate this artistic mobility. Works have been performed in about 130 cities in 46 countries in the past forty years. Most of these travels throughout the world were supported by cultural institutes in Germany and/or abroad. Except for Wuppertal, the Tanztheater's tours have mainly involved megacities, focusing on global art stages such as Paris, London, New York and Tokyo. Two different types of circulation can be seen: tours and joint productions. In the first case the ensemble performs works on stage for an audience, while in the second case dancers visit a city during a specific period, which might be a source of inspiration for a new work, and spend some time there finding choreographic materials and ideas, as well as rehearsing.

Wuppertal as a Local, Fixed and Physical Place

Before focusing on the symbolic value conferred on Wuppertal, let us underline the fixed and physical dimensions of such a place. How and why does Wuppertal remain a stable point of return for both dancers and audiences? And what is its appearance regarding the notion of centrality? How is it organized topologically? A first fact is important to mention because it gives Wuppertal a front-row seat: all the World Premieres take place in Wuppertal. Even the premieres of works produced jointly with much more influential cities take place in Wuppertal. If it is not comparable to cultural capitals such as Paris, London or New York, it endorses a special and diversified centrality. Contrary to its perception as a periphery, which is often emphasized in its reception in France due to the highly centralized vision of cultural policies that prevails in the

French press, Wuppertal embraces its distinctiveness. Wuppertal enjoys territorial dynamics provided by the network of cities and an easy circulation thanks to the geographical proximity of these cities to the *Land* of NRW, a region marked by its high population density. Wuppertal is bordered by cities of different sizes: the metropoles of Cologne and Düsseldorf, the cities of Dortmund or Essen, and other medium-size cities such as Solingen, Remscheid, Hagen, Leverkusen or Bochum. This observation on a regional scale is just meant to recontextualize Wuppertal's geographical position. Here is the occasion to recall the framework of this research, which is less a comparison between countries than between cultures. Therefore, center and periphery do not refer to the exact same phenomena in France as in Germany, and if Wuppertal is not a center like Paris is in France, it shows a different conception of centrality. It thus comes as no surprise that Wuppertal has an important flow of spectators. Many of Tanztheater's works are sold out within a few days of the tickets being put on sale. This expresses a large and certain radiance of the position of Wuppertal that goes beyond the local and national scales. Through representations of works and festivals initiated by Bausch, Wuppertal has maintained a link with an emergent creation outside Germany. In this way, Tanztheater Wuppertal's stage has built itself up through this permanent back and forth between other stages. Moreover, and with the vision of a network in mind, it is 25 km away from Essen-Werden, location of the Folkwang Universität der Künste, an art school that is considered one of the best in Europe. Indeed, this is the school where Bausch received her own education, as was also the case for a lot of the dancers who joined the company. The academic and teaching institution in Essen-Werden represents a potential source for the succession and ensures the transmission of an artistic legacy. Dance is usually transmitted on the basis of an "empiric process" (Apprill 2015). The geographical proximity linking the students in Essen-Werden with the dancers in Wuppertal allows a "corporal transmission" (*"corps-à-corps"* in Apprill 2015). We note the example of *Sacre* (1975), which is danced regularly by students from the Folkwang Universität der Künste. It is less about the migration of human beings than about mobility and movements of knowledge and know-how through a geoaesthetics. The migration, in those terms, can no longer be considered a migration of human beings but rather a migration of tastes, styles, shapes, movements, arts, and aesthetics. The issue is to understand how works circulate and to specify the conditions of their circulation. Here the work's authenticity and its updating process is perpetually renewed through this close learning link between Wuppertal and Essen.

In addition to a fixed location, and in accordance with Debardieux's definition, an *haut lieu* has to be visually recognizable in the landscape. The singular morphology of Wuppertal relates to this point. Indeed, it is built along the Wupper river, and it is enclaved between two valleys (Figure 1). It has an element of distinction that makes it quickly identifiable, notably thanks to its height: the sky train, the *Schwebebahn*. Often represented in the imagery (created by the critical reception of Bausch's *œuvre*: we can recall here Wim Wenders' movie *Pina*, 2009), the *Wuppertaler Schwebebahn* is often associated with the Tanztheater Pina Bausch. Even decontextualized from its real space, this particular element evokes a whole part of dance history within an imaginary of dance that is known across the world and is relevant to the notion of the *haut lieu*.

A Space with a Symbolic Dimension

Beyond being a local and physical space, Wuppertal embraces a symbolic dimension, this being one of the conditions for a space to be considered an *haut lieu*. In this way, the critical reception of Pina Bausch's work in the French press between the 1970s and 2000s offers an interesting point of view on narratives of Wuppertal made by projected representations of the city. In the French media, Wuppertal is regularly associated with the Ruhr, despite the fact that the city is actu-

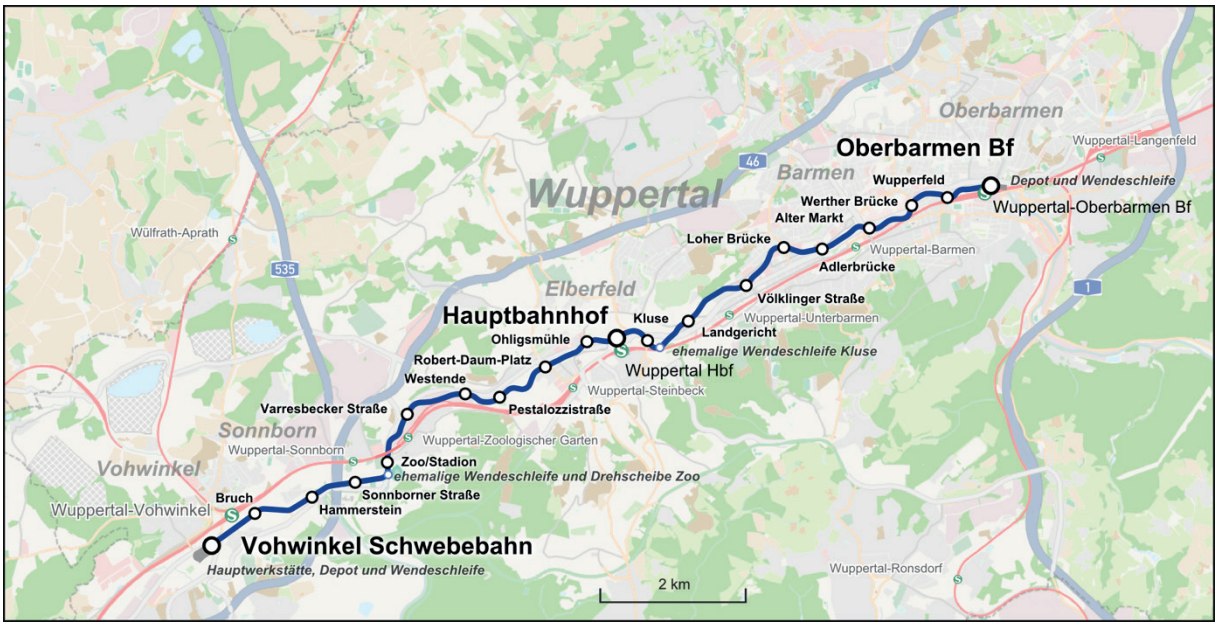

Figure 1. Wuppertaler Schwebebahn Karte © OpenStreet Map data

ally located in the Bergisches Land, slightly south of the Ruhr. As Debarbieux writes in his paper: "The symbolic nature of the *haut lieu* allows it to be dissociated from its spatial context. Very few people know where Woodstock is; no one really knows where Alesia is. But it does not matter. Two events took place there; so those places exist (unlike imaginary places), and it is an essential condition of their symbolic functioning; regardless of their location" (Debarbieux 1993: 6; transl. Fournier). Wuppertal's location does not matter as long as Bausch's creations and their premieres take place there. Critics' articles spotlight Wuppertal when they cover a company's event, even when they are not able to locate it on a map. The social interest of this geographical space is no longer about its location, but about what it represents. Bausch is often called "Lady of Wuppertal" in the press, for instance. This very tight link between a place and a personality in dance is not an isolated case: take, for instance, the case of the Béjart Ballet Lausanne (Gonçalves 2019). And such an appellation is not anecdotal: it links the figure of the choreographer directly to the name of the city as if the two were completely commutable. This commutable aspect shows how a city can endorse a symbolic value. Through this kind of designation, Wuppertal is no longer just a fixed location, it also symbolizes a whole dance *oeuvre*, being mentioned before the name of the choreographer herself.

In the shadow of "global cities" (Sassen 2002, Paquot 2011: 19), Wuppertal is a historic place for Tanztheater, as it was "popularized by Pina Bausch" (Georget and Robin 2017: 70), and it appears as the privileged city for the diffusion of her work. However, the *haut lieu* does not exactly refer to the entire city, and our analysis can be specified by focusing the discussion on some other places, leading us to explore and to question our mental map of the city. Key places within the city can be mentioned: the Lichtburg studio, the Pina Bausch Foundation and Tanztheater Wuppertal, and the theaters where these works are performed. This corresponds respectively to one place of creation and two institutional sites and spaces of diffusion.

The Lichtburg Dance Studio: One Particular Place and a Shelter for Cosmopolitan Dancers

Since 1979, the dancers have been creating in a studio set up in a former cinema called the Lichtburg (Meyer 2016: 88). Its walls inspire some of Bausch's work, for example, the wall of *Palermo Palermo* in 1989 (Wenders 2010:16). The dance studio is located in a building which is not partic-

Figure 2. The Lichtburg Studio in the 50's from outside © WDR

Figure 3. Inside of the Lichtburg (reconstructed for an exhibition) © Bundeskunsthalle Bonn

ularly remarkable at first sight. It is located in the middle of Barmen, a neighborhood in the east of Wuppertal, on the main street called Höhne and on top of a McDonald's fast-food restaurant (Figure 2). But this place is also far from ordinary according to the dancers themselves, and it even has a front-row seat in a lot of photographs and film reports about the Tanztheater company. Dancers get on with the job in this place, which has neither clock nor windows (Figure 3), which makes it an out of time and private space. These two practical details were evoked by several dancers during interviews, but they showed up in the conversation only after talking about the notion of concentration. According to the dancers we interviewed, concentration often appears as one of the most representative aspects of the Lichtburg. A dancer of the company mentions the creative process and rehearsals in Wuppertal: "She [i.e. Pina Bausch] knew it was here her dancers would be working, [and] she was right."[2] According to her, the site of Wuppertal seems to have kept dancers away from distractions that are offered to them in the big cities they visit during their tours. This dimension may also be found in critical receptions of these works. The term "industrial" and the use of grey to talk about meteorological patterns fill the pages of newspapers outside Germany that cover Tanztheater's events. The city of Wuppertal both pleases and displeases at the same time. Nevertheless, during the interviews, dancers did not just show the "periphery asset" (Barriendos 2009: 103) of the city, they introduce the Lichtburg as a very particular place that has a high emotional value for them. Most of the company's dancers, like Bausch herself, give a particular emotional charge to the Lichtburg that seems to stimulate concentration and favor creation. In their speech, this emotional link legitimizes the permanent return to Wuppertal and more precisely to the Lichtburg, which is the main site of both creation and rehearsals. Even if a work begins abroad in the context of a collaboration with another theater, the main part of the creation takes place in the Lichtburg. The studio refers to a physical place, but also to an important symbol. It is both a physical and a symbolic space. Debarbieux sums up the complexity of the phrase *haut lieu* in this double status: physical and symbolic (Debarbieux 1993).

A rehearsal assistant stated: "The Lichtburg, it's our story… Here there is a soul, I think, as soon as someone enters the room, not only for us, but also for anyone coming from the outside. I think there is something, all these lived years are here, there might be ghosts."[3] By saying this, the assistant and dancer is conveying the symbolic dimension of the place. Debarbieux's observations confirm that the object of a symbolization can be explained by imagination. He writes: "Space does not speak but refers to a meaning we have given it, which we are able to feel in its presence" (Debarbieux 1993: 7; transl. Fournier). The Lichtburg is the place where dancers have sought, created and rehearsed since the beginning of the 1970s. Different generations of dancers have worked in this studio. The long term plays a part in the place's mythical dimension. Its symbolic functioning is asserted by the gathering of dancers. One interviewed dancer said that all the company's dancers live in Wuppertal, given the schedules.[4] Wuppertal thus represents the place where the dancers work, live, and have to live, but beyond that, it is a symbol of a collective identity composed of members from very various cultures and of diverse "cultural identities" (Jullien 2016). By the phrase "collective identity", we refer to "the feeling and will shared by several individuals that they belong to the same group" (Debarbieux 2006: 342; transl. Fournier). It is important to recall such a phenomenon given the many-sided aspects of Bausch's company. In other companies across different coun-

[2] Interview with Clémentine Deluy. 22nd February 2017 in Wuppertal.

[3] Interview with Bénédicte Billiet. 26th May 2017 in Wuppertal.

[4] Interview with Clémentine Deluy. 22nd February 2017 in Wuppertal.

tries, dancers are accustomed to a lifestyle that is perhaps less rooted a single city. They often navigate between multiple artistic projects, collaborating with various companies in different cities. In contrast, at Tanztheater Wuppertal, dancers from around the world come together to join the company, which necessitates relocating to Wuppertal and becoming a resident of the city. Season after season, the group of dancers has diversified itself more and more, recruiting other dancers from a variety of backgrounds, mother tongues and cultural affiliations in general. How could one regular place, the studio, have acquired a particular meaning for such a diversified social group? Through practices and affects, the group transformed the place by conferring on it a sacred dimension. Imageries composed of press articles, documentaries and photograph albums show dancers moving inside the Lichtburg studio, around the green walls of the room that became one of the most recognizable of dance studios. By being particularly attached to a local place that in appearance is common but certainly singular, the company has reversed the usual opposition between locality and globality and articulated a high degree of mobility with locality.

When dancers evoke the emotional charge in the Lichtburg, it is often linked to personal trajectories. Beyond the fact that this studio is filled with memories and inspirations from residencies abroad (co-productions), which have always nourished its dance creation, the Lichtburg represents an arrival point for some of the dancers themselves. It is important not to forget the political approach of these migrations in the arts because these enable the redefinition of migration narratives beyond national identities. This can be regarded as a direct social and aesthetic consequence of the mobility of dancers and the ensuing effects (Bench and Elswit 2016). This aspect is sometimes shown in the works and is even exploited aesthetically. One example of this link between migration and mobility is to be observed in the heart of Bausch's works directly on stage. In *Nelken* (1982), a group of dancers pose like a ballerina. Each dancer is looking at the audience and is telling in a very few words why he or she has become a dancer. On stage in Avignon, one of them, originally from Prague, says in French with a distinct accent: "*Je suis devenu danseur parce que je ai eu une accident, parce que je ne voulu pas être soldat* (I have become a dancer because I had an accident, because I didn't want to be a soldier)(Akerman 1983). Behind this scene, there is a whole range of possibilities that offers each dancer in the Lichtburg studio the opportunity to relate part of his or her story and experience of transnationalism. This point about migration demonstrates new expressions of selfhood, as well as old ones. These modes of expression travel across the world through different countries. This way of dancing also expresses a certain migrant transnationalism; mobilities are directly involved in dance when Bausch discovers other countries, cities, dancers from different countries and adds those cultural and artistic influences to her works. In a similar way, a Greek dancer in the ensemble recalls his experience in the 1990s. He travelled by train from Greece to Germany to be auditioned. When he arrived there was no audition, but he met Bausch, who advised him to go to Essen to study dance and to stay around for the next audition. In Greece, the young dancer would be forced to do military service for one year, which would be a loss for his dance education: "When I arrived here [Germany], I had a big problem with Greece. I couldn't go back to Greece anymore because of military service. If I had gone back there, I would have been forced to do my military service, but I didn't want to. At that time, military service lasted two years." When he related his journey to Germany during the interview, the dancer insisted on the Lichtburg studio, as if this place symbolized an arrival point and at the same time a place to be anchored in. These two specific and isolated examples of dancers' personal trajectories express what it is to be understood when interviewed dancers talk about the spirit of the space and their imaginary link to this studio. The Lichtburg appears as a shelter for creation for

cosmopolitan dancers. In any case, we must take into account the emotional power associated with the place of creation and rehearsal. Narrating one's own story in the studio or incorporating one's migratory trajectory as dramaturgical material are elements of narrative and practice that bear witness to the distinctiveness of the site.

The Pina Bausch Foundation and Tanztheater Wuppertal: Two Local Chosen Sites for Translocal and Transnational Influences

In Wuppertal, some places are called after Bausch. The company's name itself specifies the artistic genre, the site and the name: Tanztheater Wuppertal Pina Bausch. After Bausch's passing, therefore, an eponymous foundation was created. These two institutions collected her choreography and the company's archives. The conservation of her material memory led to archival exhibitions, publications and revivals of works from the repertoire. As decision-makers, the foundation and the company are two different institutions, but materialize in the form of an *haut lieu* by functioning as a hyper-structure and by being localized in Wuppertal. Moreover, the two local sites participate in materializing and symbolizing Wuppertal as an *haut lieu* of dance by aspiring to give the city an emblematic building which would stand out from the urban landscape. The long-term project of the two structures is to cooperate in a joint action: the creation of a Pina Bausch Center (Pina Bausch Zentrum). It would be a whole complex located in the city center where the current Schauspielhaus is. In the meantime, the Foundation has become recognizable in the public arena thanks to a logo composed of the four letters of Bausch's forename, and it has its own office, separate from the Tanztheater Wuppertal's office.

What kinds of influence do these institutions have, and on what is this influence based? The assembling of the archives appears to be the main response. They could have been scattered around the world in a multiplicity of places, but Wuppertal is the one fixed location in which a very diverse collection of archives is to be kept. This fixed place gathers together the company, rights, and material and immaterial archives of Tanztheater. A trip to United States, where Bausch received her dance education, was undertaken in order to bring some archives back to Wuppertal (Wagenbach, Pina Bausch Foundation 2014). This action of collecting traces of the works and making them accessible in one place gives the Pina Bausch Foundation and Tanztheater Wuppertal their influence. It appears important at this point to note that archives are searchable *in situ* and with an authorization request without any possibility of being reproduced. By gathering the archives in one fixed place, a central status to this hyper-structure is guaranteed, making it possible for it to exercise a power of influence, as well as attraction.

Power would also mean being able to influence other stages worldwide, especially young stages. For this reason, the Pina Bausch Foundation welcomes choreographers from different backgrounds and nationalities—who might follow a Bauschian tradition—in a very institutional way through fellowship programs. This influence is due to the close connection between the Wuppertalien stage and the international stage, an aspect that we can detect in the critical reception to the idea of presenting Bausch no longer as a German but as an artist who transcends the "enclosing nationalities" (Noisette 2007; transl. Fournier).

In this way, individual singularities within the company are interwoven with a collective body. Despite its increasingly international composition and global touring, the company, rooted in Wuppertal, has long continued to be perceived overwhelmingly as German. However, as the members traverse the world and the theme of "elsewhere" gains prominence in their works, the concept of diversity becomes more and more significant to both the audience and the critics. This overarching theme is in line with the company's sociocultural realities, comprised of dancers with diverse backgrounds and resources. The role of diversity seems to have played a significant part

in establishing Wuppertal as a prominent center, and it remains essential for the company's place in a globalized artistic landscape.

Silhouettes, figures, dances, languages and nationalities form intricacies of diversity within the works. Consequently, the choreographer's approach is aligned with an aesthetic of diversity, bridging the gap between dance and anthropology. The incorporation of a "salad of languages"[5], mixing German with the various languages spoken within the ensemble, contributes to an aesthetic rooted in a "geographical discontinuity" (Aslan 1997; transl. Fournier). The presence of diverse nationalities generates an interesting semantic shift in the press: Bausch is no longer solely associated with German identity but, like her cosmopolitan company, acquires an international stature.

Bausch's encounters with cultural otherness are not framed within a "methodological nationalism" but rather become the subject of a "*mise en genre*", "a process that associates an aesthetic, a culture and a country" (Cicchelli, October 2018; transl. Fournier). Choreographic performances have the potential to transcend categorizations rooted in nationality. By decentering itself, the choreographic work does not aim to change the place of enunciation, which is visibly Germany, but rather to reevaluate certain principles and cultural codes in the light of encounters with different locales. The aim is indeed to decentralize in order to create and revisit knowledge such as standards of beauty and the constraints of classical ballet, for instance. While some journalists may reduce dance to simplistic national labels, Tanztheater Wuppertal is gradually becoming a manifestation of a "new internationalism" (Quirós and Imhoff 2014:13; transl. Fournier) that intertwines multiple scales and diverse geographical and imaginative regions.

Theaters: Collective Memory Spaces Beyond the Enclosing Nationalities

By taking the example of Wuppertal, we can link the notion of the *haut lieu* with others, such as the cosmopolitan aspect of the company that we explored earlier, but also notably with a "memory space" *("lieu de mémoire,"* Nora 1984). Assaf Dahdah, a geographer, points out the epistemological link between the *haut lieu* and Pierre Nora's *lieux de mémoire*. Dahdah quotes Debarbieux (1995) when he claims that space and time are two inseparable dimensions: "because it expresses a collective need of positioning between the past, the present and the future, territory is shaped by memory" (Dahdah 2015; transl. Fournier). Wuppertal is also the place where the different times of the *œuvre*'s life are articulated; for example, from 1983 Bausch began to present re-creations (*Neueinstudierungen*) of her works. In 1987 the first retrospective of her work (around twenty works at that time) was held. Whereas the company started to create works abroad (cooperating with Italy in 1986), Bausch was beginning to develop in parallel the steps of a reterritorialization of her work and, more than that, she made Wuppertal the place where the work would develop its own internal system of references by updating it with re-creations, retrospectives, and festivals. Past time corresponds to the re-creations and presentations of the repertoire, present time refers to the creation locally and the premieres, and future time coincides with processes of transmission. Wuppertal responds to a collective need to articulate the œuvre's different eras spatially: the past, the present and the future. Gathering archives in one place then means reconciling these three time-frames, which also goes along with legitimacy and responsibility for the life of the *œuvre*.

If the hyper-structure we mentioned earlier has that much influence, it is only because the sacred dimension of the works and the system of territorial values requires to be kept locally. We think here of the works themselves. We now have to explain how the company's works

[5] Interview with Daphnis Kokkinos. 10th October 2017 in Wuppertal.

in theaters all over the world have been seen as particular and even sacred. Since the middle of the 1990s, the Tanztheater's works have clearly been making a statement in the dance world and earning their reputation according to the press and critical reception. This is obviously partially due to the iconic dancers, who have been part of the company since the very beginning. In the press, descriptions conferring on the dancers a sacred dimension became much more prevalent. The dancers would have become "guardians of memory" (*"gardiens de la mémoire,"* Solis 1995:35) according to the press. When *Bandoneon* (1980), a work from the repertoire, was played in the Théâtre de la Ville in Paris in 2007, it was called a "revival" (Verrièle 2007). The event was announced with a reference to its story: "the choreographer never forgot to preserve large masterpieces [*monuments* in French] that made her renowned" (Anon 2007: 53). *Bandoneon*, the play, is qualified as "monumental" (Anon 2007: 53) and as a "performance myth" (Verrièle 2007). A few years before, in 2001, when *Wiesenland* was presented in Paris, a journalist mentioned the sacred value given to the work and the collective identification with Tanztheater's dancers: "With Pina Bausch, the Théâtre de la Ville is no longer a place of performance, but a place of worship. We await this annual event and get ready for it. It is a ritual, even better, a big family celebration […] we love those dancers as cousins from Wuppertal […] they are more than familiar […]" (Sirvin 2001; transl. Fournier).

After Pina Bausch's passing in 2009, her renown was assured worldwide and her work was repeatedly updated through a series of creations that are the homage-creations of dancers, through the transmission of Bausch's roles in *Café Müller* (1978) and *Danzón* (1995), and their incarnations, the two versions of *Kontakthof*, or through the reconstruction of the repertoire's works in other dance *hauts lieux*: l'Opéra de Paris for *Sacre*, or by other choreographers like Sidi Larbi Cherkaoui for *Café Müller*, for example. In all these cases, the reference to the place of Wuppertal is a recurring question, central to the works and the contexts of their presentation. The return to Wuppertal, to the sources, to the roots where dance and works are rehearsed, has a role in the construction of the *haut lieu* and participates in its legitimacy. These references gather together a community composed of members from various national backgrounds and strengthen it. Hence the *œuvre* takes root in Wuppertal, whereas the context of its renown is worldwide. The identification and symbolization processes of an *haut lieu* are intrinsically collective. If the works appear as a monument, it is as a collective monument.

Conclusion

Wuppertal can be considered an *haut lieu* of dance because it refers to a real and located place. The symbolic dimension of Wuppertal, the emotional charge conferred on the Lichtburg studio, the influences of two local institutions, and finally the theaters where the company's members are seen as "cousins from Wuppertal" contribute to explaining how Wuppertal has become an *haut lieu* of dance. Initially in this article, we have seen that the centrality of Wuppertal is given by the dancers' high mobility abroad, as well as by the human flows generated by audiences and dancers. The second point considered the emotional charge given to the Lichtburg regarding the migration trajectories of the dancers, while the third discussed the translocal and transnational influences of local institutions. Finally, in order to understand theaters as memory spaces, it was found necessary to consider the transformation of dancers from various national backgrounds into "cousins from Wuppertal" as a factor.

All of these observations are linked to the notion of diversity and the fact that the company is composed of cosmopolitan members. Does this place change our way of seeing and classifying space? The relation to notoriety here escapes the centralism that is usually confined to world dance capitals in a context of globalization and makes visible an asymmetrical phenomenon that persists. The *œuvre*, through its circulation, has experienced a growing notoriety. Wuppertal

has become an *haut lieu* because it has a highly symbolic dimension: it focuses power and is collectively identified. This *haut lieu* is fixed and located, and the *œuvre* returns constantly to its place of birth after acquiring renown worldwide. What is particularly noteworthy is not so much the centrality of Wuppertal itself: it was mentioned earlier that it is neither isolated nor exceptional within the political framework of a federal government like Germany's. Instead, the focus is on how its symbolic power becomes evident. This can only be understood by examining the dynamics of the company's circulation. Spatial strategies come into play, involving tours, key locations, and constant movement between major artistic hubs and Wuppertal itself. Additionally, the symbolic dimension is intertwined with the personal migratory trajectories of the dancers, which are central to Bauschian artistic creation. Furthermore, there is the iconic project that encompasses a strong effort at institutionalization, aiming to repatriate the archives and traces of the company to the local site, thereby enhancing the symbolic nature of Wuppertal on the mental map of dance. Lastly, there is the transcendental dimension of the performances, which seeks to surpass the boundaries imposed by nationalities.

This final aspect highlights how, within the works themselves, a shift occurs, with the company embodying a narrative driven by personal and collective migrations while being presented in a highly specific theater.

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