



## Research Article

Alice Aterianus-Owanga\*

# Dancing an Open Africanity: Playing with “Tradition” and Identity in the Spreading of Sabar in Europe

<https://doi.org/10.1515/culture-2019-0030>

Received July 27, 2018; accepted December 9, 2018

**Abstract:** This paper describes one of the constructions of African identity that occur through the spreading of sabar in European cities. Basing on a multi-sited fieldwork between Dakar, France and Switzerland, this paper traces the local roots and transnational routes of this Senegalese dance and music performance and presents the “transnational social field” (Levitt and Glick-Schiller) that sabar musicians and dancers have created in Europe. It analyses the representations of Africanity, Senegality and Blackness that are shared in Sabar dances classes, and describes how diasporic artists contribute to (re)invent “traditions” in migration. In this transnational dance world, “blackness” and Africanity are not homogenous and convertible categories of identification, on the contrary, they are made of many tensions and arrangements, which allow individuals to include or exclude otherness, depending on situations and contexts.

**Keywords:** Sabar, migration, tradition, identity, Africanity.

In a recent paper discussing the concept of blackness in Ghana, the anthropologist Pierre Jemima noticed that a large majority of studies that dealt with the idea of blackness in the diaspora were based on a systemic isolation of the African continent itself, and were rarely taking into account the process of racialization during colonialism and postcolonialism in Africa in order to understand current constructions of race and racialization in diasporic societies<sup>1</sup> (Jemima). In the same sense, several recent studies have highlighted how modern constructions of blackness (as well as other racialized categories) often were built through global exchanges and interconnections between Africa and the diaspora (Matory; Sansone, Barry, and Soumonni; Aterianus-Owanga and Guedj), and how, even if they could take different meanings, Africanity and blackness have been in many ways interdependent.

Thanks to the transnational turn in social sciences (Clifford, *Traveling cultures*; Basch, Glick-Schiller, and Szanton Blanc; Appadurai), new multi-sited studies have traced these transatlantic constructions of cultures and identities occurring between Africa, Europe and the Americas. The domain of anthropology of religions has been a pioneer in this perspective and has provided many conceptual tools for taking Afro-diasporic connections and circulations into account (Bastide; Matory; Capone; Guedj; Argiriadis et al.). But the anthropology of music and dance has also produced, in recent years, a series of innovative studies to understand these identity constructions occurring through transatlantic circulations (Martin, “Filiation of Innovation?”; Shain; Martin, “The Musical Heritage of Slavery”; Kelley). Thanks to their intrinsic circulatory power, music and dance have always contributed to the migration of people, ideas, cultural movements and ideologies (Pacini Hernandez; Aterianus-Owanga and Guedj), allowing individuals to resist, remember and recompose their identities in diasporic contexts. While a lot of studies in ethnomusicology

---

<sup>1</sup> These critics have been particularly prominent about Paul Gilroy’s concept of the Black Atlantic (Gilroy; Chrisman).

---

\*Corresponding author: Alice Aterianus-Owanga, University of Lausanne, ISSR, E-mail: [alice.aterianus-owanga@unil.ch](mailto:alice.aterianus-owanga@unil.ch)

or anthropology of dance have paid attention to migration and mobility pathways taking place between Africa and the Americas, a few emerging ethnographic researches deal with the experience of African dancers and musicians in Europe (Kiwani and Meinhof; Despres, *Se faire contemporain*). They have unveiled undocumented ways to experience migration and integration for Africans in Europe (Sieveking; Sawyer; Kiwani and Meinhof; Aterianus-Owanga; Rastas and Seye), and they have confirmed the importance of the anthropology of music and dance to understand diverse constructions of Africanity in the diaspora.

In this article, my aim is to highlight one of these many constructions of African identity that occur in African artists' worlds in Europe, by describing the case of Sabar dance and music movement in European cities, more precisely in France and Switzerland. Sabar is a Senegalese dance and music performance which was originally executed in women's dance circles in the streets (Penna-Diaw; Tang; Dessertine; Neveu Kringelbach, *Dance circles*; Seye). It has become very popular among Dakar's youth, and it has spread in last years to Europe and the United States (Ross; Bizas), among others, through the migration of Senegalese dancers and musicians. I will describe here how this transnational world of dance now is for some artists a space where they gain recognition and integration in Europe and where they reconstruct ideas of identity and tradition. Rather than isolating the analysis of migrants' practices in Europe from their initial context in Dakar, my aim in this article is to understand how the identity constructions and power negotiations of Senegalese dancers occur in a transnational field that permanently connects Europe to Senegal. Continuing on a tradition of research on migration, I consider that these experiences of migration should not be considered in terms of a dichotomy between two disconnected spaces, but as a circuit where different sorts of economic, cultural and affective flows travel (Cole and Groes).

What representations of Africanity, blackness and whiteness are spread through sabar teachings and performances in Europe? How are sabar artists playing between different identity categories to develop their agency and get recognition—as individuals and as dancers—in the many universes that they are crossing and connecting, between Europe and Senegal? Finally, how do these artists' travels between Senegal and Europe contribute to transform some representations of “tradition” and sabar dance itself?

In order to discuss these issues, my article is based on eighteen months of ethnographic fieldwork between Dakar,<sup>2</sup> France and Switzerland.<sup>3</sup> Still in progress, this research has consisted of the observation of several pathways of artists between Senegal and Europe, on a participant observation of dance classes and workshops (more than 250 hours until now) and on interviews with musicians, dancers, students, or administrators of African dances associations, i.e. the different actors of this dance world. In a first part of this article, I will trace briefly the local roots and transnational routes of sabar, and present the “transnational social field” (Levitt and Glick-Schiller) that sabar musicians and dancers have created in Europe. I will then pay attention to the representations of Africanity, Senegality and Blackness that are shared in sabar dance classes, and observe how diasporic artists contribute to (re)invent “traditions” in migration (Howbsbawm and Ranger). We will thus observe that “blackness” and Africanity are not homogenous and convertible categories of identification, and that, on the contrary, they are made of many “folds” (Deleuze), tensions and arrangements, to include or exclude otherness, depending on situations and contexts. The combination of a transnational perspective and an interactional methodology (Barth; Wimmer; Brubaker and Cooper) will prove how the transformation, negotiation and redefinition of tradition and Africanity boundaries occur through negotiations and connections between the many spaces and identities that these artists mobilise in their practices and interactions in Europe.

<sup>2</sup> In addition to my fieldwork in France and Switzerland, I have done a ten weeks' ethnographic fieldwork in Dakar between January and March 2018. I was following the daily activities of several sabar companies, and I have observed a two 'weeks' workshop organised for “Western” students by Senegalese dancers.

<sup>3</sup> My ethnographic research has mainly been anchored in these two countries, but I have also tried to “follow the people” in their activities and pathways (Marcus), which has led me to do short fieldworks in other European cities.

## Sabar Dance Worlds: Local Roots, Global Routes

In Senegal, the word *sabar* refers to a music instrument, a dance and a moment of performance, that has been described by several ethnomusicologists and anthropologists in the field of dance (Penna-Diaw; Tang; Dessertine; Neveu Kringelbach. *Dance circles*; Seye). Coming from Wolof and Lebou ethnic groups, *sabar* was originally a dance organised by women's association at the occasion of meetings, baptisms, or weddings, and also during night dance ceremonies called *tannëbers*. *Sabar* was seen as a "women's affair" (Seye 37) and *sabar* events were "dominated by girls and women" (Neveu Kringelbach 79), even if men used to participate in these dance events, as drummers, young boys, audience or professional dancers. Dancers and drummers who participated in these events used to belong to the griot (*gewël*) caste, considered as inferior by noble and middle-class citizens. *Sabar* events represented moments of transgression of respectability codes, provocative gestures, hip breaks and opening of wraps which suspended momentarily the norms of prudishness in this Muslim society (Neveu Kringelbach, *Dance circles*).

Therefore, since a few decades, *sabar* worlds have been affected by a series of transformation, and it has become the crucible of expression for other class, gender and ethnic identities. The first transformation is the consequence of the development of a professional network of dancers (in ballets and companies) and of a music industry around *mbalax*<sup>4</sup> music. Coming from griot families or not, several young people from the Dakar suburbs who engage in *sabar* dancing have appropriated this tradition in their performance, and male have become new "stars of this female tradition" (Seye). They have imposed a new dance style, made of virtuosity, fastness, acrobatics and demonstration of strength (Tholon; Neveu Kringelbach, *Dance circles* 84; Seye).<sup>5</sup> Whereas some dances of the *sabar* repertoire such as *farwudjar* and *lëmbel* are conceived as more feminine, other dances are considered as more gender-neutral, such as *baara mbaye*, and preferred by male dancers for their choreographies. They have also introduced new dances in *sabar* events, such as *fass*, a rhythm played at local wrestling matches, and *musicale*, an adaptation of *mbalax* music rhythms. As a consequence of the recent masculinization of *sabar* dance, many male dancers also assert a style of dancing called "*goor degg*" (real men) and create a dance style which is infused with Mouride ethos and *baye fall* hexis.<sup>6</sup> Therefore, in the present day, women who dance in companies also perform on these rhythms, and while paying attention to assert a woman's style at some moments, by playing on hips moves and emotionality (Neveu Kringelbach, *Dance circles*), they also assert their skills through the simultaneous ability to perform the same strength and athleticism as men when they dance on rhythms such as *fass* and *musicale*.

As a consequence, *Tannëbers* have become the arena for performance of and competition between these famous male and female semi-professional dancers, putting amateur dancers into the background. This new generation of dancers have created a subculture of their own, with their own media and television channels, and thanks to their video-clips, tours and connections with international spheres, they constitute new figures of success (Banégas and Warnier).

This mediatization of *sabar* events and this development of a semi-professional dance scene has led to another transformation, related to the publicization of this traditional practice which used to be private. Whereas the sexual suggestiveness and transgressive dimension of *sabar* dances used to occur in the realm of private courtyards and women circles, images of *sabar* performances are now spread in local media and on Youtube, and have in recent years been the subject of real scandals, which condemned the behaviour of women dancers as prostitution and perversion. In relation with the increasing influence of Islamic associations, *sabar* is now considered by a part of the Dakar population as a place of obscenity and perversion of women, contrary to the prudishness and respectability expected for women (Briant).

<sup>4</sup> *Mbalax* is an urban dance music distinct to Senegal, whose main feature is the use of *tama* and *sabar* instruments. It has become very popular since the 1970s (Mangin), both locally and in world-music markets.

<sup>5</sup> This male dance style is described more precisely by other authors, for example by Elina Seye.

<sup>6</sup> The word *Baye Fallism* refers to a marginal religious movement within the Mouride Sufi order, which has gained a growing popularity among the youth of Dakar (Pézeril), especially among male artists. *Baye fall* adepts worship Cheikh Ibrahim Fall, they bear several distinctive signs, such as dreadlocks, big belts, and leather necklaces, and they often assert the strong value of work.

In that sense, sabar events and dances are associated with an ambiguous status, considered on the one side as a local tradition to protect—by dancers and griot people—or as an obscene practice to fight against (Briant). In the same manner, professional dancers who engage in dance careers benefit from the advantages of fame and success, but they often take the risk to be stigmatised by a part of the citizens, who criticise their transgression of gender norms. When men dancers often take the chance to be assimilated to “*goorjiggen*” (homosexuals), stigmatisation is even worse for female dancers, who are very often confused with prostitutes<sup>7</sup>. Due to gender stereotypes and stigmata, their career is much shorter than men’s, as their family often pushes them to give up dance to get married and to have children. Even if related to stigmatisation and to a marginal subculture, the practice of sabar in semi-professional companies remains very attractive among the youth because it provides small incomes, but also because it allows them to connect to the world.

Indeed, the last transformation has been occurring in sabar scenes in the last decades, leading to new channels of connection with transnational networks and markets. Due to tourism and to the diffusion of African dances in global markets, sabar companies and events represent a new kind of “contact zone” (Clifford, *Routes*), allowing young dancers to connect to the world, and to open new gates for migration. In his discussions about colonial encounters and museums, James Clifford defined contact zones as “an attempt to invoke the spatial and temporal copresence of subjects previously separated by geographical and historical disjunctures, and whose trajectories now intersect” (*Routes*, 192). Beyond colonial context, his concept is very useful to understand how some spaces create “copresence, interaction, interlocking understandings and practices, often within radically asymmetrical power relations” (Clifford, *Routes* 191), especially in the ephemeral and mobile dance scenes that emerge around sabar performances.

In Dakar and in other touristic cities in Senegal, a “dance tourism” (Simoni; Canova and Chatelain) has emerged in last decades around the practice of sabar. Each year, from December to February mainly, hundreds of European, Japanese and American tourists come to Dakar and other coastal cities in Senegal to participate in intensive dance workshops. Often organised by sabar dancers themselves—mainly the ones who have migrated and lived in the West—these workshops are strong platforms for encounters between the local dance scene and foreigners. The latter (more often women) come to learn dance, but also to experience a cultural discovery of Senegalese cultures, through the frequentation of Dakar markets, beaches, night-clubs and popular street dance performances.<sup>8</sup> The encounters occurring in these “contact zones” between Senegalese artists and their Western students lead, sometimes, to romantic relationships, to bi-national marriages and to the migration of local dancers and musicians from Senegal to Europe or the Americas. Due to the gendered dimension of this dance tourism, it is mainly male artists who have access to these possibilities of migration by marriage, and who fulfil the aspirations to the West that many young Senegalese have (Fouquet).

Through this mobility, an important number of sabar dancers and musicians have settled and recomposed their artistic activities in European cities, among others in France and French-speaking Switzerland. As we will see in a second part, these contact zones are reinvented in Europe, where the ideas of tradition and Africanity take new meanings.

## Sabar Contact Zones in Europe: Performing an “African” and “Traditional” Blackness

Sabar dancers who settle in Europe develop their artistic practices in a context marked by a long history of representation and consummation of Black music and dance, which has evolved from the period of exotic performances in colonial exhibitions (Décoret-Ahiha), to the postcolonial market of “African dances” which

<sup>7</sup> Some women who don’t belong to griot families have also confided me that they have been strongly criticized and rejected by their own families because of their dance activities.

<sup>8</sup> For more elements about the encounters and transactions occurring through this dance tourism, see Aterianus-Owanga, *Kaay fecc*.

has emerged in the 1970s (Lefevre Mercier; Lassibille; Lefevre). In the 1980s, there was no specific class of sabar within the nebulous category of “African dances” taught in Europe. As a consequence, Senegalese dancers who arrived in Europe at that time were often pushed to teach mandingue dances and other Guinean repertoires, that were more popular among European audiences.<sup>9</sup> With the help of local associations and Europeans students, they involved in weekly classes, participated in local animations such as carnivals, and animated the parties organised by Senegalese associations in Europe.

A shift occurred in the end of 1990s and the beginning of the 2000s. At that time, a growing number of sabar dancers and musicians started to reach Europe, and African dances students became keener to discover cultural specificities hidden under the label “African dances.” A specific market has then developed for sabar in European cities; it manifests in festivals, sabar festivities such as *tannëbers*, or in dance workshops and classes.<sup>10</sup> In France for example, weekly classes of sabar are organised in most part of big and medium-sized towns. During these moments, dancers, musicians and their students experience bodily, musical, and discursive interactions through which they perform and set identity categories transcending nation, race and ethnicity in motion.

## Negotiating Ethnicity, Asserting the Nation

Amsterdam, May 2018, in a sport hall in the city-centre, several dozens of women are gathered to learn sabar dance moves with famous sabar dancers, who come from other European cities or from Dakar, especially for this festival. Even if many other events organised in Europe intend to promote Senegalese dances through festivities and workshops, “Sabar challenge” is the only European festival which includes dance classes, a night party inspired by Senegalese *tannëber* performances, and a competition where several teams of sabar students compete. Most of them are deep fans of this dance repertoire, and they travel all over Europe or in Senegal to improve their skills.

During their classes, each Senegalese dancer invited is in charge of teaching one of the many rhythms that compose the broad repertoire of sabar. Coming from different ethnic groups, different towns of Senegal and different generations of migration in Europe, they all insist nevertheless on the brotherhood they share as sabar dancers in Europe, and on the importance of supporting the initiative that one of their colleague has created to enhance their national heritage—“*sunu cosaan*” (our tradition)—in Europe. During their speeches to their student audience, or in front of the journalist sent by the National Senegalese Television to cover the weekend, they highlight the value of their work as “ambassadors” of Senegalese tradition and identity abroad.

Fieldwork notes, *Sabar Challenge festival*. May 2018, Amsterdam.

As in this event, sabar is most part of the time identified in Europe as a Senegalese “national” heritage and tradition. As here, the denomination of dance classes is “sabar dance,” and no association is made between the content of the dance or the rhythm taught (*farwudjar, yaaba, ceep bu djen, baara mbafe, yangaap, niari gorong, gumbé*), and an ethnic origin. Sabar musicians and dancers present themselves as ambassadors of a national culture during dance classes and workshops, but also during performances that they lead. Indeed, they are often invited to perform during “Senegalese nights” in night-clubs in big cities (such as *le Titan* in Paris), or during diasporic events organised by associations created by Senegalese migrants, for independence festivities or religious ceremonies. In these events, they praise the power of sabar to arouse national feelings and memories, and they perform the different rhythms of ethnic groups from Senegal, sereres, diola, peuls and of course, wolof.

This importance of the nationalist ethos that sabar artists use in their showcase in Europe reproduce in some ways the politics of identity and belonging created by cultural policies since the Senegal’s independence. Indeed, ever since the independence, the construction of the nation and of common ties between different ethnic groups and regions in Senegal has occurred not only through national politics but also through language, media and art, including music and dance (Castaldi; Mangin; Neveu Kringelbach,

<sup>9</sup> These information stem from personal interviews with several sabar dancers and instructors who have settled in Europe in the 1990s.

<sup>10</sup> Some dancers and musicians also gather around religious events, for Muslim celebrations (*korité* and *tabaski*) or for the coming of Mouride marabouts.

*Dance circles*). This national culture is strongly based on different elements of wolof culture while at the same time incorporating different elements of other ethnic groups from Senegal (Sarr and Thiaw), leading to a so-called process of “wolofisation” of national culture. In the domain of dance, this cultural nationalism has on the one side fetishised ethnic differences, by the creation and fixation in ballets of choreographies from each ethnic group in Senegal (Castaldi; Neveu Kringelbach). On the other side, the popularisation of *mbalax* and sabar dance performances in Dakar’s popular classes has created a national dance culture common to the youth in the capital. This popular dance culture which is performed in current *tannëbers* and sabar events is based strongly on wolof and lebou dance repertoires, but it is at the same time nourished by the consummation of global movements and flows.<sup>11</sup> Today, in sabar dance groups in Dakar and abroad, most part of the dancers and musicians—whatever their ethnic belonging—speak wolof, and have a knowledge of sabar rhythms and moves. As in other African countries where popular dances have strongly encapsulated national constructions (Askew; Djebbari), performances of sabar thrive on this complex Senegalese national culture which is infused both with a wolof ethos and with multiple ethnicities.

When they travel and meet in Europe, sabar dancers still assert this multiplicity and this balance between ethnic and national elements. Most of the time, sabar is transmitted as an original Senegalese “tradition.” Besides, depending on their ethnic belonging, and also on their familiarity with ethnologic theories, some dance teachers explain that dance rhythms are initially related to lebou or wolof ethnic groups. Others take the opportunity of sabar workshops and classes to teach dance repertoires from their ethnic group which are less famous than sabar, such as Serere or Diola dances. Through this multiplicity of meanings and repertoires, Senegalese dancers assert in Europe flexible national identities, depending on contexts and dances, and they highlight the many identities that they combine.

Furthermore, in Europe, this strong attachment to a national identification is often considered as part of a broader “Africa” or “African identity,” that Senegalese dancers would be representatives of. Since the 1990s, Senegalese dancers and musicians have developed their activities within the broad market of “African dances and music,” and they have collaborated with artists from other West African countries, for example for African festivals<sup>12</sup>, and Africans days (“Journées africaines”). In addition to their activities in Senegalese diasporas for national ceremonies, sabar artists perform with artists from other African countries, whether it be in “traditional,” “African contemporary” or “Afro-fusion” style. Depending on what countries and towns they settle in, many dancers explain the importance of engaging collaborations with other African artists, and to assert a kind of Pan-Africanism from below, in order to give value and visibility to an African culture that is too often marginalised or invisibilized in European cities.

As so, even if Senegalese dancers and musicians have created their own networks and markets, they are part of this broad market of Africanity which is structured by the work of associations and festivals which promote “African cultures” in Europe, and which tend to organise encounters and events between artists and repertoires from Senegal, Mali, Ivory Coast, Burkina-Faso, etc... In Lyon (France) for example, one of the main associations promoting African dances is named *Afromundo*, and its aim is to “shed the light on the diversity and legacy of African musicians and dancers, to struggle against a stereotyped and reductive vision of these aesthetics,” and to “connect all the dances that have African roots.”<sup>13</sup> In that perspective, they organise classes in Kizomba, afro-hip-hop, sabar or Congolese dances, and they try to create dance circle parties (“afro-circles”) where all these repertoires meet and mix. At the same time, while promoting hybridity and Afro-diasporic hybrid genres, this association gives advantage in their sabar classes to instructors considered as experts in the “tradition” and whose pedagogy relies more on “traditional” rhythms and moves than on new dance genres. A few Senegalese dancers interact with these global markets of Africanity and blackness to create their representation of tradition, even if most part of their connections and collaborations develop in their diasporic milieu. They use the African dance market to create new

<sup>11</sup> For example, one famous woman dancer from Dakar explained to me once that many dance steps that she has invented have been inspired by Bollywood movies and Indian dances that she has discovered on DVDs and on Youtube. Interview with Ndeye Gueye, March 2018, Guediawaye.

<sup>12</sup> In France, we can mention the festival *Africolor* in Paris or *Africa Fête* in Marseilles, and in Switzerland the *LAFF* (Lausanne Afro Fusion Festival), *Festival Couleur Café* (Geneva) or *Afro-Pfingsten Festival* (Winterthur).

<sup>13</sup> See the website of this association: <http://afromundo.fr/a-propos/>

opportunities for economic income, for recognition and for integration within European cities, where they become cultural ambassadors of Senegal and Africa.

In that way, Senegalese dancers in Europe reinvent their dance performances between ethnicity, nationalism and Africanity. As I will describe now, even if this category of Africanity is partly racialised and assimilated to an idea of blackness, it becomes above all in sabar classes an opened and accessible resource that sabar students would acquire, learn and embody through learning dance.

## Beyond Blackness? Africanity as an Open Resource

Apparently, dance workshops and classes can look like scenes of assertion of essentialized frontiers dividing African dancers and their Western audience. Indeed, sabar classes are often conceived as “intercultural” moments, which create an encounter between two different “cultures,” Africa and Europe, conceived as two blocks. The learning process of sabar is seen as a process of parting with Western or European ways of being and body techniques, in order to learn and embody an “African” or Senegalese way of moving. Observations of dance classes and interviews with dancers and students confirm the existence of racialized<sup>14</sup> or essentialized speeches that tend to present the existence of an intrinsic difference between how African and Western people dance:

Western people, they have a problem with time and rhythm. Their body is on the wrong time. Each time I see a Western person dancing, it is rare that he has the right timing. [...] Of course, I have seen European women who dance very well: Y., she dances very well, S. also that I know; but there is still something missing. It is something that is inside us, I don't know why it is inside us. It is the style... I have not yet seen a foreigner who dances sabar with the style that is required. [Interview with H., Dancer, Lyon, March 2017 \(my translation from French\).](#)

As in this conversation, some dancers consider that there are intrinsic body competences which distinguish Senegalese dancers from their European students (and also sometimes from other African dancers), and they reproduce an essentialist discourse which partly relies on racial distinctions between Africans and Western people. Beyond stereotypes appearing in interviews, this racial distinction is also visible in interactions and explanations occurring in dance classes, which often tend to interpret students' behaviour and their way of thinking, dancing and moving in relation with their belonging to the category of “toubab” in other words as “white.” In Senegal, as described by other studies, the word “toubab” doesn't only refer to phenotypic features, but to “a set of attitudes that reveals the ignorance of the local meanings and social codes” (Quashie). As so, these dance classes reproduce a distinction between “toubabs” and Senegalese people that partly relies on racial categorisation, but also on cultural and social characteristics.

But simultaneously the observation of a number of dance classes and of some pathways of European students reveal that these borders between whiteness and blackness are also porous and that the whole process of teaching sabar is to subvert them momentarily, to make the other (European) become the same (African). In their speeches during sabar parties and events, sabar musicians and dancers often insist on the fact that sabar “belongs to everybody,” and they assert that French, Swiss, German or other European women who have trained well are as skilled as Senegalese people to dance sabar, which is a “universal language.” In a same dynamic, this network of sabar musicians, dancers and students is often presented as a large “family,” who shares a common passion for this dance tradition, beyond racial borders:

“We have the heart open to share it with Europeans. Because we are all the same, there are no differences. There is not anything like “I am white, you are Black.” There are no differences, I don't see any difference. We are all human beings, we are brothers, we are sisters, you see?” Interview with Khalifa Fall, dancer, October 2017, Lausanne (my translation from French).

<sup>14</sup> Continuing on contemporary researches, I consider the notion of race as one of the many sorts of construction of alterity and difference, which—depending on cases—relies on somatic, historical, cultural and/or genealogical characteristics (Wimmer; Brubaker and Cooper).

In a way, the attempt to universalise this national heritage answers to market constraints, and the representation of the universal cohesion of “sabarists” is one of the many manifestations of a business of emotions, sociabilities and friendship that goes with the commerce of music and dance (Ericksen).

But beyond this sort of universalist discourses, the porosity of borders in Africinity is also manifested when we observe the pathways of “conversions” to Africinity (Raout and Chabloz) that some European women experience through sabar and through their interactions with Senegalese musicians and dancers. This phenomenon first appears in dance classes themselves, where students are called by their teachers to adopt as much as possible a Senegalese way of being and moving, by wearing wraps, and displaying attitudes which would make them look like real Senegalese, or real *gewël* (griots)<sup>15</sup>. During a dance workshop observed in Paris, a male dance teacher encouraged, for example, his thirty students to sing in *wolof* a song where they claimed to be as real *gewël* and to adopt gestures and positions that made their dance identifiable as griot’s.

Furthermore, within the field of sabar students, a number of women share a long history of relationships with Senegal and sabar dance, and they travel to Dakar at least once a year. Some of them are married with Senegalese musicians or dancers and organise workshops for them in their home city in Europe, contributing largely to the promotion of sabar and Senegal in European contexts, by making their economic and cultural capitals available for their husbands’ or friends’ activities<sup>16</sup>. In discussions collected with these women, the practice of sabar appears often as part of a broader experience of self-development through the embodiment of non-western activities, and through travels in Africa. In some cases, it can lead to deeper identity conversions, where these women engage into a “quest for themselves through the practice of the others” (Raout and Chabloz): they not only involve in the practice of sabar but also enrol in the learning of *wolof*, undertake changes in their social spheres or transform their clothing. Questioned about their feelings of belonging to Africinity, two women engaged in these deep relationships with sabar and Senegal gave me some interesting views about this process of identification:

Some people tell me “you are better African than the Africans.” But I don’t plan to do it, it’s just coming. I don’t know, it’s a part of me. I can’t explain it. Interview with S., sabar student, Dakar, January 2018.

Me, I really don’t feel Senegalese, but my boyfriend and all Africans that I know tell me that I am a real African. Not only because of dance, but also because of how I am. My colleague at work, who is not an African but has a sister married to a Congolese, always tells me that “you are a real African, you speak loud as African people, you have a way to be and to move, that’s it.” But I don’t feel it. I am so much... I am not all the time in this milieu. Yes, I dress up with African clothes that I have made done by a sewer, but I am not all the time... like some women who want to transform themselves. But people often tell me that. You know, in Senegal, people call me the “white griot”! Interview with M., sabar student, Geneva, June 2018 (my translation from French).

As we see here, these identifications with Africinity are not unequivocal, and they are much more related to an assignation of Africinity by the others than to a simple self-identification by these women. Africinity represents an opened and flexible resource that dancers and musicians transmit to their students through their teachings, and through an interactional process of identity assignations. As proved by this observation of interactions and pathways in the conversion of sabar students, the Africinity displayed and invented on the sabar scene is not exclusive and reduced to a blackness enclosed in racial borders. On the contrary, its borders are porous, and musicians and dancer’s main role is to include foreigners into the global world of “sabarists” that they are creating.

Another interesting aspect in order to understand the meaning of Africinity in this field is to observe the experience of the few European students with African origins who also attend to these classes. It reveals that the belonging to the Sabar Senegalese world doesn’t mainly rely on a racial categorisation based on skin colour and ancestry, but much more on distinctions between Africa and the West, a category which

<sup>15</sup> Griots are considered to be the original possessors and experts of sabar tradition (Tang).

<sup>16</sup> Altair Despres has well analysed this involvement of European women in African dancers’ careers (Despres, *Se faire contemporain*).



also includes people identified as “black.”

In February 2016, during a sabar class close to Lyon, the dance teacher Yelly Thioune expressed his enthusiasm towards the original thing happening in his class that day: for the first time for more than ten years that he had given sabar workshops and classes in Europe, two of his “African sisters” were attending the class. As demonstrated by Yelly’s surprise, the presence of dancers and musicians who assert African origins is not customary in sabar classes and workshops in Europe, contrary to other countries such as the United States, where sabar classes are a place of encounters between African Americans and the new generations of West African migrants (Bizas). Nevertheless, a few exceptions of people connected to Africa by family origins exist, particularly in big cities in France that comprise an important immigrant population, such as Paris, Marseille, and to a lesser extent Lyon. Some of these students from a migrant background have Senegalese origins and have grown up in Europe, and they learn sabar to get closer to their origins. Just as the teaching of the wolof language, sabar allows them to feel recognised as “real Senegalese” when they go back to Senegal for holidays. Others have no specific ties with Senegal, and they consider sabar as a “traditional” repertoire that can get them get closer to their African roots. I met, for example, a young Franco-Ivorian woman at the occasion of several sabar workshops, who explained that during her childhood in Lyon, she often attended sabar ceremonies organised by her Senegalese neighbours and that she was always fascinated by the spectacle of these powerful women dances. Now a dancer and comedian, she is following sabar classes because from her point of view this dance has remained purely “traditional.” For her as for several dancers that I encountered, sabar is indeed often presented as an original African performance, which in contrast to other modern dance styles (such as afrobeat, coupé décalé or African contemporary styles) is not mixing with other dance repertoires—a perception which is actually erroneous, as sabar creations keep incorporating elements from other repertoires, inspired for example by Bollywood movies or by contemporary hip-hop music videos.

Whether they have African origins or not, interviews and observations reveal that social borders and definitions of Africanity do not rely on a racial border, but rather on a set of experiences, knowledge and attitudes that compose the border between Africa and the West. For example, one student who has West-African origins has explained to me that in her experiences with sabar artists in Dakar or in Europe, she often had the feeling to be treated differently than other “white” European students, but that she was still considered as a “toubab,” for example in terms of economic expectations. Likewise, belonging to Senegalese sabar worlds does not only rely on skin colour or on African origins, but much more on the knowledge of different types of cultural codes that allows one to interact with sabar musicians and dancers. This includes dance itself, but also the knowledge of the wolof language, the experience of travelling in Senegal, the ability to understand a set of implicit codes, the knowledge of the Mouride religious customs, and a series of other attitudes which mark the competence to behave as a Senegalese. This is particularly striking in discussions that I had with one sabar teacher (who is now settled in Germany) about the arrival of North American dance students in Senegal for dance workshops, who this dancer considered to be more “difficult” than European women:

With these (African American) women, it is more difficult. Let’s say they are impolite! When they say no, it’s no. It’s hard to work with them, they insult you sometimes. They say “I don’t want to eat this, I don’t want to eat that.” They are like Africans, but they don’t want to live as Africans; they want to live as in Europe and in the United States. While for me, if you come to Africa, it is to see what we are living, to live as African people. If they want to live as they live in Europe, it is not worth coming here. On the contrary, Europeans, when they come to Senegal, they live as typical Africans; they wear wraps, they chat with the people, they dance, they ask questions, they don’t bother you. They eat everything that we eat.  
Interview with H., Dancer, Lyon, March 2017 (my translation from French).

As expressed here, the issue in this dance world is not to assert a global blackness that would connect all people from African descent, but really to invent a Senegalese and African identity that would be opened and reachable all over the world, including for Europeans and White people. Musicians and dancers play an important part in this conversion to Africanity, as “converters” (Raout and Chabloz) who teach their students different sorts of elements that will make them get closer to the “African way of life,” through dance workshops in Europe, or through bringing them to Senegal.

In the first two parts of this paper, we observed the local roots and transnational routes of sabar, and we started to trace the constructions of Senegalese, Black and African identities occurring in this transnational dance world which is connected by circulations of Senegalese artists and their students between Europe and Africa. By describing how artists play with flexible and opened conceptions of Africanity and Senegality, we have noticed implicitly how the issue of “tradition” is particularly important in discussions, interactions and legitimation issues of the sabar world. The last part of this paper will focus more precisely on this issue of tradition, to describe how sabar dancers and musicians on the move contribute to reinvent the content of this tradition through their interactions with African dance market and students.

## (Re)inventing the “Tradition” of Sabar in Europe

Paris, July 2017, in a sport hall in the popular neighbourhood of La Chapelle, several dozens of dancers are gathered around the sounds of a collection of sabar musicians and instruments, in order to participate in this annual workshop. The organiser of the event, Yama Wade, is one of the most famous sabar instructors in Europe since she has developed a specific technique to teach European students the “pure tradition” of sabar. During these two weeks, students gather from Europe, the United States and Asia; Yama Wade also invites other sabar instructors and musicians to assist her.

This day, the sabar teacher who introduces the class is a famous choreographer and dancer who has grown up between Louga and Dakar, and who has settled in the South of France a few years ago. He has become famous in sabar dance networks in France and Switzerland, and he is often assisting Yama during her workshops in France. To introduce his class, as many other dancers, he praises Yama’s pedagogic qualities, describing her as the one who knows the real “tradition” of sabar and as an elder in terms of generation. For her part, during her sessions of teaching and the “conferences” that she gives during the week, the so-called “Queen of sabar” underlines the major importance of her mission: preserving the real sabar from all contemporary perversions that this tradition is experiencing.

This dance festival is one of the main events which gathers the network of European sabar, a milieu which is united around a common aim to enhance the “tradition” of sabar throughout the world, but which happens to be also penetrated by diverging conceptions of tradition and transmission.

At the early age of anthropology, the concept of tradition was considered as one of the core objects in this discipline, which was devoted to the study of “exotic” and “traditional” societies. The critical turn in our discipline has later allowed a deconstruction of this notion, considered no more as a fix set of cultural features transmitted from generation to generation, but rather as a strategic and constructed resource. Anthropologists such as Jean Pouillon or Gerard Lenclud have demonstrated that what was often presented as “tradition” was actually a way to shape a certain vision of the past in order to make it correspond to present stakes and meanings (Pouillon; Lenclud). Meanwhile, historians have highlighted that many traditions considered as ancient have actually been invented rather recently (Hobsbawm and Ranger), through interactions and exchanges with other societies and social groups, and as an answer to situations of domination, for example during colonisation (Mary). Finally, recent researches dealing with migrations have demonstrated that contrary to some stereotyped visions of “culture” and “place,” tradition was not dependent on locality, but that it was permanently reconstructed through mobilities of people and goods, among others through tourism and migration (Capone; Guedj).

The case of sabar is a strong example of how migrations and movements, contrary to being the place of a break with “tradition,” are the lever of creation of ideologies of “back to the roots” and traditionalism. Yama Wade is one of the most interesting examples of this process. Born in a Lebou family of Dakar where she has learnt sabar since childhood, she arrived in Paris in 1992, after a career in the best ballets of Dakar, and she started by teaching “djembe”<sup>17</sup> dances, which was more popular at that time in Europe, before she engaged in the transmission of sabar. After a few years, she understood that techniques developed by her peers to teach sabar were doomed to fail, as—from her point of view—other sabar instructors were only teaching “toubabs” a minimal knowledge of sabar, reduced to the transmission of choreographies. Contrary to this, she has developed a pedagogy which aims at transmitting sabar as a language, and to

<sup>17</sup> In the discourses of sabar dancers from Dakar, the word “djembe” refers to mandingue dances and repertoires, that are accompanied by this instrument.

make each student understand its “grammar” and “vocabulary” in order to allow him/her to speak and to be autonomous in improvisation solos, rather than only reproducing teachers’ choreographies. Through that attempt, Yama’s aim is to resist contemporary transformations of sabar performance in Dakar and to preserve a “traditional culture” which is “endangered.” Contrary to the current dance fashion among Dakar’s youth, which permanently creates new rhythms and has forgotten many old dances, Yama insists on the importance to safeguard old dance rhythms which are not practised anymore in contemporary tannëbers, such as *yaaba*, *ndëp*, or *dagañ*.

In Yama’s vision, this pedagogy is also presented as a resistance against western paradigms of dance “techniques,” that she conceives as a European way to fix in a rigid frame something that is essentially fluid, and that each person needs to find by himself/herself:

“One cannot learn sabar by basing it on a technical support, and this is what creates a problem with Europeans. Europeans always need a technical support. I have the habit to say that they are skilled to transform anything into a technique. [...] But I don’t want to go in this direction. I am integrated, assimilated, open-minded, I can do everything as Europeans do, but this is the only thing that I don’t want to assimilate from Europeans, this technical aspect.”<sup>18</sup>

On the contrary, Yama uses a pedagogy based on the dissection of musical rhythms and body movements and individual “coachings” to encourage her students to create their own sabar, while respecting the grammar and codes of the dance. As so, her traditionalist pedagogy is conceived as a way to preserve sabar’s deep improvisational dimension and its power of expression in individual singularities.

The interesting point regarding Yama’s reinvention of tradition in migration is that in the course of her career and her interactions with African dance students and associations, Yama’s method and her presentation of tradition has intertwined with the influences encountered; her discourse reveals an arrangement between different conceptions that Yama has composed through her interactions with the market of African dances and with her students. This is obvious in the presentation of sabar as a healing practice and as a means for self-development that Yama gives in her classes. At the occasion of an intensive workshop, she described, for example, her teachings as a way for her students to access their “inner truth” and to free themselves:

You are all here for a common aim: to acquire freedom, independence, to develop something that comes from yourself, a freedom that is inside of you, and this is why you’re here. Yes, this is the truth. And you cannot get this if us, as teachers, we come, and we impose our sabar. [...] It doesn’t work like this in Senegal. This is why each person has his own sabar. In sabar, there’s a part where you need to learn to develop your own sabar, to do your choices, to free yourself. Yama Wade, Lyon, April 2017 (my translation from French).

Even if presented as intrinsically related to a Senegalese conception of sabar dance, Yama’s method appends to a vocabulary and to methods which resemble clearly some contemporary practices of “self-development,” that are present in the practice of spirituality and disciplines such as yoga and meditation (Requilé). Several of Yama’s students consider sabar as a way to heal their inner pains, and Yama herself often explains that “sabar heals,” both physically and psychically.

Actually, this representation of sabar performance as a healing practice both answers to European fantasies about extra-European mystic (Hoyez; Chabloz), and to certain uses of sabar performance in wolof and lebou society. Indeed, several rhythms from the sabar repertoire are known to stem from local rituals, such as the *ndëp* possession ritual (Neveu Kringelbach, *Dance circles* 86). In Dakar neighbourhoods, particularly among the Lebou ethnic group, *ndëp* ceremonies are employed to cure psychological troubles. Yama Wade was one of the first to include *ndëp* movement in her classes for Western people, as a consequence of her project of preservation and transmission of sabar origins. Through the channel of her teachings and interactions with her students, Yama invents in that manner a pedagogy of sabar which combines different conceptions of dance and “tradition,” associating the healing power of sabar observed in Dakar, with the conceptions and expectations of her western audiences.

<sup>18</sup> Extract of the documentary movie, Chiffot, Nadine. “*Sabar, souffle de vie*,” 2015.

In the field of African contemporary dance, Altaïr Despres describes that African artists are pushed to “westernize” themselves in order to gain credibility in a dance field that first emerged in the western hemisphere,” while at the same time retaining a certain degree of Africanity (Despres, *Les figures imposées de la mondialisation*). During their travels in Europe, the experience and identity representation of these African contemporary dancers are partly conditioned by their inscription within a network of European institutions and by their expectations or visions of dance, Africa and the artistic scene. On the contrary, the field of sabar has developed in Europe aside from cultural institutions, and the spreading of sabar in Europe has relied mainly on the action of some individuals such as Yama Wade, who have adapted their transmission of “tradition” basing on interactions with individuals and associations, or on their individual pathway, rather than on the format imposed by Western institutions.

Through her teachings all over Europe and her collaborations with associations which intend to promote sabar, Yama is contributing to create another image of the “tradition” of sabar in Europe, that has inspired a lot of her peers and the young generation of sabar artists in Europe. In order to impose her vision of tradition, she transmits a certain conception of sabar to her students, but she also tries to involve the new generation of sabar instructors settled in Europe. As part of the first generation of sabar dancers who have come to Europe and have spread sabar, she receives respect from the youngest dancers coming to Europe, and many of them request her support to start their activities and to integrate in this dance world.

Surely, her visions and conceptions of the tradition of sabar don’t win unanimous support, and many other dancers and students don’t share her rigorous vision of “tradition.” On the one side, a part of European students criticise the harshness of her pedagogy and her severity with her followers. On the other side, other sabar teachers develop different conceptions of sabar transmission and pedagogy: some dancers insist more during their classes on fun, and inclusion of new dance moves which are popular among Dakar’s youth, such as *musicale* or *fass*, considering that Yama takes the risk of being cut from Dakar’s current sabar life; others who adhere to *bayefall* religion may favour in their teachings the promotion of *bayefall* dances and rhythms, that they include as part of the traditional sabar repertoire. But beyond these distinctions, most part of sabar dancers rely in their teachings to European students on the same discourse about tradition, considered as a main criterion for their legitimacy as teachers and for the value of their knowledge.

Consequently, these artists on the move participate in the reinvention of a Senegalese dance repertoire in Europe and produce different sorts of “roots in reverse” (Shain) of sabar tradition. Contrary to models which tend to locate the “pure tradition” in an original locality, and as proved by many studies about the transnationalisation of music or religions, sabar tradition is now (re)invented out of its initial space, through global mobility, connections and interactions.

## Conclusion

In past times, sabar dance circles were considered as a transgressive scene within Dakar’s society, where women could subvert social norms of respectability and resolve different types of tensions. But since a few decades, it has become a new sort of “contact zone” where different individuals and social groups recompose subjectivities, power relations and identity categories. Dakar’s new subculture of sabar dancers meet up there with European people and engage in interactions, transactions and circulations which allow them to accomplish social mobility, and sometimes to achieve their dreams of migration to Europe.

While maintaining connections with their dance groups, neighbourhoods, families and towns of origin, through digital connections and travels back to Africa, sabar dancers and musicians recompose, in Europe, opportunities to maintain their activity, through dance classes and performances. Around the transmission of sabar in migration, the “contact zones” (Clifford, *Routes*) that they recompose become a place where ideas of Africanity, Senegality, and tradition are debated and redefined. Far from being fix and rigid categories, these identity categories are porous, fluid and flexible, and allow social actors to play with social frontiers, depending on the situations and markets that they are encountering. In order to pursue their strategies of integration and success within African dance markets, these artists finally contribute to set “tradition” in motion and to transform Africanity into an open resource, by playing the role of “converters” for their students and by displaying their reinvention of national, ethnic and African identities.

## Works Cited

- Appadurai, Arjun. *Modernity At Large: Cultural Dimensions of Globalization*. University of Minnesota Press, 1996.
- Argyriadis, Kali, et al. *Religions Transnationales des Suds: Afrique, Europe, Amériques*. [Transnational religions from the South: Africa, Europe, America]. L'Harmattan, 2012.
- Askew, Kelly M. *Performing the Nation: Swahili Music and Cultural Politics in Tanzania*. University of Chicago Press, 2002.
- Aterianus-Owanga, Alice. "'Gaboma', 'Kainfri' et 'Afropéen.' Circulation, création et transformation des catégories identitaires dans le hip-hop gabonais." ["'Gaboma,' 'Kainfri' and 'Afropean.' Circulation, creation and transformation of identity categories in Gabonese hip-hop]. *Cahiers d'études africaines*, vol. 216, no. 4, 2014, pp. 945-74.
- . "'Kaay fecci!' (Come dance!) Economic, cultural and intimate flows in the 'dance tourism' of sabar (Senegal—Europe)". *Destination Africa. Contemporary Africa as a Global Meeting Point*. Edited by Mayke Kaag et al. Brill, Forthcoming.
- Aterianus-Owanga, Alice, and Pauline Guedj, editors. *Musiques Dans 'l'Atlantique Noir'*. [Music in the black Atlantic]. Editions de l'École des hautes études en sciences sociales, 2014.
- Banégas, Richard, and Jean-Pierre Warnier. "Nouvelles figures de la réussite et du pouvoir." [New figures of success and power] *Politique africaine*, no. 82, 2001, pp. 5–23.
- Basch, Linda Green, et al. *Nations Unbound Transnational Projects, Postcolonial Predicaments, and Deterritorialized Nation-States*. Gordon and Breach, 1994.
- Bastide, R. *Les Amériques Noires: Les Civilisations Africaines Dans Le Nouveau Monde*. [Black Americas: African Civilizations in the New world] Editions L'Harmattan, 1996.
- Bizas, Eleni. *Learning Senegalese Sabar: Dancers and Embodiment in New York and Dakar*. Berghahn Books, 2014.
- Briant, Sarah. "Mettre en Scène l'Obscène. Les Usages Chorégraphiques du Sabar par la Scène Contemporaine Dakaroise." [Staging the obscene. Choreographic uses of sabar by the Dakar contemporary scene] *Danser contemporain: Gestes croisés d'Afrique et d'Asie du sud*, Deuxième époque, 2018, pp. 137-68.
- Brubaker, R., and F. Cooper. "Beyond 'Identity.'" *Theory and Society*, vol. 29, no. 1, 2000, pp. 1-47.
- Canova, Nicolas, and Magali Chatelain. 'Émergence et structuration d'un tourisme dansant'. [Emergence and structuration of a dance tourism] *Géographie et cultures*, no. 96, Dec. 2015, pp. 109-30.
- Capone, S. "Religions 'en Migration': De l'étude Des Migrations Internationales à l'approche Transnationale." [Religions in Migration: from Research on International migration to the Transnational approach] *Autrepart*, no. 4, 2010, pp. 235-259.
- Castaldi, Francesca. *Choreographies of African Identities: Négritude, Dance, and the National Ballet of Senegal*. University of Illinois Press, 2006.
- Chabloz, Nadège. *Peaux Blanches, Racines Noires: le Tourisme Chamannique de L'iboga au Gabon*. [White skins, black roots: chamanic tourism of iboga in Gabon], Academia-Harmattan, 2014.
- Chrisman, Laura. *Postcolonial Contraventions: Cultural Readings of Race, Imperialism and Transnationalism*. Manchester University Press, 2003.
- Clifford, J. "Traveling Cultures." *Cultural Studies*, edited by Grossberg L. et al., Routledge, 1992, pp. 96-116.
- . *Routes: Travel and Translation in the Late Twentieth Century*. Harvard University Press, 1997.
- Cole, Jennifer, and Christian Groes, editors. *Affective Circuits: African Migrations to Europe and the Pursuit of Social Regeneration*. University of Chicago Press, 2016.
- Décoret-Ahiha, Anne. *Les danses exotiques en France 1880-1940*. [Exotic dance in France 1880-1940] Centre national de la danse, 2004.
- Deleuze, Gilles. *Le Pli. Leibniz et Le Baroque*. [The fold. Leibniz and The Baroque] Minuit, 2014.
- Despres, Altaïr. "Et La Femme Créa l'homme. Les Transactions Culturelles Intimes Dans La Danse Contemporaine Africaine." [And Woman created Man. Intimate cultural transaction in contemporary African dance] *Sociologie*, vol. 6, no. 3, 2015, pp. 263-278.
- . *Se Faire Contemporain: Les Danseurs Africains à l'épreuve de La Mondialisation Culturelle*. [Making oneself contemporary: African dancers stand the test of cultural globalization] Publications de la Sorbonne, 2016.
- Dessertine, Audrey. "Une initiation diffuse à la sexualité." [A diffuse initiation to sexuality] *Civilisations. Revue internationale d'anthropologie et de sciences humaines*, no. 59-1, June 2010, pp. 89-108.
- Djebbari, Élina. *Le Ballet National Du Mali: Créer Un Patrimoine, Construire Une Nation. Enjeux Politiques, Sociologiques et Esthétiques d'un Genre Musico-Chorégraphique, de l'indépendance Du Pays à Aujourd'hui*. [The National Ballet of Mali: Creating A Heritage, Building A Nation. Political, Sociological and Aesthetic Issues of a Musico-Choreographic Genre, from the Independence to the Present]. Paris, EHESS, 2013.
- Ericksen, Julia A. *Dance with Me: Ballroom Dancing and the Promise of Instant Intimacy*. NYU Press, 2011.
- Fouquet, Thomas. "Imaginaires Migratoires et Expériences Multiples de l'altérité. Une Dialectique Actuelle Du Proche et Du Lointain." [Migratory Imaginations and Multiple Experiences of Otherness. A Current Dialectic of the Near and Far] *Autrepart*, vol. 41, no. 1, 2007, pp. 83-98.
- Guedj, Pauline. *Panafricanisme, Religion Akan et Dynamiques Identitaires Aux États-Unis: Le Chemin Du Sankofa*. [Pan-Africanism, Akan Religion and Identity Dynamics in the United States: The Sankofa Path] Editions L'Harmattan, 2011.
- Hobsbawm, Eric J., et Ranger Terrence, editors. *The Invention of Tradition*. Cambridge University Press, 1992.

- Hoyez, Anne-Cécile. *L'espace-Monde du Yoga. Une Géographie Sociale et Culturelle de La Mondialisation des Paysages Thérapeutiques*. [The global space of Yoga. A social and cultural geography of globalization of therapeutic landscapes] PhD Dissertation, Université de Rouen, 18 Nov. 2005.
- Jemima, Pierre. "L'Afrique et la question de la blackness: exemples du Ghana." [Africa and the issue of blackness: examples from Ghana] *Politique africaine*, no. 136, 2014, pp. 83-103.
- Kelley, Robin DG. *Africa Speaks, America Answers: Modern Jazz in Revolutionary Times*. Harvard University Press, 2012.
- Kiwan, Nadia, and Ulrike Hanna Meinhof. *Cultural Globalization and Music: African Artists in Transnational Networks*. Palgrave Macmillan, 2011.
- Lassibille, Mahalia. "'La danse africaine,' une catégorie à déconstruire." ['African dance': a category to deconstruct] *Cahiers d'études africaines*, vol. no. 175, no. 3, Sept. 2004, pp. 681-90.
- Lefevre, Betty. "Des danses (africaine, contemporaine) sous le regard de l'autre: jeux d'influences et déplacements des perceptions." [African and contemporary dances under the gaze of the other: games of influence and displacements of perceptions] *Présence Africaine*, no. 183, 2011, pp. 65-77.
- Lefevre Mercier, Isabelle. *Les danses noires de l'occident: analyse sociologique et interprétation de l'apparition en Europe d'une activité corporelle dansée: l'exemple des cours africains de Paris*. [Black Dances of the West: Sociological Analysis and Interpretation of the Appearance of a Corporeal Dance Activity in Europe: the Example of the African dance classes in Paris] PhD Dissertation, Université Paris Diderot-Paris 7, 1987.
- Lenclud, Gérard. "La Tradition n'est plus Ce Qu'elle Était.... Sur Les Notions de Tradition et de Société Traditionnelle En Ethnologie." [Tradition is No more what it used to be... About the notion of tradition and traditional society in Ethnology] *Terrain. Anthropologie & Sciences Humaines*, no. 9, 1987, pp. 110-123.
- Levitt, Peggy, and Nina Glick-Schiller. "Conceptualizing Simultaneity: A Transnational Social Field Perspective on Society1." *International Migration Review*, vol. 38, no. 3, Sept. 2004, pp. 1002-39.
- Mangin, Timothy. *Mbalax: Cosmopolitanism in Senegalese Urban Popular Music*. PhD Dissertation, Columbia University, 2013.
- Marcus, George E. "Ethnography in/of the World System: The Emergence of Multi-Sited Ethnography." *Annual Review of Anthropology*, vol. 24, no. 1, 1995, pp. 95-117.
- Martin, Denis-Constant. "Filiation of Innovation? Some Hypotheses to Overcome the Dilemma of Afro-American Music's Origins." *Black Music Research Journal*, vol. 11, no. 1, 1991, pp. 19-38.
- . "The Musical Heritage of Slavery: From Creolization to 'World Music.'" *Music and Globalization. Critical Encounters*, edited by Bob W. White, Indiana University Press, 2012, pp. 17-39.
- Matory, James Lorand. *Black Atlantic Religion: Tradition, Transnationalism, and Matriarchy in the Afro-Brazilian Candomblé*. Princeton University Press, 2005.
- Neveu Kringelbach, Héléne. "Moving Shadows of Casamance: Performance and Regionalism in Senegal." *Dancing Cultures: Globalization, Tourism and Identity in the Anthropology of Dance*, vol. 4, 2012, p. 143.
- Neveu Kringelbach, Héléne. *Dance Circles: Movement, Morality and Self-Fashioning in Urban Senegal*. Berghahn Books, 2013.
- Penna-Diaw, Luciana. "La danse sabar, une expression de l'identité féminine chez les Wolof du Sénégal." [Sabar dance, an expression of female identity in Wolof society from Senegal] *Cahiers d'ethnomusicologie. Anciennement Cahiers de musiques traditionnelles*, no. 18, Dec. 2005, pp. 201-15.
- Pézeril Charlotte. *Islam, mysticisme et marginalité: les Baay Faal du Sénégal*. [Islam, Mysticism and marginality: the Baay Faal from Senegal] L'Harmattan, 2008.
- Pouillon, Jean. *Tradition: Transmission or Reconstruction?* Werner-Gren Foundation for anthropological research, 1968.
- Quashie, Héléne. "La 'blanchité' au miroir de l'africanité." ['Whiteness' in the mirror of Africanity] *Cahiers d'études africaines*, vol. No. 220, no. 4, Dec. 2015, pp. 761-86.
- Raout, Julien, and Nadège Chabloz. "Corps et Âmes. Conversions Touristiques à l'africanité." [Body and Souls. Tourist Conversions to Africanity] *Cahiers d'études Africaines*, vol. 1-2, no. 193-194, 2009, pp. 7-26.
- Rastas, Anna, and Elina Seye. "Music as a Site for Africanness and Diaspora Cultures: African Musicians in the White Landscape of Finland." *African and Black Diaspora: An International Journal*, vol. 9, no. 1, Jan. 2016, pp. 82-95.
- Requillé, Élise. "Entre souci de soi et réenchantement subjectif. Sens et portée du développement personnel." *Mouvements*, no. 54, May 2008, pp. 65-77. *Cairn.info*.
- Ross, Alisha. 2008. "The Changing Faces of Drum and Dance in Senegal—Jembe and Sabar Repertoire in Traditional and Contemporary Contexts, From Dakar To Boston." M.A., Ann Arbor, United States.
- Sansone, Livio, et al. *La construction transatlantique d'identités noires: Entre Afrique et Amériques*. [The Transatlantic Construction of Black Identities: Between Africa and the Americas] Karthala Editions, 2010.
- Sawyer, Lena. *Racialization, Gender, and the Negotiation of Power in Stockholm's African Dance Courses*. Publisher???? 2006.
- Seye, Elina. "Male Dancers of Sabar—Stars of a Female Tradition." *African Music: Journal of the International Library of African Music*, vol. 10, no. 2, 2016, pp. 35-56.
- . "Performative Participation: Embodiment of Identities and Relationships in 'Sabar' Dance Events." *Dance Ethnography and Global Perspectives*, Palgrave Macmillan, London, 2014, pp. 58–74.

- Shain, Richard M. "Roots in Reverse: Cubanismo in Twentieth-Century Senegalese Music." *The International Journal of African Historical Studies*, vol. 35, no. 1, 2002, pp. 83-101.
- Sievekings, Nadine. "Empowerment via Embodiment: The Transcultural Practice of African Dance in Berlin." *Sociologus*, vol. 52, no. 2, 2002, pp. 215-44.
- Simoni, Valerio. "Dancing Tourists: Tourism, Party and Seduction in Cuba." *Emotion in Motion: Tourism, Affect and Transformation*. Edited by Mike Robinson and David Picard. Routledge, 2012, pp. 267-81.
- Tang, Patricia. *Masters of the Sabar: Wolof Griot Percussionists of Senegal*. Temple University Press, 2007.
- Wimmer, Andreas. "The Making and Unmaking of Ethnic Boundaries: A Multilevel Process Theory." *American Journal of Sociology*, vol. 113, no. 4, 2008, pp. 970-1022.