

Mbalax: Cosmopolitanism in Senegalese Urban Popular Music

Timothy Roark Mangin

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ABSTRACT

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This dissertation is an ethnographic and historical examination of Senegalese modern identity and cosmopolitanism through urban dance music. My central argument is that local popular culture thrives not in spite of transnational influences and processes, but as a result of a Senegalese cosmopolitanism that has long valued the borrowing and integration of foreign ideas, cultural practices, and material culture into local lifeways. My research focuses on the articulation of cosmopolitanism through *mbalax*, an urban dance music distinct to Senegal and valued by musicians and fans for its ability to shape, produce, re-produce, and articulate overlapping ideas of their ethnic, racial, generational, gendered, religious, and national identities. Specifically, I concentrate on the practice of black, Muslim, and Wolof identities that Senegalese urban dance music articulates most consistently.

The majority of my fieldwork was carried out in the nightclubs and neighborhoods in Dakar, the capital city. I performed with different *mbalax* groups and witnessed how the practices of Wolofness, blackness, and Sufism layered and intersected to articulate a modern Senegalese identity, or Senegaleseness. This ethnographic work was complimented by research in recording studios, television studios, radio stations, and research institutions throughout Senegal.

The dissertation begins with an historical inquiry into the foundations of Senegalese cosmopolitanism from precolonial Senegambia and the spread of Wolof hegemony, to colonial Dakar and the rise of a distinctive urban Senegalese identity that set the proximate conditions for the postcolonial cultural policy of *Négritude* and *mbalax*. Subsequent chapters focus on the practices of Wolofness, Sufism, and blackness articulated in *mbalax*.

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Dedication

To the memory of my brother
Calvin Mangin

Chapter 1

Introduction

A Night of *Mbalax*

It is a Sunday evening in July 7 1999, at the Sahel nightclub in the Medina, the neighborhood that *Dakarois* (residents of Dakar) consider the heart of urban African culture and traditions. It is the *quartier* where *mbalax* has flourished since its *musique moderne* inception in the late 1960s and where the Sahel, the first venue built to showcase *mbalax* has been a fixture since the mid-1970s. I am here with Jean, a man in his mid-twenties who's Catholic, literate, and entrepreneurial. We met through a mutual acquaintance, an American jazz musician who is sponsoring Jean's sister for her college education and housing in the United States. Outside the club, Jean and I join three of his friends—also in their mid- to late twenties—and, like many Senegalese I've come to know, flush with cosmopolitan connections: friends and relatives living, studying, or working abroad who bring back goods, ideas, remittances, and new ways of living.

Tonight, Sahel features Thione Seck, one of *mbalax*'s pioneer musicians, and his group Raam Daan—a name that plays on both the Muslim Ramadan season of fasting and the Wolof phrase meaning, “in order to achieve your goals, you must proceed slowly and deliberately.” Seck is known as a singer able to fuse “traditional” and “modern” styles within an aesthetic that appeals to Senegalese across generations. Seck's “traditional” reputation and techniques derive from his Wolof griot (*gɛwɛl*) heritage: his ancestors' famous service as griots to Lat Dior, the nineteenth-century King of Cayor, whose Wolof kingdom was one of the last to battle French colonial forces. Griots are an

endogamous caste of praise singers, musicians, drummers, and dancers who extol genealogies, recount histories, and mediate disputes. Before colonialism, they served royal and prominent families. Today, Thione Seck fulfills his duties as a griot for the general population through his heavily percussive *mbalax pur et dur* style (“pure” and “hard” *mbalax*) where his vocal techniques fuse traditional Senegalese griot music with Afro-Cuban salsa (*son montunos*, cha-chas, rumbas, mambos), American soul, and Bollywood musicals.

As we enter the club, we catch the tail end of a slow Afro-Cuban ballad. As the next song, an up-tempo *mbalax* tune “Doomu Baay” (“My Bother”) begins, dancers gently release the hands of their partners and get ready to take their dancing up a to a higher level. “Doomu Baay” is a song praising Seck’s little brother, Mapenda Seck, who also sings *mbalax*. As Thione Seck’s voice sails over the rhythm section (two guitars, two keyboards, three percussionists playing indigenous drums, a bassist, and a trap drum) his melismatic ornamentations, timbre, and overall sound remind me simultaneously of Algerian pop (*rai*), soul, Sufi melodies, and traditional Senegalese songs. He sings in Wolof, the *lingua franca* of Dakar. Many Wolof-speaking inhabitants describe themselves as “Wolof” even though their heritage may consist of many ethnicities. Being “Wolof” transcends ethnic affiliation and has become, contextually, synonymous with being Dakarois and Senegalese.

People are wearing the latest European and American fashions, and everyone is more stylishly dressed than I. This is my first nightclub introduction to *mbalax*. At first, the polyrhythmic drumming is difficult for me to grasp. It is remarkably different from the Ewe drumming of Togo and Ghana that I have danced and studied. I carefully watch

my friends to glean a clue of how my body should move, and if possible, to locate that rhythm or groove that holds everything together. While Seck sings, we form a small, mixed-gender circle of five on the dance floor, lightly swaying from side to side, shifting weight from one foot to another. This slight motion seems, at first, contradictory to the band's *mbalax pur et dur* sound (*sono*). But then the band raises the rhythmic tension by increasing the tempo, volume, and polyrhythmic density. On cue, the dance floor becomes more energetic, with dancers lowering their centers of gravity and making more expressive gestures with their arms and hands. As the drums play in double time, smiles erupt across faces. One of the women in our group moves to the center of our circle and lowers herself with arms extended straight down, hands parallel to the floor. In this position, legs roughly shoulder-width apart, a wave of energy seems to pass through her, starting from the floor and moving upwards to her knees, which open and close in smooth pulses, in time to the music. Another center of energy picks up around her midriff, as her stomach rolls in and out to a complementary beat. All around her, the group claps in time to the music and voices "ayahs" of encouragement. Another woman touches the encircled dancer's forehead with her thumb, twisting in clockwise motion to indicate the "hotness" or "being inside" ("*ci biir*") of the dancer's groove.

So this is how one dances to the music. At first, I think of the move as a variation of the American soul dance called the "Funky Chicken," but there is more subtlety, complexity, grace, and individual expression in this dance than the one I remember from when I was a pre-teen. When the first dancer moves back to join our circle, another woman quickly takes her place and like the dancer before her, she lowers her center of gravity, and, with the extra flair of raising her blouse to her navel, moves her hips, legs,

and stomach in a similar basic pattern as the woman she replaced. Another round of claps and “ayehs” ensues and then another woman joins her in the middle. The two crouch low with the same undulating lower body movements except that this woman’s hands point towards the floor. Their bodies nearly touch. They move synchronically for several seconds before they rise and move back to the circle—this interplay continuing off and on through the remainder of the song.

The next tune, “Yen bi” (“The Burden”), praises the space of refuge provided by the spiritual path (*tariqa*) of the Muriddiya, a Sufi brotherhood founded by Senegal’s Amadou Bamba Mbacké (most often referred to simply as Bamba). We continue to dance as a group but this time, not in a circle. Attempting to imitate my friends’ moves, I keep raising my heels but notice that everyone else’s remain on the floor. I can’t get that smooth “wave” motion flowing through my body. Fortunately, noticing my troubles and self-consciousness, one of the guys stands in front of me and begins to demonstrate the basic movements, which I copy but not with the same groove as he. Still, I am encouraged and try multiple variations until I relax and do my own thing—my version—and then get closer to feeling “it.” I draw on previous, impromptu dance sessions in my host family’s courtyard and make the cognitive and physical shift away from listening to the groove as if it were in duple meter.¹ I curb my inclination to locate the “one” and instead, give in to experiencing the dance in the moment, without regard to meter. At that moment, I get closer to entering the music, being inside (*ci biir*) it, and feel intimately connected to the other dancers and the energy of the club—an ephemeral grasp of *mbalax* that has escaped me until this moment, when my body becomes wholly engaged, a

¹ The most common rhythm for a Westerner—a generalization based on my research on R&B, hip hop, soul, and pop in nightclubs in San Francisco and New York City (Mangin

sensation made possible only when one remains open to their fellow dancers and the exchange of experiences and knowledge. It is a wordless communication acknowledging different cultural histories and, for me, the unfamiliar explicit and implicit symbols particular to “Senegaleseness” —cues heretofore difficult to discern—although the recognizable, diasporic musical elements provide some foundation for greater understanding.

After the set, the DJ plays Cape Verdean pop (*funana* and *passada*), Jamaican and African reggae, American soul and rap, and Congolese urban dance music. When the rap and soul play I relax, relieved to hear sounds I've known since childhood. I hear the “one” easily. I notice other dancers studying me, perhaps to see if I am performing some new dance from the United States, but I don't know any. The glances and stares continue. Then I realize that maybe this is the first time they have seen an African American dancing to a music that is native to his country, as opposed to the two-dimensional images of black Americans they've seen in film and videos. I, the observer, am now being observed dancing to his own, “local” music. Still, the moment allows for us to share movements, back and forth. After all, the other dancers and I are in analogous (semi-kindred?) territory since Senegalese have long listened and danced to urban music from the United States.

During a break in the live set, our party speaks outside the club with Thione Seck. In response to my question about his current American musical influences, he responds that Whitney Houston and Lionel Richie are his favorites. Then I ask him to explain the differences between African- and African-American musics. Seck says, “They are the same, it is in the blood,” and he points to the veins in his forearm (Thione Seck,

conversation with author, 1997)² On the one hand, when Seck points to his arm, he evokes the metaphor of blood ties, referencing an imaginary Black Atlantic where Africans and people of African descent—in the New World and Europe—share a black diasporic consciousness linked by experiences, histories, memories, and transoceanic connections derived from the transatlantic slave trade, colonialism, and slavery (Gilroy 1993; Matory 2005; Thompson 1984). The gesture also references an essentialized notion of blackness that I continue to observe in Dakar as part of a varied discourse on Senegaleseness. On the other hand, Seck is referencing a particular and vernacular Senegalese cosmopolitanism that comes from Dakarais’ own long experience with popular musics from the West (jazz, rock, soul, tango, pop, reggae, folk, and French variety). Since the interwar years (1919-1938), Senegalese have produced and consumed urban popular musics from abroad. These were performed, played, and danced to at events including family gatherings, weddings, birthdays, parties, and casual get-togethers with friends, where teenagers identified themselves by a particular genre (e.g., rockers, slick hairs, and soulsters). Thus, when Seck says it is “in the blood,” he is referencing both a transatlantic black consciousness and local practices tied to histories and situations of sociability not connected specifically to race, but to memories and experiences of listening, dancing, or singing to these musics as part of their daily lives.

I use “blackness” to describe both a black collective identity, whose meaning changes within historical and contemporary contexts, and a process where actors negotiate their identities and subjectivities in relation to systems or structures—such as French hegemony and Senegalese governmental policies—both of which shape

² I conducted all interviews in this dissertation except where noted.

cosmopolitan life in Dakar. Indeed, blackness is constitutive of a broader constellation of Senegalese modern identities that are defined by a complex, regional history—and French colonial past—intertwined with processes of globalization that link Senegalese to new and different cultural, social, and political ideas from distant places. These identities are bound up with Senegal’s postcolonial situation, which involves the mediation of pre-colonial, colonial, and national histories—along with current relationships to the West, Middle East, and other African countries (Diouf 2002). Achille Mbembe (2001) characterizes the postcolony as containing multiple public spaces, each with its own internal logic that engages with other logics, requiring the postcolonial subject to “bargain in this conceptual market place ... [and] to have marked ability to manage not just a single identity, but several—flexible enough to negotiate as and when necessary” (Mbembe 2001, 104). At the Sahel, for example, Seck frequently conjures his Muslim, Wolof, and black identities through praises to Senegalese Sufi saints, while directing his band to sustain and the funky *afro* vamps derived from black American soul fused with indigenous Wolof percussion.

Before Seck returns to the stage, I ask him about his style and the aim of his music. He answers that he plays “world music,” experiments with funk, and uses more percussion to create a more “traditional” sound than his contemporary, the well-known *mbalax* singer Youssou N’Dour. This last statement alludes to another task of this dissertation, which is to reveal how the complex musical form of *mbalax* incorporates cosmopolitan influences—including traditional Wolof forms of cultural expression, American jazz and rhythm and blues, and Afro-Caribbean salsa—yet is considered the national music of Senegal. This process of how *mbalax*, a “world music” with strong

transnational connections and roots, has become quintessentially Senegalese, is a key topic of this discussion. The complex roles of the musicians and the audience in the expansion of *mbalax* as cultural practice offer insight into the significance of this genre, especially its salience across generations. I am concerned with the following broad questions: What is the cultural significance and practice of *mbalax* in cosmopolitan Senegal? Why is *mbalax* more popular than all other genres in Senegal? What do other genres contribute to the vitality of *mbalax*, and what is their significance in Senegalese popular culture? In what ways is *mbalax* a site for the mediation of modern black, Muslim, and Wolof identities in postcolonial Senegal? And, most importantly, how is cosmopolitanism articulated through *mbalax*?

The Project

This dissertation is an historical and ethnographic study of Senegalese cosmopolitanism through urban dance music. Concerned with how Senegalese express and communicate overlapping ideas of their ethnic, racial, generational, gendered, religious, and national identities in musical performances and genres, I explore how these identity formations result from a distinct Senegalese cosmopolitanism. My use of cosmopolitanism focuses on how urban Senegalese desire, dream, and use their agency to connect to the world through expressive culture, politics, and religion. In his study of ethics across cultures, philosopher Anthony Appiah broadly defines cosmopolitanism as the weaving of two ideas. "One is the idea that we have obligations to others, obligations that stretch beyond those to whom we are related by the ties of a shared citizenship. The other is that we take seriously the value not just of human life but of particular human lives, which means taking an interest in the practices and beliefs that lend them

significance" (Appiah 2006: xv). I focus on the practice of a Senegalese cosmopolitanism rooted in indigenous values that prize both fulfilling obligations to one's kith and kind balanced by an openness to strangers and their lifeways.

I concentrate on the black, Muslim, and Wolof identities that Senegalese urban dance music articulates most consistently. To a lesser extent I examine representations of Frenchness, a topic that has long been addressed in studies of Senegalese politics, arts, and literature (Cruise O'Brien 1972; Harney 2004; Sarkozy 2007; Vaillant 1990, 2002). While these works illuminate the tensions that arise when Senegalese negotiate French subjecthood as part of their modern identity, my research in urban dance music indicates that many Senegalese have eschewed Frenchness in favor of Black Atlantic connections and Wolofness. I include Frenchness in my matrix of identities investigated, but devote my energies towards other identities most often invoked in Senegalese popular music.

In particular, this dissertation concentrates on the articulation of cosmopolitanism through *mbalax*, a genre of music distinct to Senegal, and locally referred to by musicians and fans as "*très Senegalaise*," "*afro*" (urban dance music from Africa), and "*cosaan*" (traditional culture). These terms reference values and beliefs of an indigenous cosmopolitanism fostering "*la Sénégalité*" or Senegaleseness, that is, the articulation of cultural values and the social identities constituent of, and, particular to, Senegalese modern urban identity. In *mbalax*, Senegaleseness is practiced through combining *afro* and Western urban popular dance musics (hereafter Western pop) with traditional musics that are, in turn, themselves, always undergoing change from translocal and transregional influences. My central argument is that local popular culture thrives not in spite of transnational influences and processes, but as a result of an indigenous cosmopolitanism

that has long valued the borrowing and integration of foreign ideas, cultural practices, and material culture into local lifeways.

I investigate cosmopolitanism through my ethnographic work in urban Senegal's nightclubs, streets, homes, and other spaces and places where *mbalax* is performed. This fieldwork is complemented by the historical work I conducted in research institutions in the current capital city of Dakar and the former colonial capital Saint-Louis. In Dakar, I formed friendships with musicians who encouraged and allowed me to sit in with them as a flutist. I played with three *mbalax* groups on a weekly basis over a year (1999-2000). Number One + with Doudou Sow was a *salsa-mbalax* group specializing in an early style of *mbalax* strongly characterized by its use of Afro-Cuban music (*pachanga*, *sones*, and *charanga*) and Congolese rumba. Ceddo was an *afro-mbalax* group specializing in both traditional and modern styles of *mbalax*. Dieuf Dieul played *jazz-mbalax* and was distinguished for their vocals in Pulaar instead of Wolof. I also worked with rap groups in Dakar including mainstream rappers Positive Black Soul, Daara J, and Black Mboolo. In the underground rap community the bulk of my time was spent with WA-BMG-44, a group whose politically charged song "Def Si Yaw" ("We're Gonna Fuck You Up"), to which I contributed vocals, garnered significant public attention for its harsh criticism of corruption between duplicitous religious leaders and politicians (Mangin forthcoming). My work among an array of popular music groups and genres was critical for understanding and contextualizing the cultural significance of *mbalax*, a genre that, unlike rap, is unique to Senegal.

Mbalax performance became my primary entry to investigating Senegaleseness. Whenever I played, danced, and hung out at *mbalax* performances I videotaped,

photographed, and wrote down as much about my experiences as possible as a way to interrogate the complexity of cosmopolitan living in Dakar. Throughout this dissertation I use many of these accounts to introduce tropes and topics for analysis. This thick descriptive approach allows me to spiral outward and discuss the intricate ways social identities and cosmopolitanism are mediated through music. Broadly speaking, I use mediation to describe the process of indexing, filtering, and transforming social and cultural meanings through musical practices. In her study of Zuluness in a South African recording studio, ethnomusicologist Louise Meintjes describes mediation as “that which is both a conduit and a filter—it transfers but along the way it necessarily transforms. Mediation is a process that connects and translates disparate worlds, people, imaginations, values, and ideas, whether in its symbolic, social, or technological form” (Meintjes 2003:8). I am specifically concerned with the mediation of Senegalese social identities and how they inform and are informed by cosmopolitanism.

Tradition and the Study of African Popular Music

The study of urban African popular music developed from interdisciplinary studies of African performing arts. Works such as Sylvia Bembe’s (1985) history of popular music in Congo-Zaire; Karin Barber’s (1987) survey of African popular arts; David Coplan’s (1985) *In Township Tonight!: South Africa’s Black City Music and Theater*, a social-historical ethnography examining new genres based on traditional values amongst migrant workers in South Africa; and Christopher Waterman’s (1990a) social history and ethnography on *jùjú*, a Nigerian popular music, all mark a shift from previous anthropological studies which focused on acculturation theory (c.f., Apter 1991; Herskovits 1941; Matory 2005). Their alternative approach examines music as intricately

bound up with local cultures and related expressive arts, and as active sites for the production of society. Waterman claims that studies such as these:

situate the humanistic analysis of performance within a broader perspective concerned with social organization, symbolic communication and political economy. They suggest that musical style may be more than icing on an infrastructural cake: that patterns of popular performance may not only mirror, but also shape other social and historical processes.” (Waterman 1990a)

Waterman’s “patterns of popular performance” resonates with what Anthony Appiah refers to as the “cultural productivity” of expressive culture (Appiah 1992:157).³ Both notions suggest that dance, drama, oral performance/narrative, music, visual arts, and other popular arts provide important means for negotiating and mediating identity. Until the late 1980s, popular art forms were discussed within a binary paradigm of “traditional” versus “modern.” Couched in historical pre-colonial imaginings of Africa, “tradition” often represents that which is (or was) “purely” African, and not polluted by Western influences. “Modern” or elite idioms, on the other hand, represented the West; knowledge; a command of European language, music, art, education, and dress; and a familiarity with new technologies. An alternative approach to the traditional/modern binary is to examine African popular culture as occupying both spaces of modernity *and* tradition (Barber 1987, 1997a). However, this liminal approach does not fully address the complex sociocultural issues individuals face as powerful transnational or global systems (e.g., Islam, Christianity, capitalism, and Western cultural products and media) impinge on their localities.

³ Appiah’s analysis of the wooden carving, “Yorùbá Man with a Bicycle,” that sees the figure confidently embracing both categories of tradition and modernity is a favored icon referenced by Africanists (Appiah 1992; Barber 1997b; Thompson 1984).

Following the discourses of the “invention” and “imagining” of tradition stimulated by Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger (1983, 2002), ethnomusicologists and anthropologists acknowledge the flexibility of tradition as an ideology which becomes reinterpreted as different social forces come into play (Coplan 1991; Matory 2005; Turino 2000; Waterman 1990b; White 1998). Music’s semiotic and ephemeral complexity makes it an especially useful element in such flexible cultural constructions. David Coplan remarks that an examination of contemporary urban musical styles during South Africa’s apartheid system “reveals the survival and even the progressive development of the distinctive principles, values, and structures of cultural tradition ... Tradition lives in their new genres of self-expression, rooted in the historicity of their being in the world, in the very ground of their conscious existence” (Coplan 1991:47). Tradition is fluid and moves beyond rigid parameters of former constructions framed in terms of elite or “modern” culture. Individuals can find agency by drawing upon tradition as an active source of power.

The turn away from the traditional/modern binary discourse in scholarship did not lead to abandonment of examining how African subjects use tradition to position themselves in modernity. For example, Eric Charry’s (2000) ethnography of Mande musics delineates numerous examples of traditional musics used in different modern contexts; Lucy Duran’s examination of women’s *wassoulou* music in Mali shows how women re-imagine their traditional roles as singers by co-opting the symbols and practices of male hunter musics; and Michael Veal’s (2000) research on Fela Kuti’s fusion of traditional African symbols with modal jazz in afrobeat—as well as Waterman’s (1990a) work on how *jùjú* musicians sing deep Yoruba praise to modern

guitar grooves—considers different processes of sustaining and imagining tradition in relation to the effects of the global political economy in post-independent Nigeria. These studies document how musicians and fans value urban dance musics for their ability to articulate both the “traditional” and the “modern.”

In the 1990s-2000s African popular music scholarship increasingly focused on understanding how processes of nationalism, transnationalism, and cosmopolitanism influence local performance. From the southern hemisphere, Kelly Askew (2002) documents the production of nationalism through the interplay of Swahilization, cultural policy, and popular music in Tanzania; Thomas Turino’s (2000) ethnography of Zimbabwean popular music examines how nationalism and cosmopolitanism inform each other; Veit Erlmann (1999) investigates how modern South African subjectivities are shaped in dialogue with a global imaginary, a process represented in popular music; and Louise Meintjes (2003) analyzes the mediation of Zuluness, blackness, and gender in the sound of South African pop (*mbaqanga*) made in a recording studio. In Central Africa, Bob White (2008) describes how the politics of popular culture and music in Zaire emerged from the performances of modern music and state-sponsored traditional music. As Steven Feld cogently notes, many of these Africanist anthromusicologists implicitly evoke cosmopolitan formations in their research.⁴ But they also explicitly describe the widespread tradition of urban Africans borrowing, internalizing, and fusing African

⁴ Steven Feld uses “Africanist anthromusicologists” to describe anthropologists who have written book-length ethnographies or conducted research on urban popular music in Africa such as Veit Erlmann (1999), Louise Meintjes (2003), Thomas Turino (2000), Christopher Waterman (1990), and Bob White (2008). Feld claims “Africanist anthromusicologists have also contributed to understanding cosmopolitan dimensions of musical formations, whether or not the notion of cosmopolitanism is directly theorized in the foreground” (Feld 2012: 254, fn28.).

diasporic musics with their own local styles. Feld closely explores this latter musical cosmopolitanism in *Jazz Cosmopolitanism in Accra* (2012), a richly textured ethnography of acoustemology focused on how three Ghanaian jazz players and a labor union of drivers who play car horns called a *por por* group, craft unique and distinct musical traditions influenced by, but not trapped in rote imitation of, the jazz aesthetics and practices primarily from the Black Atlantic.

Mbalax is a particularly exciting site for examining how practitioners imagine tradition as a feature of cosmopolitanism. Musicians and fans often refer to the *sabar*, the sound of the *balafon* in the keyboards, and the singers, as “traditional” —even though they are playing modern *afro* riffs. Tradition is always contextual, but it is rooted in history. *Mbalax* represents a Senegalese tradition of music making that has not only survived colonialism, but thrives in the postcolony. *Mbalax* is one of the few traditions whose core practice remains tied to the precolonial idea of the caste system through the reconfigured role of the griot, who not only provides the music, dance, and lyrics, but also fulfills their obligation to Senegalese patrons by mediating social conflict and informing the general public of news and events. *Mbalax* is also a tradition that conjoins Muslim, Wolof, and black modern practices, making it a tradition rooted in a cosmopolitan history of travel, heterogeneity, and encounters with Europeans and Arabs that remains a core emblem of Senegaleseness.

I concentrate on *mbalax* because it is a music continually constructed from a fusion of genres, each with its own meanings and histories which are valued by actors who interpret them in a very local but cosmopolitan way, according to an array of historical, social, political, and sonic relationships. *Mbalax* performances, recordings, and

videos influence Senegalese notions of selfhood; Senegalese also deploy *mbalax* through these media to reflect and relay their changing experiences of personhood. I am interested in how Senegalese producers and consumers, with their own sociopolitical experiences and histories, interpret—explicitly and implicitly—the styles and signs of the genre, as a site of Senegaleseness.

This focus on genre thereby opens up an exploration of different genealogies, identities, histories, and stories. As Bob White notes in his study of Zairian popular music, an ethnographic analysis of genre not only attends to the social sciences' long interest in classification, but also to other important intellectual concerns (Briggs and Bauman 1992:144) such as understanding “how genre is embedded in various moments of cultural practice and performance” (White 2008:29–30). White's position is informed by Mikhail Bakhtin's (1986:229) assertion that genres are sites for social memory, where meanings change or are amplified when new genres emerge (White 2008:30). A concentration on *mbalax* also allows me to spiral outward and investigate the historical and cultural meanings embedded in the traditional, Western, and *afro* musical styles that influence it. For example, *mbalax* singers often use traditional griot performance practices such as *tassu*—a panegyric used at lifecycle ceremonies and communal gatherings to foster social cohesion, critique bad or improper behavior, and teach traditional Wolof values.⁵ *Tassu* also signifies a connection to urban hip-hop practitioners in the Black Atlantic. For example, when griots Salam Diallo and Mbaye Diaye Faye use *tassu* in their *mbalax* performances, interlocutors quickly point out to me that this is the “original rap.” Among the Senegalese musicians I work with, American rappers are

⁵ See Lisa McNee (2000) on the overt and subtle applications of *tassu* by Wolof women commenting on politics, culture, and social obligations.

admired for their production and marketing innovations, musical skill with creating “beats,” and lyrical “flow,” but lamented for not knowing their African history, culture, and traditions. Using *tassu* directly indexes traditional Senegalese musical and cultural practices while implicitly summoning a Black Atlantic history of colonialism, slavery, and modernity.

Finally, focusing on genres allows me to detail the musical features of the popular and traditional musical styles that keep *mbalax* the most consumed and produced music in Senegal. For example, the traditional drumming genre *sabar* relies on the accompanying *mbalax* drum patterns (for which the genre is named) that sonically mark Wolofness, an urban pan-ethnic identity rooted in rural Senegalese cultural practices that embrace difference. Understanding the cultural and historical significance of the musical features that constitute the sound of a genre also helps to better understand the racial, religious, and ethnic identities practiced in *mbalax* and representative of “Senegaleseness” as a whole.

Indeed, Senegalese modern identities are defined by a complex, translocal regional history—and French colonial past—intertwined with processes of globalization that link Senegalese to new and different cultural, social, and political ideas from distant places. This dissertation concentrates on the production of Wolof, Muslim, and black identity formations through *mbalax*. French identity is addressed as a formation constantly in tension with blackness Muslim-ness, and Wolofness. I examine how these identities overlap and layer to create a cosmopolitan urban culture characterized by an openness and engagement to new ideas, cultures, lifeways, and objects—all of which broaden the cultural horizons of urban Senegalese (see Hannerz 1996; Tomlinson 1999;

Turino 2000). For example, there is a Wolof tradition called *lakhas*, referring to the time when a Muslim student or cleric travels in search of an education that will increase his spiritual grace (*baraka*) and ultimately benefit their religious community upon his return (Babou 2007:54). This tradition, which predates European colonialism, contributes to the Islamic cosmopolitanism of Senegalese Muslims who today have created transnational networks of commerce that support their black Sufi communities at home and abroad (Ebin 1995). It is the members of these communities who help support and finance the careers of *mbalax* singers such as Thione Seck and Youssou N'Dour, whose songs often praise the fortitude of immigrants and the values of the Senegalese Sufi saints they worship.

The role of music in the construction of modern Senegalese identities in Dakar is examined here in three ways. First, I study how Senegalese draw upon indigenous musical styles and practices to articulate social concerns and identify musical elements maintained and valued over the centuries—from colonial expansion, through the independence years of African socialism, to today's neoliberalism. Second, I examine how Senegalese cosmopolitan networks (e.g., migration and new media technologies) and collaborations between individuals are used to assert agency and identity. This leads to a deeper understanding of how the transnational flow of Western musics, information, and products affects and transforms local urban popular music scenes. Thirdly, I explore the significance of the notion of “blackness” in politics and popular music styles in Senegalese cosmopolitan culture. I draw from the founding principles of Senegal's first president, Leopold Sédar Senghor, the architect of using *Négritude* as cultural policy to create a national Senegalese identity. Parallel to these developments, Senegalese music

borrowed—and continues to borrow—from *afro* sources (African-American, Afro-Caribbean, and afropop or African popular musics). This investigation will reveal complex ideological allegiances and contestations involving racial, generational, political, and economic conflicts negotiated within Senegal.

Mbalax

An investigation of Senegaleseness through *mbalax* first requires outlining some basic musical and cultural features of the genre, including its instrumentation, performance contexts, relationship to other genres, and its transnational, translocal, and local meanings to the primary participants (audiences, dancers, instrumentalists, singers, producers, DJs, and drummers). This preliminary soundtrack sets up an opening groove for further layering and elaboration in subsequent chapters.

The instrumentation of *mbalax* ensembles varies according to a group's style and the circumstance of a given performance, but there is a basic configuration. The harmonic instruments in the rhythm section are electric guitar, bass, and keyboard. The bass often plays a sparse ostinato pattern, firm and solid. Unlike an anchor that keeps a ship in place, the bass shifts tempos and range in a close relationship to the trap drums and the indigenous drums, collectively called *sabar*, that push the pulse. Often, I hear resonances of Afro-Cuban *tumbao* (an Afro-Cuban bass line) patterns inverted and syncopated by sharp accents characteristic of traditional drumming. The guitar and keyboard parts play either single-line ostinatos or syncopated chordal accompaniment. The timbre of the guitar can change from synthesized *kora* and *xalam* (indigenous harp-lutes) lines to the

sparse chordal skank of reggae or the light two-fingered palmwine guitar style.⁶

Keyboard timbres range from imitation of the percussive marimba, often called the marimba part, to sustained chords similar to the Hammond B3 (as in the sound of jazz keyboardist Jimmy Smith). The keyboard also plays horn vamps once characteristic of early *mbalax* roots, where horn players riffed on borrowings of soul and Afro-Cuban horn sections. The technology that creates these sounds, and the Senegalese who bring these instruments home, mark another transnational flow of information and material critical for the *mbalax* sound. The Marimba sound, for example, could not have happened without Yamaha, the Japanese company that makes the DX7. Using the research of American John Chowning at Stanford University on frequency modulation synthesis (FM), Yamaha made a digital synthesizer responsive to the needs of musicians around the globe. Herbie Hancock's use of the DX7 was greatly admired by Senegalese in the 1980s when jazz fusion and acid jazz were popular. Senegalese *émigrés* using informal networks sponsored by the Murid brotherhood brought the DX7 to Dakar, facilitating its becoming a staple in the *mbalax* bands. Today the "marimba part" is a vital percussive component of *mbalax* that layers with the *sabar* drums.

Percussion is driven by the *sabar*, the quintessential sound of *mbalax* and Senegaleseness. The term *sabar* is often used in three ways: as a collection of Wolof drums; as a traditional dance accompanied by these drums; and as a traditional event

⁶ Palmwine is an urban music developed in the early 1900s in the ports along the West African coast. The genre is named after the palm wine served in the dockside bars where Africans encountered West Indian and African-American sailors who played guitars and banjos. These encounters and recordings heard in the bars influenced guitarists among the Kru sailors (short for crew boys) from Liberia, who also traveled widely along the coast. These Kru developed a two-fingered polyrhythmic palm-wine guitar style, that became popular in West and Central Africa (Collins1987:180-191).

involving dancing, praise, and drumming. Most ensembles use two *sabar* players, sometimes augmented by a *tama* player (the *tama* is double-headed hourglass drum capable of producing multiple pitches that imitate speech). The *sabar* drums differ from the *tama* in that they have only one head attached by pegs or nails to a conical wooden body held in place by the knees. These drummers share three to five *sabar* drums between them. The drums are played with a stick and an open hand. The drummers often supplement the *sabar* percussion with the *jembe*, a drum of Mande origin, sometimes played with a stick and hand combination, though more often without a stick. The principal *sabar* drums are the *cól*, a single-headed bass drum (also known as the *lamb*); and the *mbëng-mbëng*, a single-headed drum higher in pitch than the *cól*. The *mbëng-mbëng* plays accompanying patterns called *mbalax*. Each *sabar* dance has its own accompanying rhythms. The most popular *mbalax* rhythm comes from the *sabar* piece “Kaolack” and is one of the foundational rhythms used by *mbalax* bands (see appendix for “Kaolack” rhythm).

In the 1970s, musicians copied and reinterpreted the *mbalax* rhythms of the *sabar*, and played them on their congas, guitars, and keyboards in modern ensembles (jazz, rock, reggae, soul, and *afro*). When this performance practice became characteristic of bands’ sounds, the style was called *mbalax*, after the accompanying patterns. Today, musicians frequently modify and create new *mbalax* rhythms. Thus, *mbalax* functions both as an accompanying part that unites the ensemble, and as a musical style linking genres, dances, and instruments together across generations.

Bands are judged not only by their musical abilities but also by how well the musicians interact with the audience, a practice locally referred to as *animation*. The

principal figures responsible for this *animation* are the *sabar* drummers and the singer. Singers employ different techniques to engage their audiences, including choice of lyrical content, phrasing, and delivery style. Each singer has a particular style developed from listening to and copying other *mbalax* and afropop singers, Western pop artists, traditional griot singers, and other sources. Thione Seck, for example, learned how to use a griot style in modern music from traditional Wolof griots (Abdoulaye M'Boup); from the U.S he was influenced by rhythm and blues artists (Whitney Houston and Lionel Ritchie); from Indian films he studied the Bollywood singers (Kishore Kumar, Late Mangeshkar and Asha Bhosle); and from recordings he was influenced by Egyptian singers (Abdel Halim Hafez and Oum Kalsoum).⁷

Animation, plays a key role in creating successful performances and establishing fame. *Animation* is how performers elicit excitement and encourage audience participation while articulating the moral values, social concerns, and religious doctrine that Senegalese patrons consider topical. There are three main ways to achieve animation. First, singers elicit excitement and intimacy through praise singing and narration. Praise singing is the art of complimenting a person through repeating their name and extolling their virtues and contribution to society. People most often praised are Sufi saints, historical hero's, prominent figures in popular culture such as sports stars and other performers, fans, and patrons. Narration is telling a story that often, but not exclusively, includes a moral lesson about love, obligations to kith and kin, being a good

⁷ In the early to mid 2000s Senegalese artists collaborated with musicians and producers outside of their usual *afro* and black Atlantic networks. From 1999-2002 Thione Seck worked with French, Indian, Senegalese, and Egyptian musicians and producers on his *Orientation* CD. Before *Orientation* was released in 2006, Youssou N'Dour, released his Grammy winning album *Egypt*, which included collaborations with Egyptian, African, and French musicians and producers.

Muslim or Senegalese, and maintaining a positive attitude as an émigré. Second, audiences judge *animation* by how well groups fuse or alternate between *mbalax pur et dur* and *afro* to create and resolve tensions that lead to *ci biir* (being inside).

Thirdly, many groups rely on griot performance practices in their *animation*. Many singers employ griot praise singing techniques to shape their melodic phrases, color the timbre of their voice, and ornament their melodies. Wolof griot style is the most prevalent, and a keystone of Wolof music and cultural expressive practices is openness and the ability to incorporate many regional styles, so listeners from other ethnic groups, such as the Tukulor and Mande, can associate with the Wolof style with ease. Most lyrics are sung in Wolof, and the basic melodic shapes frequently change during performances according to a singer's ornamentation and delivery. Another style of text delivery is Wolof *tassu*, a form of extemporaneous praise. Singers are critiqued by how well they express these topics and by their ability to *animate* a performance through dance, gesture, wit, humor, and style. Analyzing and understanding how this intimacy and *animation* I witnessed in live performances drives my research and shapes my inquiry.

The harmonic structure of *mbalax* songs is based on the repetition of chord changes of three to four major and dominant seventh chords with minor seconds, thirds, and sixths added for tension (I-VI-i-VI, I-IV-ii-V7-I, I-IV-V-I7-IV, or iii-I-ii) (interview with Mac Fallows, June 3, 2000; see also Tang, 2007:156). Basic song forms exist, but in live performances their structures often change on the spur of the moment, when the singer and/or the band “feels it,” and as a result of interactions between specific dancers and the drummers. That is, when dancers feel inspired, they approach a drummer and

engage him⁸ in an improvisatory dialogue for a brief time, usually some fifteen to thirty seconds. When this happens frequently, interspersed by solos from an instrumentalist or guest artist, performances of single songs can extend from four to ten minutes.

Mbalax is performed widely throughout Senegal and is consumed by Senegalese across lines of caste, class, age, gender, and ethnicity. Recordings of *mbalax* are heard in public venues where people socialize or transact business including restaurants, tailor shops, nightclubs, and market stalls. Television video programs and radio shows featuring *mbalax* are numerous and present a wide range of old and new styles. *Mbalax* is also heard at traditional life-cycle events celebrating baptisms and weddings. Funerals provide one notable exception: “We don’t play the drums or *mbalax* at funerals because the drums make us happy, and funerals are a time of sadness” (Cheikh Mbaye, discussion with author, November 3, 2004). Live performances occur in concert halls, nightclubs, community centers, and stadium events called “mega-concerts.”

While *mbalax* may be the main attraction at events, other musical styles are performed as well, most often in sets of rap, reggae, salsa, soul, rhythm and blues, and popular musics from the Congo, Cape Verde, and French Antilles. I consider this inclusion of *afro* and diaspora musics a crucial feature of *mbalax* performance, as do participants at events, and this consistent—indeed critical—inclusion of *afro* and diaspora musics informs much of my analysis. Musicians in particular view their music in relation to other styles. Often groups demarcate their set of *mbalax* styles by naming them according to the relevant influence outside the core *mbalax* aesthetic. For example,

⁸ *Mbalax* and *sabar* drummers are almost exclusively male. Notable exceptions are female Western students studying *sabar* and master drummer Doudou N’Diaye Rose and his Rosettes, a large ensemble that includes women drummers.

two groups I worked with, Dieuf Dieul and Ceddo, call their music *jazz-mbalax* or *Mandingo-mbalax*, and *afro-world* or *afro-mbalax*, respectively. These hybrid categories represent how musicians use *mbalax* to connect to wider translocal (Mandingo, *afro*) and transnational imaginaries (jazz, *afro*, world) and identities. These *mbalax* subcategories show how *mbalax* serves not only as a link to other genres, but also to processes of revitalization, which are crucial to maintaining *mbalax*'s salience in the culture.

Africanist ethnomusicological studies have long recognized the impact of Western and American popular musics on African styles (e.g., Askew 2002; Coplan 1985; Erlmann 1998, 2000; Feld 2012; Meintjes 1990, 2003; Nketia 1992; Turino 2000; Veal 2000; Waterman 1990a; White 2002). Monographs on how francophone West African popular musics have been impacted by Western and *afro* popular styles include Jenny Cathcart's biography of Youssou N'Dour, highlighting how his collaborations with pop stars such as Peter Gabriel and Sting impacted the production quality of his *mbalax* style; Cornelia Panzacchi's monograph in German (to date there is no monograph on *mbalax* in English) lists African diasporic influences on *mbalax* but is not specific about how they influenced musical style; and Eric Charry's detailed account of modern Malian musical styles through the rise of guitar bands includes how artists such as Ali Farke Touré were influenced by American blues artists (Cathcart 1989; Charry 2000; Panzacchi 1996). My historical and ethnographic material will contribute to this limited literature on francophone West African urban dance music (chapter 3 engages more comprehensively with Panzacchi's and other scholars writings on *mbalax*).

The strategy of revitalizing *mbalax* through the borrowings of transnational music (*afro*), as mediated through local aesthetics serves at least two purposes. First, artists

often claim that experimenting with *afro* familiarizes them with a variety of repertoires and musical styles critical for breaking into the world beat market and pursuing an international career. Second, playing *afro* attracts larger local followings in an intensely competitive musical scene and offers a critical counterpoint to *mbalax pur et dur*. Since most groups earn money primarily from live performances, the ways *mbalax* groups temper “traditional” and “modern” sounds (both local and foreign) must appeal to a broad demographic of urban Senegalese but still be distinguishable enough from other groups so that audiences will patronize them for their unique style

For example, in the 1990s, Thione Seck’s main audience was middle-aged (forty-year-olds and above) and made up of patrons who knew him as a pioneer *mbalax* musician, a famous griot singer at traditional ceremonies, a traditional singer with the Latin-tinged group Orchestra Baobab, and as the heavily percussive Raam Daan. He was particularly popular among *driankes*, middle-aged women who represent elegance, grace, and proper behavior, and are regarded as bearers of tradition. But his 1998 experimentations with reggae, funk, Egyptian orchestrations and lutes—as well as Bollywood musical styles in the *mbalax pur et dur* of Raam Daan—drew a younger clientele (mostly in their twenties). His hit song “Mathiou” (1998), praising a wealthy businessman in the perfume trade, bridged the gap between generations, especially among women who enthusiastically took to the new dance that accompanied “Mathiou,” called “Mogne.” The dance featured intricate navel movements that young women at the Sahel were known for executing well. They claimed the dance was therapeutic, ecstatic, and made them attractive, “heavenly” women (“aux anges”).⁹ The song and dance also

⁹ *Mbalax* (website), by Jenny Cathcart, Stargazer Records, Enniskilen, 2004.

appealed to older women who favored the heavy use of Wolof *sabar* percussion and Seck's amazing vocal ability to communicate associations to the soul music of their youth that simultaneously symbolized African independence and African-American struggles for civil rights; traditional griot music connected to Wolof culture; Egyptian orchestrations that suggest relationships to a global Islamic community (*umma*); and Bollywood pop that refers to the popular television shows Senegalese admire for their music—and their focus on family obligations. The purpose of this chapter is not to engage in a more comprehensive analysis of events like this, but to introduce the reader to one of several complex strategies *mbalax* musicians use to garner an audience who value the genre for its ability to simultaneously index the African American musics of their youth that represented freedom and joy, the Wolof *sabar* that is played at major lifecycle event and links listeners to their past and values, and Muslim practices that represent resistance to French hegemony and connection to their North African and Middle Eastern Muslim fellow practitioners.

Cosmopolitanism

In his study of Zimbabwean popular musics, Thomas Turino defines cosmopolitanism as “objects, ideas and cultural positions that are widely diffused throughout the world and yet are specific only to certain portions of the populations within given countries” (Turino 2000:7). Jazz bands in 1930s-1960s colonial Africa, for example, performed for urban and racially segregated clientele like jazz performers in Jim Crow America during the same period. White and black cosmopolitans used this urban dance music to experience and imagine themselves as part of larger global

community, albeit in different ways, especially in the wake of the U.S. State-sponsored jazz ambassador tours to Africa in the 1950s-1970s (Von Eschen 2004). Likewise, the cosmopolitanism of Afro-Cuban music has a rich history in Africa. Bob White (2002) analyses this Afro-Cuban cosmopolitanism through its influence on Congolese rumba in Kinshasa during the colonial period. White recognizes the significance of blackness in the music which can be traced to *Negrismo* in Cuba and *Negritude* in Paris, while focusing on the representation and experience of the music by Congolese as “modern.” Even though these works concentrate on different regions of the African continent, they cite similar transnational networks—including Europe, America, Africa, and the Caribbean—as influences on their respective localities. The history of Senegalese popular music is similarly located in these networks and, like them, has a specific configuration that tells a different story. The cosmopolitanism I detail here addresses discourses of Senegaleseness through *mbalax* as experienced by practitioners from the translocal and transnational networks that converged in Dakar in the twentieth century.

Scholars recognize that there are multiple cosmopolitanisms in any given culture and suggest that the utility of the concept lies in its refusal to be locked down into a single paradigm (Breckenridge, et al. 2002; Brennan 1997; Turino 2000; Werbner 2006). The Senegalese practice of cosmopolitanism similarly refuses to be locked down. Historian Mamadou Diouf (2000) describes the emergence of a vernacular cosmopolitanism from a synthesis of Wolof values, unique urban *civilité*, and Senegalese Sufism influenced by African engagements with French colonialism, global markets, and Muslim universalism. Diouf argues that the Murid, a branch of Senegalese Sufism, take advantage of global modernity and modern capitalism to expand cosmopolitanism at

home (Diouf 2000). Historian T. K. Biaya (2000) describes an erotic cosmopolitanism articulated through visual representations of the female Senegalese body in dance and visual art. Anthropologist Susanne Scheld examines youth cosmopolitanism in Dakar's informal economy. Scheld argues that "youth clothing practices keep the urban economy in motion and the city hooked into a global economy" (Scheld 2007: 233). Scheld's ethnography also documents the deleterious effects of these youth practices on social relationships at home. Although an overarching paradigm does not emerge in these studies of Senegalese cosmopolitanism, they set up an intriguing body of work that my research contributes to by focusing on the practice of cosmopolitanism through *mbalax*.

My study of musical cosmopolitanism considers three dynamics: the internalization of foreign genres over time into local practices, travel and engagement, and how vernacular Senegalese cosmopolitanism layers with other cosmopolitanisms. When Senegalese describe the history of *mbalax*, they refer to soul, Afro-Cuban (salsa, *pachanga*, and *charanga*), Latin (bolero, tango, and *paso doble*), *morna*, jazz, and rock music—along with traditional musics such as the *sabar* and griot acoustic music (also called folklore). These genres, except for the indigenous *sabar*, arrived in Senegal at different historical moments and developed locally according to different temporalities. As Turino explains, "the concept of cosmopolitanism must fully take into account the issue of *time* in relation to processes of socialization" (2000:8). Turino further elaborates, "The key difference for the concept of cosmopolitanism is between imitation and internalization; the latter allows for internally generated cultural creativity, practices, and identities (Turino 2000:9). Turino then documents, in great detail, the histories of urban musics in Zimbabwe. This approach allows him to identify the signs that Zimbabweans

value and index in the articulation of their national, class, ethnic, and cosmopolitan identities. Alternatively, Bob White and Steven Feld document the internalization of popular musics in Kinshasa (White 2002) and Accra, Ghana (Feld 2012), though histories of listening. The stories Feld and White narrate describe the social context, cultural significance, and the ways in which people dream and imagine themselves at home and abroad. My research expands on these approaches to internalization by including narratives of performance among musicians and dancers.

The internalization of musics from abroad into Senegalese culture is a story similar to that in other African places but different for the ease in which colonials and Africans interacted. Many modern musics first came to Senegal from France via colonists who brought with them recordings, sheet music, and knowledge of the genres. For example, in the 1920s, colonials trained Saint-Louis and Dakar musicians in *solfege* and musicianship which they used to play European marches, Western art music, and French *variété*—all as part of their program of assimilation (c.f., *mission civilisatrice*). In cafés, ballrooms, and the town square, Senegalese played for colonials, politicians, and a black elite. Over a period of decades, these musics became less foreign and more a part of urban Senegalese life and sociality.

This is especially true in the case of jazz. In the 1930s, Senegalese heard the jazz recordings that the colonials brought with them, using *solfege* to transcribe, document, and perform what they heard (Marius Gouané, musician, interview with author, June 6, 2002). Over a period of time, Senegalese musicians internalized these musics and claimed them as their own by changing the harmonic and rhythmic performance of the music. At dances, artists sang in Wolof instead of French or English and modified the

dances to suit their tastes (Aminata Fall, interview with author, June 25, 2002).¹⁰

Senegalese elites created a cosmopolitan urban world different from the subjects in the interior (Diouf 1998): the musics were no longer foreign, but had become part of their lives (Thioub and Benga 1999). When these styles and performance practices were passed on to later generations they were no longer French, but Senegalese.

The second feature of my framework for cosmopolitanism is travel and engagement. Senegalese have a long history of travel from forced migrations, war, and the search for employment—and from other motivations ranging from fulfilling religious duties (*lakhas*), education, and the desire to see new lands, to professional development, for example, *originaires* who were sent to France to study administration; or musicians like Thione Seck who traveled to France to expand their audiences and develop their musicality. However, the exemplary Senegalese traveler is one who spends both time and energy in new cultures, remaining open to new experiences, learning different cultural values, and establishing him- or herself in a place with the desire to engage the “other.” This traveler values diversity. As Ulf Hannerz (1996:102–106) argues, it is not enough for the tourists to visit—or for an emigrant workers to rarely leave the safety net of their fellow workers—and not learn their host country’s language and customs. They must invest themselves in the new culture and learn ways of being that broaden their cultural

¹⁰ The scant literature on jazz in Senegal does not mention singing in Wolof (see Thioub and Benga 1999). The revelation that Senegalese were performing in Wolof first arose in my interview with Aminata Sow, Senegal’s first female jazz singer. When I questioned her about early jazz repertoire she remembered only the composers and performers such as Ella Fitzgerald, Duke Ellington and Louis Armstrong, but not the titles of specific songs. I then asked her if she might sing a song from her early years. In a full and clear voice she sang a blues in Wolof. Ms. Sow is now deceased, but I hope to find more performers from these early years to clarify and fill out the record on early performance context and style.

horizons (see also Appiah 1998; Hannerz 2004; Werbner 2006).

A Senegalese archetype of a traveling cosmopolitan, often applied to successful musicians who live abroad for extensive periods and return home, is the *moodu* (alt. *moodu-moodu* or *baol-baol*). The idea of the *moodu* is rooted in the history of the Wolof Baol region. Peasants from Baol have a tradition of leaving home and moving to the city for work in order to enrich their awareness of the world and send money to their village. When they return home, they are expected to share that knowledge with elders and use it to help the community. Today, *moodu* applies to the organic intellectual, laborer, or aspiring entrepreneur who moves to Dakar, and later, to cities abroad, where he works and sends remittances home. The prosperous ones travel and trade back and forth between Senegal and distant places, bringing back new experiences and products such as the latest music videos and CDs. Others may live in a far away city, working for years in low-paying jobs, never accumulating enough wealth to move back to Senegal to build a home and retire.¹¹

Fans, budding musicians, and producers in Dakar all mentioned their respect for Youssou N'Dour, who lives in London for a few months of every year and is a wealthy and successful *baol-baol* (or *moodu*) committed to Senegalese traditions and to his family. N'Dour's experimentation with different fusions of musical styles—garnered from collaborations with Western pop stars, producers, and musicians—has led to a pattern of releasing new work in Dakar that is oftentimes met with trepidation by the public due to its innovative sound, but, months later has become a model for emulation.

¹¹ On Sahelian immigrants in New York City see Paul Stoller (2002). On the topic of Senegalese immigrants who struggle with remaining abroad or returning home see the films *Ainsi Meurent Les Anges* “So Die the Angels” (2001) and *L'Afrique* (2001), and the novel *Ambiguous Adventure* (Kane 1961).

(This said, the public sometimes rejects his work more wholly and, in those cases, N'Dour recomposes the pieces according to local tastes - see chapter 3).

N'Dour and the *moodu* are examples of travelers regarded with high symbolic value, especially since the post-1980 economic downturn that has caused increased emigration. *Moodu* are also respected for their nationalist sentiments and continued dedication to contributing to the economic and cultural life of Senegal. Cosmopolitans may have strong attachments to lifeways in different places, yet they remain committed to a home, or many homes, in a “rooted cosmopolitanism”—counter to critiques that cosmopolitans are not committed to a place (Appiah 1998; Tarrow 2005; Werbner 2006). There are also Senegalese cosmopolitans who have never left the country, yet their interactions with physical travelers and media (videos, movies, CDs, radios, film, TV) allow them to travel *cognitively* outside Dakar. Anthony Appiah describes both the traveling encounters and cognitive engagements with the ideas and material culture from abroad as “conversation,” the principle concept behind his philosophical cosmopolitanism. For Appiah (2006), conversations entail ways that an individual or group will either accept the difference of strangers or reject that difference, yet still remain committed or obligated to respecting the values and morals of the stranger.

I am inspired by Appiah’s concept of conversation yet prefer to use the term “engagement” since conversation suggests a dialogue between people, which in the case of Senegalese cosmopolitanism is not the case. The urban Senegalese I worked with in this project engaged with digital media, new technologies, mass media, histories, and collaborations with foreign musicians. To me, this work is about how people engaged with others, their kith and kin, and objects to dream and imagine ways of being in and of

the world.

The third element of cosmopolitanism that I consider important to this study is the way it overlaps with other cosmopolitanisms and transnational formations. Scholars on cosmopolitanism in Senegal recognize that there are multiple cosmopolitan formations that share translocal and transnational features with a Senegalese vernacular cosmopolitanism. Diouf (2000) and T. K. Biaya (2002) consider how Senegalese Muslims assert their agency—and their black, Sufi, and Wolof identities—in relation to modern capitalist cosmopolitanism and Islamic cosmopolitanism. In this dissertation, Islamic cosmopolitanism is particularly considered, since much of the *mbalax* repertoire praises marabouts, stresses adherence to Sufi principles, and implicitly evokes such contested expressions of Sufism such as sensual dancing during songs praising marabouts. What do these expressions mean, and how do cosmopolitan settings make them possible?

I also devote considerable attention to how cosmopolitanism overlaps with the transnational formation of the African diaspora.¹² When Thione Seck and others in this work speak of African and black New World connections, these their evocations of transnational black connections contain complex social, cultural, and political meanings and histories. For example, the history of Négritude begins in Paris among black

¹² The term “African diaspora” is distinguished from the wider debate on diaspora (which addresses issues such as migration, dispersion, exile, and postcolonialism) by emphasizing discussions on race and racial oppression such as pan-Africanism, black nationalism, and essentialism (Monson2000:1). African diaspora also invokes the notion of African heritage and the desire and political need for blacks outside of Africa to discover their African cultural roots as a response to racist ideologies and practices that denied the historical and cultural value of the black experience (Gilroy 1993:112). In this work, my use of African diaspora concentrates on black cultures of the Caribbean, United States, Africa, and France.

francophone students and artists who connect their movement to the Harlem Renaissance in New York. Jazz becomes the sonic symbol of this connection, but it is also a music admired by the colonials for its “primitiveness,” “sophistication,” and “American blackness.” Both colonials and the proponents of *Négritude* bring the music to Senegal. In Dakar and Saint-Louis, jazz becomes a cosmopolitan music, laden with multiple meanings for urbanites. I find it remarkable that for both blacks and whites in Senegal, the music connects them to memories of Paris; to imaginings of blackness in the United States; and to numerous ideas of freedom and liberation (discussed in chapter 5). Over time, jazz remains important in urban life. As different generations draw upon jazz for inspiration and enjoyment, the music links Senegalese to French urban life and history, while also contributing to the imagining of blackness in the Black Atlantic.

Fieldwork and Research

My research consisted of ethnographic research, data gathering, and the review of written literature. I conducted five periods of ethnographic research. My first trip to Senegal was in 1987. I worked for a film project documenting the Festival of Pan-African Arts and Culture (FESPAC), which was to be held that summer on Gorée Island, off the coast of Dakar. I contributed to the task by creating a synopsis of material on the popular musics, arts, dances, theatre, and cultures of the African diaspora represented at the festival. The data used to create this synopsis was drawn from material encountered in an African ethnomusicology course I took at Bowdoin College; from resources and experiences gained while working at the World Music Institute in Manhattan; from musicians and producers in New York City; and from the New York Public Library. Unfortunately, FESPAC was cancelled due to mismanagement. Still, the crew made it to

Gorée to begin pre-production and, undeterred, we remained there to gather more footage. Due the festival's cancellation, the filmmakers shifted their focus to what became the documentary entitled *Gorée: The Door of No Return*, which addressed the history of Gorée as a slave-trading island and the corresponding relationships between Africans and Europeans (Johnson, et al. 1992). For this reason, I too stayed on and immersed myself in the music and culture of Gorée and Dakar.

During that period I spent my time with a small community of musicians and members of the Baye Fall, a sub-sect of the Murid Sufi brotherhood that follows the teachings of Cheikh Ibra Fall, a disciple of Amadou Bamba. Music was a daily occurrence. The music of the Baye Fall often consists of a recitation of Bamba's teachings, characterized by monophonic phrasing with long melismatic motives called *xasaïd*. When accompanied by two or three *jembes* or *xiins* (a small, skin-covered, barrel-shaped drum considered the oldest of the *sabar* drums), the rhythms helped members to correctly recite the text, and synchronized dancers who moved counterclockwise in a circle, facilitating members' transcendence from the physical plane on earth to a spiritual one. Members demonstrated this transcendence by striking themselves on their backs with a large wooden bat (*cour*) to confirm that they did not feel pain here on earth. I observed these performances in Gorée and Dakar at events either solely for Baye Fall or at ceremonies attended by Muslims from different brotherhoods.

Other live performances were impromptu and mostly secular, with occasional praises to Allah or Bamba. I quickly realized that the sacred and secular were often intertwined. These sessions often began with grooves set up by the drummers who were joined by guitars and horns. The participants were not professional musicians, but young

men in their twenties who were unemployed or working in the informal sector. When we had tea and hung out, we listened to a great deal of African and African diasporic music by artists such as Alpha Blondy, Steel Pulse, Bob Marley, Miles Davis, Michael Jackson, Orchestra Aragon, and Peter Tosh. This was the music that I researched for the film project, but it had become, by that point, more than an object of study; it was an integral part of my life on Gorée.

During both my stay on Gorée and my excursions to Dakar, I was surprised at people's intense interest in and knowledge of African diasporic musics. I was curious about what meanings these musics had for Senegalese and, in particular, about their impact on popular culture. I aimed to rectify my lack of knowledge by pursuing ethnomusicology studies and that decision led to an examination of the relationship between African-American and African popular musics.

My second period of fieldwork was undertaken as pre-dissertation research in Dakar, in the summer of 1997. During that time I focused on investigating the meaning of Islam in popular music. I lived with a family in the neighborhood of HLM II where I learned about domestic life, cultural values, proper behavior, and community relationships. I also became aware of the dynamics of rural-urban migration, the impact of remittances from family members living abroad, and the way poverty affects immediate and extended families.

My music research consisted of attending *sabar*, rap, and *mbalax* performances. *Sabars* in our neighborhood were frequent, and important to the women in our home as opportunities for parties and to celebrate the baptisms and weddings of their friends and family. They were important to my research because I wanted to unpack how *mbalax*

musicians used traditional musical elements from *sabar* in their performances. In the nightclubs, I found that performances billed as rap, *mbalax*, or even jazz almost always included a plethora of African diasporic and western pop. Confounded, I changed my research project to investigating the influence of African-American musics on Senegalese popular musics. I intended to do a comparative study between rap and *mbalax*.

My third, and most intensive, period of ethnographic research took place from 1999 to 2000. During that stay, I conducted fieldwork, primarily in Dakar, supplemented by work in Saint Louis and villages. After surveying and mapping out different scenes and nightclubs, I returned to Sahel and the nightclubs bordering it: Toolu Buur and Sunset Jazz. I chose this location as my primary research site for several reasons. First, my contacts, friends, and musicians, mostly worked in this area, and I had developed stable and friendly working relationships with the food vendors, doormen, producers, technicians, venue owners, and returning patrons there. Second, these clubs had a long history in the popular music scene. I had access to an older generation with valuable memories from the inception of *mbalax*. Finally, the clubs enjoyed a thriving business spanning a wide age and geographic demographic. Most patrons were middle- to low-income earners or worked in the informal sector of the economy. Very few Westerners patronized the club, and thus the music played was intended for a local audience rather than tourists and Westerners.

My subsequent research trips to Senegal in 2004 and 2006 averaged three months apiece, and were used to keep abreast of musical trends and verify my thoughts and writings on *mbalax* with musicians in Dakar. Also, since the late 1990s, I have maintained close contact with the Senegalese diaspora in New York City where I take

sabar classes and continue to research collaborations between African and African-American musicians.

In addition to this ethnographic research, I undertook data gathering of various kinds. I conducted formal and informal interviews among musicians, producers, DJs, audience members, radio personalities, marabouts, griots, and dancers. I videotaped and recorded audio cassettes of live performances, television music-video shows, and radio programs. Videos enabled me to document how producers, dancers, and artists used traditional and modern symbols to convey ideas of Senegaleseness. Some video and audio recordings were made by friends and assistants, which allowed me to consider how Senegalese spoke about popular music when not in my presence.

My final area of research was familiarizing myself with the written literature on *mbalax*. To my knowledge, there are only two book-length studies on Senegalese popular music. Jenny Cathcart's *Hey You! A Portrait of Youssou N'Dour* (1989) examines the singer's life and position as a cultural broker by analyzing his song lyrics. Cornelia Panzacchi's *Mbalax Mi: Musikszene Senegal* (1996) is an historical, descriptive account of *mbalax*, in which she argues that it is a music of social cohesion based on her analysis of song lyrics, biographical accounts, and examination of the music industry. The author surveys past and present styles but employs little cultural or musical analysis. Panzacchi, like other scholars of *mbalax*, notes the significance of influences from African-American popular musics and Islamic practices but provides little ethnography. This dissertation will fill in this gap with thick descriptive material from live *mbalax* events and daily life in order to show how Wolof, Muslim, and black identities, and music layer to produce Senegalese cosmopolitanism. My analysis of these materials includes analyses of how the

signs that represent the sociality of Dakarais are danced, played, and sung in performances (discussed further in chapter 1). This approach is inspired by Thomas Turino's use of indexing to investigate how live music and dance creates social cohesion and group identity in Zimbabwean popular music (Turino 1999, 2000).

After my return from fieldwork, I consulted Patricia Tang's (2005) article on her life as an *mbalax* musician and her monograph on *sabar* (2007), which includes valuable material on the traditional *mbalax* rhythms that form the foundation of *sabar*. Most writings on *mbalax* are located in survey articles on Senegalese popular music (Benga 2002a, b; Thioub and Benga 1999) and in books about African popular music (Collins 1992; Dieng, et al. 1999; Hudson, et al. 2000; Seck and Clerfeuille 1993). In the Archives de L'Afrique Occidentale Française and the library at Institut Fondamental d'Afrique Noire (IFAN), I consulted the Senegalese popular press from the 1950s–70s, which was helpful for understanding how Negritude influenced popular culture during the independence years. I also purchased local newspapers and magazines such as *Thiof* and *Télé Mag*, both of which printed profiles and gossip pieces showcasing *mbalax* artists at social functions and political events, as well as articles about their views and opinions on the music industry.

When I returned from the field in 2001, my intent was to write about how African-American musics influenced Senegalese jazz, rap, and *mbalax*. However, I came to realize that a focused ethnography of Senegalese cosmopolitanism through the articulation of social identities in the musical life of *mbalax* would include the story of these other genres and their practice in Dakar's popular music scene.

Chapter Summaries

The dissertation is divided into two sections. The first two chapters provide historical, political, and social background information that contextualizes the subsequent chapters. The remaining three chapters analyze Senegalese cosmopolitanism in *mbalax* performances, with a particular focus on how Muslim, black, and Wolof identities layer and overlap.

Chapter 1 introduces key dynamics of Senegalese cosmopolitanism through a narration of an *mbalax* performance at a Dakar nightclub. I review thirty years of scholarship that has increasingly addressed how Africans use tradition to position themselves in a global modernity. This scholarship was in response to early studies that presented a “traditional” Africa versus a “modern” West, and Africans as essentialized, originary, and stuck in an unchanging primitivism. In the late 1990s scholars increasingly turned to the idea of cosmopolitanism to address how sub-Saharan musical cultures have long been part of a global modernity. My dissertation takes this cosmopolitan approach and applies it to Senegal, looking at how three social identities come together to form a cosmopolitan identity of Senegaleseness. I use the musical tradition of *mbalax* as a lens to look at this cosmopolitanism. The chapter also outlines my fourteen years of fieldwork in Senegal, describes the main musical features of *mbalax*, and introduces the key *mbalax* groups that I worked with in Dakar.

Chapter 2 introduces the history of Senegal, and then focuses on the urban history of Dakar. I outline the cosmopolitan history the Greater Senegambian Region where encounters with Arabs, Europeans, and other Africans balanced by constant travel and engagement with “others” led to the expansion of Islam, black consciousness, and a pan-

ethnic Wolof identity. How Senegalese dealt with these encounters in the Greater Senegambian Region, set the stage for the shared cultural features and social structures that are the roots of modern day Senegalese cosmopolitanism. The second part of the chapter hones in on urban Senegal and the cosmopolitanism of blackness. I show how early urban Senegalese (*originaires*) used race, religion, politics, and ethnicity to assert agency and projects of resistance against the French both in the metropole and at home. I then focus on the significance of *Négritude* in shaping urban popular culture and articulation of an African voice in the diaspora.

Chapter 3 begins the task of examining identity formations and practices of Senegaleseness. This chapter argues that *mbalax* is vital to the practice and representation of Wolofness. I describe the broad practice of Wolofness as a pan-ethnic urban identity through its articulation in the *sabar*, *animation* at live events, and imagining of the griot in both *musique traditionnelle (folklore)* and *musique moderne* events. My aim is demonstrate the long history of Wolof cosmopolitan practices.

Chapter 4 examines how the practice of Islam in *mbalax* articulates ways of being Muslim in postcolonial Senegal. I begin with a brief description of Senegalese Sufism and a history of the saints and brotherhoods praised in *mbalax*. After a description of the sound of Islam in everyday life, I describe and examine its sound and significance in *mbalax*. I include how the sung prayers index a growing universalist and non-affiliated population of Muslims. In closing, I briefly describe how women use *mbalax* to challenge values of proper comportment and sensuality.

Chapter 5 examines blackness in urban popular culture through imaginings of the diaspora and incorporation of jazz into *mbalax*. This complements notions raised in

chapter 2 regarding ideas of blackness in Dakar's political history. I argue here that jazz remains a vital element of Senegalese culture and a powerful revitalizing force in *mbalax*. I begin with an historical overview of jazz in Senegal, followed by a look at how the state institutionalizes jazz as part of Negritude. I then concentrate on cosmopolitan collaborations between US jazz musicians and Senegalese artists, and how their interactions affect live *mbalax* performances.

I conclude with an argument for increased attention to the circulation of dance practices across gender, caste, and cultural boundaries. I am interested in how dances circulate between music videos, street sabars and other participatory traditional events, and the nightclub. I question the role of foreign producers in the making of *mbalax* and how their input changes or takes into account the dance practices so valuable to men and women of Senegal. Lastly, I consider the expression of joy through dance to be an underrepresented topic in African popular music studies and needs further consideration, especially in the quest to discover what it means to be *ci biir* (inside).

Chapter 2

Cosmopolitan Foundations, Dakar, and *Négritude*

Senegambia

Senegalese historical consciousness developed from a larger Senegambian geopolitical area that predates colonialism.¹³ This Greater Senegambia Region included the basins of the Senegal and Gambia rivers. The present-day nation-states that occupy this area are Senegal, The Gambia, Guinea Bissau, Guinea Conakry, and parts of southern Mauritania. This area was (and still is) populated by Berbers, Wolof, Fulbe, Mande (Mandinka), Seereer, Tukolor, Jola, Nalu, Baga, and Tenda (Barry 1998:xi–5). Many of these groups share cultural features and practices, as well as two main sociopolitical features: hierarchal organizations based on caste or lineage, and frequent migrations (Barry 1998). Pre-colonial states (900s–1800s) were monarchical and bilinear, with ultimate power resting in the hands of a ruler who controlled community chiefs, who in turn held power over peasants and slaves.¹⁴ Hierarchy was based on an endogamous and hereditary caste system of freeborn, casted specialists, and slaves. As members of the specialists, griots held considerable power as historians, advisors, and brokers of conflict resolution between royalty, marabouts, and peasants. The griot has remained a vital

¹³See Boubacar Barry (1982, 1998, 2001) and Mamadou Diouf (2001) for persuasive arguments calling for “a regional historiography within the framework of a coherent vision of a Senegambian zone” (Barry 1998:xv).

¹⁴ See Boubacar Barry (1985) for an in-depth description of different hierarchies in Senegambia, and for a detailed description of Wolof caste and social orders, see Abdoulaye Diop (1981). For the significance of Wolof caste in relation to griot praise singers and musicians, see Judith Irvine (1978), Isabelle Leymarie (1999), Cornelia Panzacchi (1994, 1996), and Patricia Tang (2007).

concept and participant in contemporary society, as well as a marker of Senegaleseness through creative reinvention despite major sociopolitical transformations over the centuries (chapters 2-4).¹⁵

External migrations were from the Sudan (present-day Mali) in the east, the Sahel to the north, and the forest region in the south. Internal travel was widespread. Barry (1998) claims that:

Individuals and groups did a great deal of traveling in all directions. When they reached a different community, they intermingled according to the rules of their host communities, in a region where there was still plenty of space for incoming migrants ... people switched ethnic groups and languages. There were Toures, originally Manding, who became Tukolor or Wolof; Jalloos, originally Peul, became Khaasonke; Moors turned into Naari Kajor; Mane and Sane, originally Joola surnames, were taken by the Manding royalty of Kaabu.... Nowhere in this Senegambia, where population settlement patterns assumed stable outlines as early as the end of the fifteenth century, did any Wolof, Manding, Peul, Tukolor, Sereer, Joola, or other ethnic group feel they were strangers. (Barry 1998:35)

The translocal movements and ability of the inhabitants to move between ethnic groups and identities as far back as the tenth century suggests a developing cosmopolitanism where Senegambians valued travel, openness to difference, diversity, and engagement with the lifeways of strangers. Medieval Europe in contrast was not as open to diversity and the lifeways of strangers. Although Europeans had embraced the

¹⁵ In comparison, Thomas Hale and Paul Stoller (1985), who study the Mande griots and Songhay caste of musicians and healers respectively, argue that “the ethnic groups which make up this mosaic share a common ecosystem, a great deal of history, and a variety of common cultural behaviors reflected in both Islamic and pre-Islamic traditions” (Hale and Stoller 1985:164). These authors place these characteristics within a “deep Sahelian culture,” the same geopolitical area that Barry (1998) and Diouf (2001) describe as the Senegambian zone. See also Philip Curtin (1975), one of the first historians to consider the socioeconomic unity of a Senegambia region.

universalism of Christianity, its practitioners were not tolerant of difference, and under manorialism, serfs were legally bound to remain on the lands of the nobility. Travel across territories was limited to mostly nobility, clergy, troubadours, and soldiers fighting in the crusades.¹⁶

Griots played a critical role in enabling mobility across ethnic groups and fostering a regional Senegambian consciousness or early Senegaleseness. Griots traveled widely throughout the region carrying news and performing for important ceremonial, military, aristocratic, communal, and familial functions. Griots were particularly adept at fusing the musical styles of different groups into their own particular ethnic group's genre. In this way when strangers participated in lifecycle celebrations, social dances, recitation of epics and religious practices griots introduced new rhythms, dances, songs and performance practices in ways the community could accept or reject. Wolof griots, for example, were master musicians and cultural brokers between ethnicities. A description on the origins of the Wolof *sabar* by master drummer Macheikh Mbaye, reveals the cosmopolitan roots of this drumming tradition.

The Wolof people learned to play the drum from the Seereer, who took it from the Soosé. There was a king called Maysa Waaly Jon; he was the king of Kaabu. ...[He] went into exile and came to settle in Saloum with his whole court and the griot... His griot brought some percussions the Seereer had never seen, and it is called *saoruba*. So the Seereer people, they cut it in half and then came up with other drums. And as time continued, people from Dakar

¹⁶ Cosmopolitan was first coined in the fourth century BC by the Cynics to challenge the belief that citizens (*polites*) owed allegiance to the city-state (*polis*). By identifying as a cosmopolite, a citizen of the universe (*kosmos*) a person was now obligated to consider themselves connected to broader universe of humanity. Even though the term had this ancient heritage it was not until the nineteenth century did the modern European version of cosmopolitanism gain traction as a discourse in politics and philosophy (see Appiah 2006; Kant 1991; Kleingeld 2012; c.f. Magnalo).

just imitated drumming from the Seereer. (Macheikh Mbaye quoted in Tang 2007:31)

This early musical cosmopolitanism began in the fourteenth century, when the prince from Kaabu, Maysa Waaly Jon, ruled Sine-Saloum, a region south of Dakar, circa 1350–75. He was *gelwaar*, a member of aristocracy descended from the Socé and Mande who, over the course of their rule, became identified as Seereer, the dominant ethnic group in Sine-Saloum (followed by the Wolof and Peul). The *saoruba* drumming of the Mande griots (*jeli*) was modified by the Seereer and then transformed by Wolof griots (*gégwël*) into the *sabar* (c.f., Charry 2000:235-236). From these pan-ethnic origins, *sabar* developed and thrived through *gégwël* incorporation of the musics and dances from other ethnic groups in the Greater Senegambia Region.

The relative ease for the exchange of musical practices between ethnic groups comes from a shared history of empires that exerted significant regional power over communities and their social orders. The first dominant empires in the region were Ghana (Wagadu), which ruled the upper Senegal Valley in the eighth century; and Sanhaja Berber confederations, which controlled the market in the city of Awdagost. In response to the Berber and Ghanaian presence, the Wolof, Peul, Seereer, and Tukolor (from Adrar in the north) migrated to the Senegal Valley and farther south, where they displaced the Socé. Tekrur was the first political center in the valley, in the same area where the eleventh-century Almoravid movement both originated and began its quest to conquer Iberia and Morocco.

The Ghana empire fell in the twelfth century, and the Mali empire moved in to exert its influence on the Greater Senegambian Region until the fifteenth century. Historian Boubacar Barry (1998) asserts that the Mali empire's dominance over the

Tukulor and Wolof states “catalyzed the transformation of the region’s kinship-based societies into states” (Barry 1998:6). The Manding further consolidated the trade networks to include not only the gold mines but also the salt-producing regions along the coast. They were strongly entrenched in the southern Senegambia, but in 1360 the ruler Mansa Suleiman died, strengthening the Jolof Confederation.

When the Jolof Confederation broke away from the Mali empire in the last half of the thirteenth century, they occupied an area that extended from present-day Dakar to the Senegal River basin in the north and the Gambia River basin in the south. During this period, Tekrur, formerly a vassal state of Mali, became part of the Jolof Confederation. The Jolof Confederation broke apart into the Wolof states Cayor, Waalo, and Baol, and the Seereer states of Sine (Siin) and Saloum (Saalum).

After the fall of the Ghana and Tekrur rule, Futa Toro was created in the north along the Senegal River and Gajaaga further east. Futa Toro became the center of the nomadic Peul and Tukulor. This area stretched 400 kilometers along the Senegal River and supplied most of the millet for the Sahel. Owned and controlled by families, the region was overpopulated and subject to periodic mass migrations known as *fergo* (Barry 1998:13). Gelwaar, descendants of the Manding, created Sine and Saloum kingdoms. Together these areas constitute northern Senegambia, with the Senegal River to the north, Gambia River in the south, Sudan to the east, and the Atlantic Ocean to the west.

To clarify: before colonialism, the Senegal River was not a political border; states’ territories crossed both sides. Adrar in present-day Mauritania was an important urban center from which the Wolof, Peul, Seereer, and Tukulor moved south (due to political pressures from Berbers and the ecological pressures of desertification). In broad

terms, the Wolof shared northern Senegambia with the Tukolor and Peul in Futa Toro. To the south, the Seereer rejected the rule of the Jolof and the incursion of Islam. The Sudan to the east was a link to trans-Saharan trade to the Middle East, while Northern Senegambia was linked to the Maghrib. Many other groups existed in this vast network of relations, but a closer examination of their histories is beyond the scope of this dissertation.¹⁷ However, an in-depth look at Wolof history through its foundational tale, the Njaanjaan Njaay Epic, describes the core values shared among many ethnic groups in the region and binds the Arab, Berber, Tukolor, Seereer, and Wolof to each other through narrative performed by a griot (Sylla 1995: 257).

Njaanjaan Njaay and Wolofness

When a griot performs the epic of Njaanjaan Njaay, the founder of the first Wolof Empire (1200-1550), the narration depicts the major historical events and actors of a pre-colonial Senegal. The narration also articulates the roots of an incipient cosmopolitanism that derives from the high value that Senegalese place on the desire to learn about the lifeways and ideas of strangers. Since the thirteenth century, the Njaay epic has been performed by griots to the accompaniment of the *xalam*, an indigenous lute. Audiences are composed of a patron and the people of his social world including friends, family, and neighbors.¹⁸

¹⁷ For more historical information on pre-colonial and colonial Senegambia, consult Mamadou Diouf (1990) and Lucy Colvin-Phillips (1972) on Kajor; Charlotte Quinn (1972) on the Mandingo; Martin Klein (1998) on Siin and Saloum; David Robinson (1971) on Futa Toro; and Jean Boulégue (1987a, b) and Victoria Coifman (1969) on Jolof; and Boubacar Barry on a general history (1998) and on Waalo (1985).

¹⁸ After Senegal's independence in 1960, the state became another patron and the epic reached a wider audience through government-sponsored performances at the national

The most popular version of the epic describes how in the thirteenth century an Arab Muslim cleric from Jordan traveled to Senegal where he married an African Tukolor (an ethnic group in northern Senegal) and they had a son, Mouhamadou Njaay. The father died and the mother remarried. Distraught over the death and remarriage, the son dove into the Senegal River where he acquired supernatural powers and lived along the banks. One day, while swimming in the Wolof region of Waalo, Njaay noticed two children on a riverbank arguing over how to divide the pile of fish they had caught. Njaay interceded, equitably distributed the catch between them, and showed them how to string their fish through the gills after pulling them out of the water, thereby resolving their conflict. The children returned to their village and told their elders about the stranger. Curious, the villagers went to the river and became enthralled with this aquatic entity and admired his skill at solving the dispute. They beseeched him to become their leader. Initially he refused, in Pulaar (the language of the Tukolor), then relented and became mortal when he married a Wolof woman presented to him by the elders. The elders sent word of Njaay to the neighboring Sereer king and sorcerer who exclaimed “Njaanjaan” (“stranger”). The exclamation held, and “Njaanjaan” became Njaay’s first name. Njaay ruled with vigor by consolidating the neighboring Wolof states (Waalo, Cayor, Sine, Saloum, Jolof) into the Jolof Empire (Diop 1995).

During the narration of this epic by the singers listeners interject with comments and positive affirmations, particularly when the griot praises an ancestor and describes

theatre and on state-run radio and television programs. Today, urban dance bands perform condensed versions of the epic at live events and have recorded versions available on compact discs and YouTube. For an urban popular dance band version of the epic see “Njaanjaan Njaay,” on Youssou N'Dour et Le Super Etoile de Dakar, *Best of 80's* (CD; Melodie 67003-2; France).

key events. Audiences also respect the morals and the values emphasized by the griot that include conflict resolution through non-violence, a Muslim heritage fused with African beliefs, and an obligation of leaders to equitably distribute goods and services throughout the community. This respect for the beliefs, practices, and ideas of others balanced by obligations to the local community prevail in the different versions of this epic. However, other versions focus more on the politics of Wolof hegemony or validation of a Muslim identity connected to the Arab north. A political version, for example, switches the principle antagonists from children to aristocratic rulers fighting over forest resources along a lake. Before the rulers engage in battle, a stranger appears from the water and peacefully resolves the conflict. The rulers implore the stranger to remain in their territory and assume leadership. After much persuasion “Njaanjaan” agrees, and the story continues much as in the first version, with Njaay becoming Wolof and forming the Jolof Confederation. Religious versions emphasize Muslim heritage by beginning with praises to Allah followed by recounting of the story of Noah that segues into the birth of Muhammad Njaay. In most of these versions, griots emphasize the relationship between Njaay’s Muslim father and his black servant as symbolic of the Prophet Mohammed’s close relationship with his black African muezzin, Bilal.

These variations in the epic narrative convey several key dynamics of Wolofness and Senegalese cosmopolitanism. First, they introduce an historical precedent for the pan-ethnic Wolof identity that has become the *de facto* indigenous social identity for Senegalese today: Njaay adopts a Wolof identity even though his parents are Tukulor and Arab, and the Seereer king’s submits to Wolof leadership, a move that also indexes how some urban Senegalese today consider the Seereer ethnically similar to, and for some

inseparable from, the Wolof. Second, the epic establishes the Senegalese's long involvement in transregional encounters with Muslim Arabs culminating in a shared Muslim heritage that has taken a distinctive Senegalese form (see chapter 4). Third, the narrative emphasizes values that Senegalese have long drawn upon to survive, and indeed, thrive, despite centuries of inter-African wars, violent *jihads*, and French colonialism. These values include conflict resolution through non-violence; the responsibility of leaders to equitably distribute goods and services throughout the community; and a respect for the beliefs, ideas, and cultural practices of strangers. Finally, the musical transmission of this oral history, with its concomitant values and meanings, is a deeply valued expressive practice endemic to both traditional griot performances and *mbalax*. Indeed, the values of openness to and respect for strangers coupled with agency outlined in the Njaay myth are not only core Wolof values but also central to the Senegalese cosmopolitanism that developed over centuries of engagement between Africans, Europeans, Arabs, and Berbers.

Encounters: The Fifteenth through Twentieth Centuries

Precolonial French, African, and Muslim encounters in the Greater Senegambian Region, set the conditions for forming an early cosmopolitan subject in which a Senegaleseness was incipient. The arrival of the Portuguese in 1444 and their subsequent military and capitalist excursions paved the way for the French, English, and Dutch to establish commercial networks along the coast that challenged the established Senegambian networks that linked to the Sudan east and Arab north. When some traditional aristocracies diverted their resources to the coast, others formed allegiances with the growing Muslim theocracies that contested the Atlantic trade. Sporadic *jihads*,

led by African and Berber Muslim clerics with ties to the Arab north, attempted to create a united Muslim land under *sharia* (the code of law based on the Qur'an and other Islamic sources). The demand by Europeans and Americans in the New World for slaves radically changed the political and social structures of the Senegambians. Political instability was compounded not only by wars between the Muslim theocracies, Europeans, and traditional aristocracies, but also by internal struggles within each group. Famine, depopulation, and mass migrations increased, and by the end of the nineteenth century, Europeans—once relegated to the coast—had assumed total political and economic authority over the interior, and had destroyed the traditional aristocracies.

In the sixteenth century, the Jolof Confederation began to disintegrate as their coastal states became empowered by trade with the Europeans. Mid-century, Cayor, Waalo, Sine, and Saloum became independent. The breakup into small traditional aristocracies allowed for the rise of the *ceddo* monarchies, a violent class of former royal slaves who became aristocrat warriors. Barry (1998:44, 8–93) argues that much of *ceddo* power relied on meeting European demand for slaves and goods through an ability to easily mobilize military forces, pillage settlements, and transport slaves to the coast. *Ceddo* violence drove peasants to seek protection from warrior Muslim leaders who offered more stability. However, some Muslim clerics abandoned their mission to revitalize the trans-Saharan trade and supplied the Europeans with slaves. Political and social instability for Senegambians increased in the seventeenth century, when the slave trade became the primary European capitalist endeavor, binding Africa to Europe and the Americas (Barry 1998:305; Diouf 2001:221–222).¹⁹

¹⁹ An important consequence of this endeavor was that over a million of these slaves

From 1673 to 1679, wars escalated between Muslim theocracies and traditional aristocracies. One of the most formidable Muslim leaders was Nasir al-Din, a champion of Berbers and of orthodox Islam. His victories galvanized two forces that brought his religious military campaign to an end: Hassani Arab warriors supported by the French Saint-Louis trading company, and former rulers from Futa Toro, Jolof, Cayor, and Waalo. Al-Din's defeat ensured the continuation of the trans-Atlantic trade since traditional aristocracies became economically dependent upon the slave trade. However, his movement also instilled the idea of a populist Islam as a rallying site for opposition to aristocratic violence and European domination (Barry 1998:305).

Meanwhile, along the Atlantic coast, the Europeans battled over port cities that served as links to the goods and slaves from the interior. Toward the end of the eighteenth century, the European trading posts became towns with urban populations distinct from the interior. Europeans intermarried with Africans and created a class of creoles or *métis* who became an elite group of merchants and cultural brokers between European and Senegambian trading interests. The *métis* and French merchant families maintained strong ties to provinces in the metropole (e.g., the Bordeaux families). *Signares*, African women or the daughters of *métis* who married or formed liaisons with French merchants and military, became particularly powerful leaders to local Africans, and played important roles in their cultural events (see Jones 2005).

In the early nineteenth century, the dismantling of slavery coupled by French expansion into the interior led to the fall of African aristocracies and the rise of

were transported to the port cities of the United States such as New Orleans (Hall 1992) where they helped create the African American genres (jazz, R&B, blues, soul) that many urban and cosmopolitan Senegalese use to link to link themselves to a black modernity.

Senegalese Sufi orders and black political parties. These Senegalese religious and political institutions became the bedrock for fighting French imperialism and engaging with colonial culture. In 1818, the transatlantic slave trade was abolished (although an illegal trade continued) and Europeans focused on the gum arabic and peanut industries. The end of the official slave trade followed by the outlawing of slavery in the colony of Senegal (1848) caused an economic depression along the coast that had severe consequences for the interior. Traditional aristocracies once empowered by their slave-trade profits became destabilized and embroiled in civil wars between royal clans. The *ceddo*, suffering from the loss of their main source of income (slaving), stepped up the pillage of peasants (Barry 1998:308). The latter sought refuge with Muslim theocracies and joined their armies. Thousands moved to the eastern borders and joined Shaykh Umar Tal, who wanted to create a Muslim empire based on *sharia* through his brand of Tijaniyya Islam. Tal's movement (1845-1864) attracted the peasant masses because he and his disciple-lieutenants were black Africans of common birth (like the peasants). Tal and his followers wanted to use orthodox Islam to transform Senegambian society through the mobilization of these masses

who [themselves] became a significant economic force once legitimate commerce replaced slave trading, and whose contribution to peanut farming was crucial. The new religious leaders fought against both the outdated structures of the status quo and the violent abuses of the *ceddo* exploitation of the ordinary people by the Muslim aristocracies that had been in power since the eighteenth century. (Barry 1998:312)

Tal and his lieutenants showed that through conversion to Islam, it was possible to gain political power and move beyond the limitations of social mobility prescribed by caste, race, ethnicity, and old social orders. But, as marabouts, the leaders still drew upon

Senegambian cultural values—of respect for hierarchy, and of travel through invoking *hijra* (Muslim migration)—to safe haven Muslim authority away from *ceddo* and colonial influence (Robinson 2000:22).

Still, the mobilization of peasants away from peanut-growing areas threatened the colonials' agricultural enterprises. In 1854, the French government intervened by appointing Captain Louis Faidherbe as Governor General of the Colony, charging him with the mission to annex the interior. That same year, Faidherbe stopped Tal's westward expansion and defeated the Waalo and Trarza Moor army in northern Senegal. People fled and depopulated the area. Faidherbe then asserted colonial authority over the area and made all parties recognize the Senegal River as the border between the white Moors (*bidan*) to the north and the black Africans to the south. This helped the Saint-Louis merchants promote the peanut trade from the south bank, and increased French military control. In the following years, Faidherbe and traditional rulers united and defeated the Muslim movement. Then, in 1879, Lat Dior Diop—the last Wolof king of Cayor and a *ceddo* who collaborated with Muslim clerics—was defeated by the French. Cayor then came under total French control and the colonization of interior Senegal was assured. The French invested Wolof leaders with an authority that would assure peanut production and began to create an infrastructure and political system that would have long-lasting effects into the twentieth century.

In the latter part of the nineteenth century, there was an intensification of infrastructure development and empire building that led to the rise of a black cosmopolitan urban citizenry and Senegalese Sufi orders led by marabouts able to enforce social order where the colonial authorities and their appointed African

representatives failed. Ports were modernized and a rail line was built to facilitate the transportation of peanuts to the ports. The port cities of Saint-Louis, Dakar, Gorée, and Rufisque became *communes*—French political entities under metropole, not colonial, law—with the right to send deputies to the French National Assembly. In the 1850s, the French instituted a policy of assimilation with the aim of creating black Catholic Frenchmen who would serve in Africa as teachers, administrators, and representatives of the metropole. These cosmopolitans, called *originaires*, used this education and knowledge to create black political groups that, with concomitant print media and organizational acumen, effected social and cultural change that eventually led to independence.

In 1889, France and Britain signed a treaty fixing the boundaries between Senegal and The Gambia. In 1895, the French combined the colonies of Senegal, French Sudan, French Guinea, and Cote d’Ivoire into the Afrique Occidentale Française (AOF), an area nine times the size of the French metropole, consisting of present-day Mauritania, Senegal, Côte d’Ivoire, Guinea, Burkina Faso, Mali, Niger, and Benin. The colonial territory, with a population of nearly ten million, was now permanently linked, economically and politically, to global networks governed by France. Concurrently, Arab support of African Muslim theocracies failed to create a polity under *sharia*, and orthodox Islam did not take a substantial hold over the majority of the population. Still, the roots and ideas of Islam—as an alternative to *ceddo* and colonial domination—was established.

With the destruction of indigenous monarchies, Senegalese peasants (and *ceddo* in the interior) turned to local Sufi brotherhoods for spiritual, political, and economic

order. The brotherhoods, infused with indigenous religious practices, used hierarchy, through devotion to a marabout, to enforce order. Instead of evoking a violent *jihad* of the sword and Arab affiliation, the brotherhoods both created a distinct non-violent brand of black African Sufism (a *jihad* of the greater struggle), and compromised with the French.

The Senegalese brotherhoods were led by marabouts who were granted lands that they governed and, in turn, distributed to loyal disciples who farmed the peanuts so valuable to the French. Laborers were beholden to marabouts, who distributed wealth and spiritual guidance, while the marabouts depended on workers for crops, which gave them leverage with the French to administer justice according to Senegalese Islamic codes, so long as it did not contravene colonial authority. In sum, the brotherhoods granted the French civic stability, consistent peanut production, and manpower for colonial projects—as well as troops to use in World War I.

Colonial modernity in the countryside was different from that in *communes* (Diouf 1998). The brotherhoods became part of colonial agricultural system that reframed Wolof values by borrowing colonial management and labor (Diouf 1998:113).

Originaires in the *communes* were able to seek justice in French courts; but black subjects (*sujets*) in the interior lived under a separate colonial code (*indigénat*) which stripped them of their civil rights and left them vulnerable to French military officers and administrators' legal and punishment powers such as military conscription, forced labor, concubine, and severe punishment (see Jones 2012: 332). This unequal situation changed in 1946 with passage of the Lamine Gueye Law which extended citizenship to all Senegalese.

When Senegal gained its independence from France in 1960, Africans from the surrounding countries, colonies, and from the interior, came to the capital, Dakar, in increasing numbers. The city grew at an exponential rate and diversified as rural Senegambians mixed with Dakarois and the French. Despite centuries of violence, these groups lived in Dakar without suffering the ethnic and racial violence that afflicted other African cities.²⁰ A principle reason for the relative peacefulness was due to the practice of an urban Wolofness, distinguished from its rural counterpart by the heavy populist use of French, Arabic, and English in “urban” or “Dakar” Wolof, and by the integration of a broad range of traditional African and diaspora popular musical styles into *sabar*, *mbalax*, and *afro*. Another reason for the vibrancy of Dakar was due to the political and cultural influence of Senegalese who had studied abroad or at the elite French institutions of the colony. These intellectuals and elite provided an administrative acumen for political stability and patronage for urban dance musics from abroad.

At the dawn of twenty-first century Dakar was a city with a thriving music industry hosting collaborations with artists from around the world, a political culture proud and critical of its relatively peaceful democracy, hosting Senegalese Sufist brotherhoods with branches around the world, and an intelligentsia publishing and collaborating with scholars at home and abroad. Despite these transnational connections and cosmopolitan history, Western essentialism of Senegalese society and culture remained intact.

²⁰ I do not mean to imply that a utopian state devoid of conflict and violence was created. To the contrary, there were—and continue to be—many social problems. For contrasting investigations of the state, see the essays in *La Construction de l'État au Sénégal* (Cruise O'Brien, et al. 2002); for essays on twentieth-century politics, culture, and religion see *Le Sénégal Contemporain* (Diop 2002); and for a concise sociological review of urban crisis after independence, see *Les Familles Dakaroises Face à la Crise* (Antoine, et al. 1995).

Sarkozy and Mbembe

In 2007, President Sarkozy addressed the students, faculty, leading business people, government ministers, and civil servants of Dakar—its urban elite—at Cheikh Anta Diop University, Senegal’s leading institution of higher education. Sarkozy called for African youth to assert their agency as cosmopolitans connected to the world through their dual French and African roots and resist the nostalgic trappings of an imagined “traditional” African past. The president advised,

Youth of Africa open your eyes and no longer look, as your elders do too often, at global civilization as a threat to your identity but as something that also belongs to you....

The tragedy of Africa is that the African man has not entered history enough. The rural African, who for millennia has lived according to the seasons, whose ideal life in harmony with nature, known through the eternal renewal of time, through endless repetitions of rhythms, the same gestures, and the same words. In this imaginary, where everything repeats, there is neither a place for human adventure, nor for the idea of progress.

In this universe where nature orders everything, the [traditional] African escapes from the anguish and history that tortures modern man but remains immobile in the medium of an immutable unchanging same. The African never moves towards the future. The idea never comes to him to leave the repetition and invent his own destiny. (Sarkozy 2007:4–5, my translation)

Sarkozy’s ahistorical generalization of African culture and society, and his call for Africans to avoid the trap of remaining in an unchanging past, reveals the persistent and unfounded belief that Africans lack agency and have not inserted themselves in a purposely “Western” or any other modernity, a perspective Senghor had refuted seventy-one years earlier. In 1936, in a speech delivered in Dakar, Senghor claimed that Senegalese had long been part of Europe, were “Afro-French,” and that the image of the “traditional” African was over (Senghor 1945; see Vaillant 2002). Senghor’s speech was

an act of agency that asserted Senegalese cosmopolitanism—just one example of several similar historical events that I will describe further in this chapter.

Later in his speech, Sarkozy took another longstanding colonial position that the path to African progress was through assimilation into French culture. Citing Senghor, Sarkozy pronounced,

He, the child of Joal, who had been cradled by the rhapsodies of griots, said: “We are cultural *métis*, and if we feel in black and express ourselves in French, it’s because French is a universal and vocational language that communicates our message as much to the French as to other men. (Sarkozy 2007:6, my translation)

For Sarkozy, and many French intellectuals, Senghor was the ideal *assimilé*: a black Frenchman whose mastery of French language and customs, and positive essentialism of blackness, enabled him to succeed as *the* intermediary between Africans and Europeans. But the quote’s emphasis on the mastery of French language as a path to progress has long been contested among Senegalese who have wished to be respected and acknowledged as a people with their own histories and languages. Senghor himself addressed this problem with the oft-cited phrase, “to assimilate and not be assimilated” (Senghor 1945). He recognized that political and social advancement for Africans came in part from embracing European culture while also drawing on and acknowledging one’s African roots and blackness as a source of strength.

I believe that Sarkozy wanted to use Senghor and his words as an example of how African youth could be part of a globalized world.²¹ Sarkozy even used the musical

²¹ Another point of contention deserves mention. French-educated and literate urban Senegalese were not the only Africans with extensive cosmopolitan interactions. Over 170,000 Africans served in the French army and colonial forces during WWI. The soldiers came from all castes, classes, and rural and urban areas throughout the colonies. Their service in theatres around the world exposed them to different lifeways that they

metaphors of rhythms and griots that so often colored the prose of Senghor. Yet the tone and content of the speech was too close to the old strategy of French rule—the argument that the path to progress for the “traditional” African was solely through French civilization. Sarkozy had brought colonialist assimilationism into the twenty-first century. He rekindled an angst that Senegalese had long struggled with, namely: tension over the colonial strategy of pitting the imagined “traditional” man against the “modern” *assimilé*.²²

African reaction to the speech was heated. Postcolonial scholar Achille Mbembe wrote a critique printed in the African press that became the focus of debates that spread to the Internet, thereby taking on a global form that countered Sarkozy’s characterization of Africans without agency and adverse to globalization processes. Mbembe questioned,

How is it possible to come to Cheikh Anta Diop University in Dakar at the start of the 21st century to address the intellectual elite as if Africa didn’t have its own critical traditions and as if Senghor

then brought home and shared with their communities and whose impact was felt by the French when veteran organizations formed to fight for benefits and pay, equal to that which the metropolitan French received (Echenberg 1991; Lunn 1999).

²² Sarkozy and his speechwriter failed to recognize the contestations among Senegalese over Senghor’s cultural and political policies. Nor did they address the projects of agency among Senegalese such as scholarly works of the “Dakar School,” dedicated to writing histories that redress the inaccuracies of colonialist literature colored by racialism and primitivism (Barry 2001; Diouf 1989). The work of Mamadou Diouf, for example, examines Senegalese agency in early nineteenth-century transnational encounters between Africans and Europeans in the *communes* (Diouf 1998), and vernacular cosmopolitanism in twentieth-century Dakar (Diouf 2000). The Dakar School and followers of Negritude wrote to counter European historians’ contention Africa had no history, an idea best represented in this oft-cited quote of British historian Hugh Trevor-Roper, “Perhaps in the future there will be some African history to teach. But at present there is none: there is only the history of Europeans in Africa. The rest is largely, like the history of...pre-Columbian America, darkness And darkness is not a subject of history” (Roper 1965: 9).

and Camara Laye, respective champions of black emotion and the kingdom of childhood, hadn't been the object of vigorous internal refutations?

What credibility can we afford such gloomy words that portray Africans as fundamentally traumatized beings incapable of acting on their own behalf and in their own recognized interests? What is this so-called historicity of the continent that totally silences the long tradition of resistance, including that against French colonialism, along with today's struggles for democracy, none of which receive the clear support of a country that, for many years, has actively backed the local satrapies? How is it possible to come to promise us a fanciful Eurafrica without even mentioning the internal efforts to build a unitary African economic framework? (Mbembe 2007)²³

His questions point to three dynamics that shape the structure of this chapter.

First, Mbembe draws attention to Dakar as a place with "its own critical traditions."

Dakar is one of Africa's most dynamic cities and its population remains connected to cultural and political practices from abroad. In the following sections, I pay attention to the city as an actor and social force in its own right and show how its transnationalism has long contributed to Dakar's rich political and cultural life. Sarkozy's speech, for example, occurred at a university built during the colonial period (as "L'Institute des Hautes Etudes de Dakar") that remains committed to maintaining global ties under an independent African government. University Cheikh Anta Diop sponsors Fulbright scholars from abroad; Internet and digitization projects for documenting West African

²³ For a critique on the essentialism of the Sarkozy speech see Etienne Smith (2007) "L'Afrique De Monsieur Sarkozy." *Mouvements*, <http://www.mouvements.info/L-Afrique-de-Monsieur-Sarkozy.html#forum214>., accessed January 2010. For analysis of the Sarkozy speech through the lens of black intellectuals and a global humanism see the interview with Mamadou Diouf (2007) "Pourquoi Sarkozy Se Donne-T-Il Le Droit De Nous Tancer Et De Juger Nos Pratiques..." *Seneweb.com*, http://www.seneweb.com/news/Politique/entretien-pr-mamadou-diouf-de-columbia-university-pourquoi-sarkozy-se-donne-t-il-le-droit-de-nous-tancer-et-de-juger-nos-pratiques_n_11792.html.

culture and scholarship; and, most importantly, forums for presenting and debating African and European economic and political policies, which the Sarkozy speech was part of. In addition, the university has trained many of Senegal's scholars, writers, musicians, artists, and business professionals, who have contributed significantly to a dynamic cultural life in this African world city.

Second, Mbembe critiques Sarkozy's speech for essentializing Africans and failing to acknowledge African agency, a persistent problem among Western politicians and news media. As Sherry Ortner reminds us, the idea of human agency de-essentializes the subject and points to "the capacity of social beings to interpret and morally evaluate their situation and to formulate projects and try to enact them" (Ortner 1995:185). The musicians and interlocutors I worked with in Dakar considered both foreign and local cultural and political issues when making decisions that would, they hoped, better their own lives and those of their families and social groups (e.g., political associations, bands, sporting associations). The song "Jambaat" ("Complaint") by the *afro-mbalax* group Ceddo, for example, critiques poverty, urban malaise, and corruption. "Jambaat" was released on cassette during the 1999-2000 presidential elections and was widely played on private radio, cable television, and in Ceddo's weekly performances at the Toolu Buur nightclub in Dakar. Because of its political critique the government-run radio and television stations banned the song on its stations. Yet it was precisely because of the critique, and its deliverance through *afro-mbalax*, that appealed to young Dakarois across class lines. Ceddo knew they would not be called to perform at government sponsored events and rallies, a crucial source of financial support for performers, but felt their criticism needed to be voiced, and as a result the group's popularity and audience grew

(Ceddo, in conversation with author, July 5, 2000). Ceddo's agency, the mark of the cosmopolitan, increased the group's fame and mediated Senegalese frustration with ongoing poverty and police corruption.

Third, Mbembe takes Sarkozy to task for ignoring the "long tradition of resistance" to both French hegemony and contestations among Senegalese political groups. Colonial authorities ruled not only through oppression but also accommodation, connivance, and conviviality (Mbembe 1992, 2001). In response, subjects developed their own strategies of resistance that not only confronted, but also toyed with this power (Werbner 1996). In all, consideration of culture and politics among subalterns who interact with external forces as individuals and collectivities (Ortner 1995) would be key to understanding the history of Dakar.

Taking a cue from Mbembe, I locate Dakar as an African world city whose demographics are not only shaped by transnational material and cultural influences, but by important histories of agency and resistance. Since *mbalax* is a symbolic register of these histories—where race and culture are key areas of contention between Europeans and Africans—it is important to lay out these events in advance of the more in-depth analyses of the genre that follow in the next chapters.

Cosmopolitan Dakar

Sarkozy's position—that the majority of Africans remain unconnected to global civilization (*civilization mondiale*)—in other words, there are no African cosmopolitans—can be found in an alternate form in a number of discourses on globalization. Although Dakar is properly characterized as a participant in the world economy (Mustafa 1997; Scheld 2003), it is, like many African cities, absent from

globalization and urban discourses as a “world” or “global” city. The “world city” concept (Friedman 2002; Friedman and Wolff 1982) proposes a hierarchy of cities, mostly in Europe and North America, based on their production and employment levels and ability to exert power in a global economy. In general, world and global cities have concentrated financial sectors, modernized environments and infrastructures, well-distributed and advanced information technologies, and strong economic and political connections to other cities.

Alternatively, Saskia Sassen (1991) and Anna Tsing (2000) questions the assumption that place is insignificant in globalization where the increased flow of capital and information across territories diminishes the power of localities. While Sassen (1991) argues that place is indeed a significant factor, she nonetheless maintains, that “global” cities such as New York, London, and Tokyo have their urban character shaped by the need of the financial and information industries to maintain a high concentration of managers, financial and technical experts, and a cheap migrant labor pool in order to maintain a sophisticated infrastructure and compete successfully in the global economy.

African cities have not been generally classified as global or world cities due to their lack of economic and political power in the global political economy—as well as to their high debt, low employment, and decaying infrastructure. While Dakar fits this latter description, it is nevertheless a major economic, political, and cultural force in Francophone West Africa, with substantial ties to other world cities.

Recent studies by social scientists argue that these definitions of global cities pay little attention to the role of agency and culture. They dispute the characterization of the “global” that privileges Western and Global North metropolises and seek instead to redraw

the parameters in ways that include African cities in global and world city discourses. Urban scholar Abdou Maliq Simone (2001, 2004) recognizes that major African cities are not “global” in the traditional sense, but counters that they are both “worldly” and “global” because they are centers of *informal* cosmopolitan networks fueled by migration and social ties that affect not only local, but also other “world” cities. In making this argument, Simone relies on the ethnography of transnational networks of African religious organizations in Nigeria, Ghana, and Saudi Arabia. This ethnographic approach is championed by urban scholar Michael Peter Smith (2001), who questions the utility of the global/local dichotomy and asserts that understanding urban space requires a model outside the world- and global-cities categories. Smith argues for a transnational urbanism that emphasizes ethnography as a way to understand:

[t]he crisscrossing of transnational circuits of communication and cross-cutting local, translocal, and transnational social practices that “come together” in particular places at particular times and enter into the contested politics of place-making, the social construction of power differentials, and the making of individual, group, national, and transnational identities, and their corresponding fields of difference. (Smith 2001:5)

Smith’s transnational urbanism addresses the lack of attention to culture and agency in Friedman’s and Sassen’s global-cities concepts, which are delineated by economics and technology. Anthropologist Suzanne Scheld draws upon Smith’s transnational urbanism to challenge the emphasis on economic and political hierarchy in the world city concept by examining how the informal trade networks run by Senegalese transmigrants between New York and Dakar create a shared social life around the symbolic meaning actors ascribe to the clothing designed or manufactured abroad (e.g., Sebago shoes made in the Americas, second-hand clothing from the United States, and

European fashion reproduced and tailored in Dakar) (Scheld 2003:109). Scheld argues that the transnational networks of consumption and production created around Senegalese desire for this clothing affects the lives of cosmopolitan youth and justifies rethinking the role of culture in the global- and world-cities concepts (Scheld 2007). The youth cosmopolitanism that Scheld investigates exemplifies the type of dynamic interactions people use through formal and informal networks to survive in the city. For urban Simone analyzing these type of interactions is key to understanding what he calls “cityness” a dynamic where “at the heart of city life is the capacity for its different people, spaces, activities, and things to interact in ways that exceed any attempt to regulate them” (Simone 2010: 3).

These scholars recognize the need to include African cities in accounts of globalization and like them, I feel that the parameters of the global- and world-cities discourses are too restrictive. Instead of attempting to locate Dakar as a city that cannot achieve the level of wealth, technology, and infrastructure necessary to be fully included in the global and world city discourses, I focus on its cosmopolitanism.

Ethnomusicologists Turino (2000) and Stokes (2007) deem cosmopolitanism more effective than globalization in describing the specificity of how human agency emerges and operates in relation to global markets, informal networks of trade and migration, and media flows. Drawing on the work of Anna Tsing (2000), Stokes recognizes that attention needs to be paid to the specificity of how globalization processes affect the social lives of actors at particular times and places. Since Dakar is the place under consideration here, it is necessary to sketch out the complex socio-demography that characterizes this city’s cosmopolitanism.

Dakar's port is the second busiest in West Africa (after Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire), and serves primarily Senegal, Mauritania, and Mali. It is a major trade center for imports (primarily consumer goods), and exports of raw materials and locally produced commodities. Dakar is also the terminus for the Dakar-Niger Railway that connects Dakar to Koulikoro, Mali. The roadways facilitate intercontinental trade, migrant travel, and rural-urban movements within the country.

As a major trade and transportation hub, Dakar also supports a robust, informal trade in electronics, illegal drugs, prostitution, clothing, and pirated music. While in the past, slave ships sailed from Gorée Island, a short twenty-minute ferry ride from Dakar, today the city serves as a primary launching point for smuggling migrants into Europe and the United States. Informal commercial networks are also established through tourists, Senegalese migrants, and members of Islamic religious brotherhoods that sponsor international trade, which in turn supports local religious institutions and services.

Dakar is also a major telecommunications node for West Africa. This allows for such diverse programming as news from the Cable News Network (CNN), British Broadcasting Company (BBC), and Radio France International (RFI); soap operas from the Americas; Bollywood films; hip-hop and jazz programs; and music videos from France and the United States. Cellular telephone services connect Senegalese to their families and friends abroad. These networks, images, movies, sounds, and goods provide Dakarois with cultural and material products that broaden their worldview and cosmopolitan lives. For example, the jazz programs on the government's radio station Radio Télévision Sénégalaise provide up-to-date music that *mbalax* groups such as

Doudou Sow and Number One Plus, Ceddo, Frères Guissé, Nakodje, and Dieuf Dieul mine for new ways to voice harmonies in their arrangements and live performances. Audiences are drawn to these groups for their unique sound—one that’s often described as “jazz” because of the groups’ use of more dissonant harmonies and extensive improvisations.

Dakarois also benefit from national cultural institutions such as the Théâtre National Daniel Sorano (the country’s premier performance center), Archives Nationales du Sénégal (ANS), École Nationale des Arts, and the Institute Fondamental d’Afrique Noire (IFAN), Saint-Louis Jazz Festival, and Dak’Art, the Biennale of Contemporary African Art. These entities provide material resources, training, and performances focused on both African and non-African arts and culture. These institutions also provide resources for entertainers to develop repertoires to perform on stages around the world, for artists to create works to display at expositions in foreign cities, and for scholars to present papers at conferences at distant universities. Foreign governments also make research, educational, and entertainment services available to the public. The Centre Culturel Français (CCF), for example, features a well-stocked library and sponsors a dizzying number of plays, concerts, art shows, dances, and films from francophone countries, the Americas, and continental Africa. These institutions broaden Dakarois’ cosmopolitan experiences through employment, access to research material, and exposure to expressive cultural practices from around the world.

As Mbembe suggested, Dakar is clearly influenced by and a part of the globalized world. But Dakar’s importance as an international trade and administrative center is not the only story important to relay here. Rather, since the start of the colonial era, political

struggles between Africans and Europeans have contributed to a dynamic cultural and cosmopolitan life. For example, in the nineteenth century, following Louis Faidherbe's victories over the Wolof and Seereer states, the French government administered Senegal through a policy of assimilation, designed to transform a numerically small but powerful group of urban Senegalese into *assimilés*—that is, blacks whose subjecthood was crafted through French Catholicism, culture, and values. Assimilation contributed to the rise of a distinct black urban citizenry who used the education, ideology, and legal codes of assimilation to create their own cosmopolitan identity. In short, the transnationalism of French metropolitan rule impelled urban Senegalese to create a formidable black political structure that relied on the assertion of their Wolof and Muslim identities as a counter to French hegemony (Diouf 1998; Johnson 1971, 1972). This transnationalism was foundational to the early Senegalese cosmopolitanism from which nationalism emerged.

Assimilation was based on France's "civilizing mission" (*la mission civilisatrice*). French philosophers used this doctrine to impose "reason" in constitutional, political, administrative, moral, religious, and other intellectual realms, and it demarcated a perceived contrast between the enlightened French and the "barbaric" savages and slaves of the colonies. Historian Alice Conklin asserts that this idea of civilization embodied a singular and universal concept that French republicans sought to apply throughout their domain—and that French colonial officials in the territories were influenced by these metropolitan ideas of individualism, humanism, and rational government.²⁴ Yet the

²⁴ Conklin describes a core set of republican values that remained entrenched among the French liberal elite until shortly after World War I. "French republicanism was always multifaceted. Nevertheless, a core set of values animated republicans of all camps through the war: an emancipatory and universalistic impulse that resisted tyranny; an ideal of self-help and mutualism that included a sanctioning of state assistance to the

colonial officials had other priorities that contradicted these ideals. In particular, they were concerned with maintaining order, protecting their own positions, ensuring the economic prosperity of the colony that had been entrusted to them, and considering new territories that could strengthen the existing empire and provide new posts (Conklin 1997:14–15).

In the mid-nineteenth century, the civilizing mission took two forms. The first form was *mise en valeur*, or rational development of human and natural resources, focused on the construction of railroads connecting the coastal cities to the interior, and on battling disease through a concentrated program of improving hygiene among Africans and Europeans (Conklin 1997:6).²⁵ In Dakar, the administration used the enforcement of hygiene to segregate Africans from Europeans in the city. The black neighborhoods created by this segregation became important sites of Wolof and Muslim expressive cultural practices that became identified with being urban, African, and Senegalese. Senegalese regarded the Medina neighborhood in particular as the heart of urban African culture, and it was here that *mbalax* began in the 1960s.

The second form of *la mission civilisatrice* was the destruction of those African institutions that conflicted with French interests. This meant that indigenous languages, traditional aristocracies, and customary laws were targeted for eradication since they

indigent when necessary; anticlericalism, and its attendant faith in reason, science, and progress; and ardent patriotism founded on the creation of a loyal, disciplined, and enlightened citizenry; and a strong respect for the individual private property, and morality” (Conklin 1997:7).

²⁵ In 1885, the rail line from Dakar to Saint-Louis was completed, and in 1879 the French started construction of rail lines into the interior. These allowed for the rapid transportation of French troops who asserted their authority in the interior and eventually helped to bring in goods and services.

were at odds with the “republican virtues of a common language, freedom, social equality, and liberal justice” (Conklin 1997:6). Still, the colonial administration was understaffed and unable to enforce total eradication because most urban Senegalese simply refused to comply. Senegalese resisted this form of the civilizing mission by strategically reconfiguring the ideology of the Republic to argue for their rights to practice Islam, follow customary laws, speak indigenous languages, and form black political parties (Diouf 1998). Assimilation (direct rule) slowly eroded into a policy of accommodation or association (indirect rule) as urban blacks increasingly asserted their agency against French hegemony.

The battle for these rights occurred in the *quatre communes*, where assimilation was encouraged by granting the towns municipal status, which in turn enabled African suffrage.²⁶ This meant that voters now elected municipal officers and sent a deputy to the French Chamber of Deputies in Paris.²⁷ Black and *métis*²⁸ residents were granted a status equivalent to citizenship and fell under the jurisdiction of the French metropole as

²⁶ Saint-Louis was granted status in 1872, Gorée in 1872, Rufisque in 1880, and Dakar in 1887.

²⁷ When General Louis Faidherbe governed the colony of Senegal (1854-1865) only one deputy was sent to parliament. This right was rescinded and reinstated periodically by different French governments until the practice was suspended in World War II. After the war Senegal was granted the right to send two deputies to parliament.

²⁸ For people of mixed African and European descent, the colonial and historical literature also uses the names Afro-European, Euro-African, Creole, *mulâtre* (mulatto), and half-breed (Barry 2001; Boilat [1853] 1984; Camara 1968; Crowder 1967; Diouf 1998; Johnson 1971). According to historian Hillary Jones, the *métis* called themselves “*mulâtre*” or “*enfant du pays*” (“children of the country”). Following her lead and convention, I use *métis* rather than *mulâtre* since the name originated as a description for sterile mule (Jones 2003:6–7). See Robert Young (1995) on the Victorian preoccupation with white and black unions and the use of biological racism and hybridity in colonial discourses.

opposed to the *indigénat* laws that curtailed the rights of black Africans in the interior.²⁹ However, due to frequent changes in political dynamics in the metropole, urban black African privileges were unclear and subject to change until they were codified into law. In this precarious situation, urban blacks were continuously obligated to form projects of resistance and agency to keep and clarify their citizenship rights—means that included petitioning the Governor-General and colonial ministry, battling against the *métis* for political and economic authority, and arguing for codification through editorials and letters in the press.

Race, religion, and cultural heritage became important criteria for achieving political power. The *originaires* (urban black and *métis* Senegalese) had a historical consciousness that connected them to France, Wolof indigenous society, Catholicism, and Islam. Since the seventeenth century, urban blacks were connected to the French as clerks, traders, domestics, laborers, slaves, and soldiers in the colonial army. The *métis*, mostly a mercantile group, often distinguished themselves from their African origins by underscoring their Frenchness. This included French family names (often of Bordeaux heritage), education in France, literacy in French, European dress, and Catholic affiliation. Both *métis* and black Africans could be rich or poor, work similar jobs (most often as intermediaries between French and interior blacks), and assimilate into French society by adopting French language, culture, and religion. Nonetheless, *métis* and blacks

²⁹ An 1833 law granted French civil and political rights to urban freeborn men and former slaves. Although the law did not legally grant citizenship, it was generally interpreted “that Senegalese were French citizens. The voting instructions issued in 1848 furthered this impression by declaring that five years residence in Gorée or Saint-Louis was sufficient proof of France naturalization, thus conferred voting privileges” (Shereikis 2001:263). In 1860, the inhabitants of Rufisque and Dakar were granted the voting and naturalization privileges of the 1848 law (Shereikis 2001:263).

were sometimes rivals despite their common place of birth and residence in the commune (the defining requirement of *originnaire* status), which allowed them to vote in elections, hold public office, and travel freely in the French Empire.³⁰

Originnaire blackness was constructed from two elements: first, the struggle for political authority under a French rule dependent on a diverse group of people who provided the administrative and technical support for the civilizing mission; and second, from the creation of a black collective identity in a unique urban environment rooted in both Senegambian and French religions and cultures. Since the communes were in former Wolof territory, most black *originnaires* were Wolof (followed by Lebu and Tukolor) and reared with Wolof customs, including griot stories of heroes who fought against the French (such as Lat Dior and Umar Tall). While a small percentage of black *originnaires* had a general, working knowledge of spoken French, Wolof was used in almost all business and social dealings. Wolof *sabar* remained a part of birth naming ceremonies, festivities, and even political events. Fluency in Wolof and competency in practicing Wolof traditions was necessary for survival for most urban Africans and elevated urban Wolofness above other ethnic practices. Most blacks were Muslim, educated in Qur'anic schools, and followed Islamic law in matters such as marriage, inheritance, and family arrangements. They followed individual marabouts rather than forming an allegiance to a brotherhood (characteristic of Muslims in the interior), but also retained a strong usage of animist beliefs. A minority—Johnson (1972) estimates around 5 percent—were Catholic, spoke French, dressed in European clothing, and fully embraced French culture. These *assimilés* were granted greater access to French colonial life and

³⁰ On the complicated interactions between blacks and *métis* surrounding issues of racialization, religion, and culture see Boilat (1853), Jones (2012); and Marcson (1976).

power and worked for racial equality: however, as distinct from Muslims, felt that progress was achievable through further assimilation of French culture, language, and politics.

Black *originaires*' identity also developed from the need to distinguish themselves from other groups in the *communes* in order to gain political authority. Wesley Johnson's interviews with *originaires* (1971) reveal their evaluation of others based on race, nationality, occupation, and class. Black *originaires* used these criteria to help them determine their own social position and thus effectively strategize for greater power in the *communes*. *Originaires* referred to Europeans, French, Lebanese, and assimilated *métis* as *tubaab*, a Wolof term meaning a foreigner (often non-blacks) unfamiliar with or not following indigenous cultural practices. *Petits colons* (French tradesmen, laborers, and small business owners) were regarded with little respect because they were often poor and relied on racism as their main recourse to distinguish and elevate themselves in urban society (Cruise O'Brien 1972). Other Africans, such as Cape Verdeans and Caribbeans, were considered socially, economically, and politically marginal because they did not have French citizenship.³¹ Black *originaires* evaluation of others—based on race, social status, and economic and political power—was an important step in the construction of their own identity, and of their refusal to accept the “primitive” version of that identity, dictated to them by the French. Additionally, these turn-of-the-century categorizations refute notions of Africans living in a past unconnected

³¹ Antillean and West Indian administrators were likened to *métis* since they did not identify with Africans. Mauritians were regarded with suspicion and fear due to their historic battles over Saharan trade routes. Sudanese were seen as peasants and slaves. Guineans were domestics, and Dahomeyans were an educated minority (Johnson 1971:148).

to transnational processes.

By the early 1900s, urban blacks began to identify themselves as “Senegalese,” as was evident in the newspapers, interviews, and colonial records (Johnson 1972:171).³² The practices of Wolofness and blackness were important to this early urban Senegaleseness and were fueled by the political and cultural battles among the *originaires*, *métis* and French. In reaction to these battles Senegalese formed religious, political and cultural institutions modeled on French, Arab/Berber, and African American forms but refashioned into African versions that contributed to an early urban Senegaleseness. Black political parties, for example, were based on French democracy inherited from the metropole³³. Senegalese marabouts administered justice through Muslim courts modeled on Algerian examples that the French had sanctioned and were already familiar with from their colonial projects in North Africa. Senegalese formed professional music groups based on African American jazz bands and French interpretations of traditional African music performed in French schools and public theatre. The Senegalese professional groups, black political parties, and Sufi institutions were important organizations that allowed Africans to engage with Western modernity

³² The *métis* referred to themselves as “children of the soil” (Jones 2003:6) but by their own admission, distanced themselves from blacks (Johnson 1972).

³³ Of particular note was the election of Blaise Diagne in 1914 as the first black African to the French Parliament who was fluent in Wolof but preferred French language and culture. Alternatively, there was Galandou Diouf, a World War I veteran and Mayor of Rufisque, who preferred speaking Wolof over French, had several wives, did not like living in Paris, and was Muslim. In the same vein, Thécouta Diop, a politician who was also Muslim, wore African clothing, spoke only in Wolof, and used interpreters to communicate with the French, even though he was schooled by Catholic missionaries. Although a veteran of World War I and a Legion of Honor member, Diop wanted to be treated as an African notable rather than as an assimilated black Frenchman (Johnson 1972).

through a broader and more cosmopolitan experience.

The École Normale William Ponty —first located in Saint-Louis (1903), then on Gorée (1913), and finally in Sébikotane just outside of Dakar (1938)— was a hub for the colonial production of “tradition.” In the 1930s educators Charles Béart and George Hardy included indigenous African culture into the school’s curriculum. They, along with French anthropologist Maurice Delafosse, were part of a minority of colonial administrators who attempted to portray African culture as more complex than its “primitive” depiction in the France (see Pasler 2004). Their endeavors included creating a public theatre that worked with the Ponty School to produce plays based on the ethnographic writings of students. Performances were in French and for colonial audiences. All music, dance, songs, stories, and themes required colonial approval and were choreographed according to European theatre standards. African celebrations once performed in circles, where those present joined in the dances and music, were now presented on stages for a seated group of urban spectators. These colonial interpretations of autochthonous pieces were seen by some Africans and students as a paternalistic, tasteless, and debasing theatre of colonialism and assimilation meant to psychologically influence the students to view themselves as privileged black Frenchmen. Other Africans and students viewed the pieces as a valuable way for *assimilé* students from throughout FWA to learn about African traditions that would otherwise be unknown to them (Snipes 1998:30).

One of the results of both the school and the public theatre’s development was that Africans received western music training and developed musical professionalism—ultimately forming popular music groups to perform jazz, Cap Verdean *morna*, French

variété, and Latin music. At first, the performances were for colonials. Later, they were for *originaires*. Then, as the groups became more proficient with the repertoire and techniques of western urban dance music, they became a viable and less expensive alternative to musical groups hired from France. In all, as long as the African groups did not use the music subversively, they were supported by the French and encouraged to charge for performances and travel to other cities in FWA.

By the 1950s urban dance groups in Dakar such as Les Déménageurs, founded by saxophonist Oumar N'Diaye, played throughout francophone and anglophone West Africa. Their success was due to the training that some group members received in the French schools, a training that was shared with younger players. Other musicians learned from autodidactic methods including listening and playing to recordings on the radio and phonograph. This training helped the group achieve a high level of musicianship and professionalism that enabled the musicians to successfully play the different musical styles requested of them at home and abroad. As Thioub and Benga note, “the cosmopolitanism of the group came from their ability to express themselves in different musics: highlife from the British territories in West Africa, Congolese music, French *variété*, and Afro-Brazilian and Afro-American [popular musics]” (Thioub and Benga 216). Groups like Les Déménageurs introduced and facilitated the experience of musics from across the continent and abroad, thereby broadening the cosmopolitan soundscape of Dakar from its *sabar* roots to the urban dance musics of Europe, Africa and the diaspora, known as *musique moderne*.

From statements I have come across in my research and interviews, many urban Senegalese saw black American music, such as jazz and Afro-Cuban, as a music of

freedom and independence. In fact, early Senegalese pop bands did perform these styles, —not only as a way to insert themselves into modernity as traveling cosmopolitans and higher-wage earners, but also as a way to assert agency in the colonial order. In other words, freedom and independence were not construed solely as a counter to racism and colonialism; they were also the means by which black musicians could earn a living in a profession once relegated to the hereditary griot caste, thereby breaking out of long-established African social boundaries. Furthermore, these musics would reposition performers as cosmopolitans culturally connected to blacks in the United States, and materially and culturally to Europe in whole.

Diouf (1998) argues that the *originaires*' refusal to abide by the French civil code and cultural practices in favor of Muslim jurisprudence and indigenous cultural practices while demanding status as French citizens with the same political and civil rights as the French in the metropole, was a model for President Senghor and his idea of *Négritude*. I suggest that the professional music groups and their African diaspora repertoire were also critical in the assertion of a modern Senegaleseness. The goal of assimilation was to take away African identity but the *originaires* strategy was to keep their African identity, a cosmopolitan black identity that allowed blacks in the *commune* different ways to articulate their modern identity within the colonial regime. Urban dance music from the diaspora and traditional African musics were important symbols of freedom and agency that Senghor heavily relied on to implement *Négritude*.

Senghor and *Négritude*

In the early 1960s Senegal's first president, Léopold Sédar Senghor, initiated the cultural policy called *Négritude* or blackness to forge a postcolonial Senegalese modern

identity. First created by francophone African and Caribbean writers in Paris during the interwar years, Negritude was a black cosmopolitan philosophy strongly influenced by the writings and music of the Harlem Renaissance³⁴. African American pride in their race through music, art, and literature influenced the black writers to articulate their French African and Caribbean presence in this broader transatlantic black imaginary through expressive culture. The core members of this Parisian group were the French Antillean writers Aimé Césaire, Léon Damas, and Paulette Nardal. Césaire first used *Négritude* in print in his 1939 poem, “Cahier d'un retour au pays natal” (“Notebook of a return to the native land”) (Césaire 1960). In it, Césaire sought to liberate black subjectivity from the colonial racism that objectified blacks as primitive. He described blackness as constantly evolving from historical shared experiences: the slave trade and colonialism in particular.

Senghor’s version of *Négritude* stressed an essentialized core of blackness, characterized by intuition and artistic creativity, as a positive African cultural feature—in contrast to white culture, which was rational and Hellenic. He emphasized that the eternal black soul was shaped by emotion, rhythmic attitude, humor, and anthropopsychism. This last feature, according to literary scholar Nick Nesbitt, “refers to the unmediated relation of the ‘black soul’ to the phenomenological world, the ‘eternal ... essential’ trait ... of the black soul” (Nesbitt 1999:1407). Senghor argued that black culture, in all its diasporic

³⁴ Influential literature of the Harlem Renaissance included *The Collected Poems of Langston Hughes*, *Banjo* and *Home to Harlem* by Claude McKay, *The New Negro* by Alain Leroy Locke, and *The Souls of Black Folk* by W.E.B. Du Bois. Césaire and Senghor were also immersed in the analysis of African culture in *Les Nègres* (1927), and by Delafosse and Leo Frobenius’s *History of African Civilization* (1936) whose second chapter Senghor claimed was inspirational for its suggestion that Europeans invented the stereotype of blacks as primitive (Nesbitt 1999:1406). Oswald Spengler’s *The Decline of the West* (1918) also helped them develop the idea that African diasporic cultures could arrest the decay of Western cultures (Nesbitt 1999:1406).

and essentialized complexity, could contribute to a universal civilization, which philosopher V. Y. Mudimbe argued was equivalent to French culture since Senghor relied so deeply on French scholarship (Mudimbe 1973). Senghor toyed with colonial power by using French scholarship that asserted humanism and universalism to challenge French notions of black inferiority. But Senghor's idea of universal civilization went beyond the French discourses, since he also integrated ideas from African diasporic literature into his work (Senghor 1971). In sum, even as this was an important intellectual and cosmopolitan exercise, Senghor needed to realize it through politics.

As Thomas Turino (2000) analyzes, one of the features of cosmopolitanism is how black nationalist leaders used and shared their experiences from abroad with local actors to marshal their forces together into an effective movement for social change. Senghor's implementation of *Négritude* deemphasized differences based on caste, ethnicity, and religion and felt it was imperative that Senegalese envision themselves as not only connected to the world through the diaspora, but also as part of a global community, one that extended beyond the parameters of race. To this end, his policy of *Négritude* emphasized two themes based on, but ultimately transcending, the black diasporic foundation. They can broadly be described as "openness" (*ouverture*) and "rootedness" (*enracinement*) (Mbengue 1973; Snipe 1998). Senghor described *ouverture* in *Négritude* as

the sum of the cultural values of the black world; that is, a certain active presence in the world, or better, in the universe.... Yes, it is essentially relations with others, an opening out to the world, contact and participation with others. Because of what it is, Negritude is necessary in the world today: it is a humanism of the twentieth century. (Senghor [1970] 1994:22)³⁵

³⁵ Written ten years after independence, this quote was a clarification of Senghor's

Ouverture encouraged development and awareness of new and different cultural practices, technologies, and lifeways. Newspaper and magazine articles written by journalists sympathetic to *Négritude* covered Western art traditions such as symphonic works, literature, films, jazz, serials, and social issues such as the civil rights movement in the United States and the lives of students studying in America and Europe, who were negotiating Western styles of living. The inclusion of non-black artistic forms alongside diasporic ones was a crucial part of *ouverture*. To be black in the new Senegal Republic meant focusing not just on black diasporic culture as a means to an end, but engaging with French and other cultural practices as well. Senghor's own life reflected this idea. This Seereer Catholic from Joal mastered French in a Dakar mission school, and then moved to Paris, where he was alienated until he discovered a way to be part of Western modernity through developing a diasporic consciousness through black music, art, and meetings. He then came to uneasy terms with his French heritage by fully engaging with European scholarship. From these cosmopolitan experiences, he endeavored to implement policies that would enable other Senegalese to similarly expand their cultural horizons.

Enracinement was an important sub concept of blackness synonymous to how Wolofness had long been informed by translocalisms across the continent and from the West and East. The intent was to instill pride and respect for cultural practices and systems of knowledge unique to Africa that were either ignored during colonialism or reinterpreted by Europeans in demeaning ways (e.g., the Ponty theatre). African

position on Négritude that had long been criticized for its essentialism. Here, Senghor explains that Négritude is not limited to black people and experience, but open to other people and influences.

traditions such as the *sabar* and the griot, were studied and used as a base to affirm the value of a black essence that could contribute to world civilization. One reason this was important to Senghor was his witness to the horrors of World War II and imprisonment in a German camp. He and the other Parisian Negritude writers felt that something was profoundly wrong with a Western modernity that produced such cycles of violence, an inhumane transatlantic slave trade, and oppressive colonial systems. One way to alleviate this condition was through documenting and valuing the African lifeways that themselves had been created out of cosmopolitan entanglements.

An emphasis on *ouverture* and *enracinement* allowed proponents of *Négritude* to avoid the primitive/*assimilé* stereotypes found in colonial literature that emphasized the tradition/modern dichotomy as a way to justify assimilation. Examples of *ouverture* and *enracinement* that favored *Négritude* can be found in the media and press of the period. In *Bingo*, for example, articles on jazz and Brazilian samba were set against those about indigenous dances and musics. These were presented without judgmental commentary. *Bingo* editor Joachim wrote: “Let us do as President Senghor and write for our people and not for the approval of a foreign public.... In writing for our people we are certain to assure them an internal equilibrium and to start them marching again, to interrupt the dead period of colonialism” (quoted in Rand 1988:146). Radio and television similarly included pieces aimed at presenting musical and cultural practices that connected them to globality without stigmatizing local practices. Musicologist, novelist, and musician Francis Bebey, for example, wrote articles and presented radio shows (such as the *Le Train du Jazz*) that included commentary on historic and contemporary black Atlantic musical connections. These media outlets were important ways to spread *Négritude* but

they had a limited audience and Senghor was adamant in wanting *Négritude* to reach all Senegalese.

Senghor used the considerable resources of the state to pursue his Negritude agenda through African socialism. African socialism entailed the centralization of industries, political power, housing, economy, and cultural institutions by the government. It was a path that many newly independent countries took but Senghor's version remained open to French socialist influences.³⁶ He rejected Russian and Chinese communisms for their emphasis on atheism and materialism. Preferring de Chardin's French humanism instead (Cox and Kessler 1980:328), he claimed: "We stand for a middle course, for a democratic socialism, which goes so far as to integrate spiritual values, a socialism which ties in with the old ethical current of the French socialists" (quoted in Cook 1964:xi).

Through African socialism, Senghor created cultural institutions to spread his version of cultural nationalism. His patronage of the arts began in the early 1960s with the creation of a ministry of culture. Through its National Arts Institute, the ministry presented and researched arts and cultural practice throughout Senegambia (Mbengue 1973:9). The ministry was responsible for theatres, cultural centers, museums, and schools in the plastic arts, drama, music, and dance. The schools trained a cadre of cultural specialists in indigenous dance and music, Western art music, jazz, and theatre. From this pool of students emerged many *mbalax* musicians such as pioneer singers Doudou Sow and Youssou N'Dour. The institutions provided employment for many

³⁶ On African socialism in Senegal see Sheldon Gellar (2005). For a review of African socialism as a policy based on the ideas of a "traditional," classless society in Tanzania, see Kelly Askew (2002). In Africa more generally, see Kwame Nkrumah (1967).

artists and were particularly instrumental in maintaining griot drumming, dance, and music as an active part of contemporary life through radio, television, and theatre. The master drummer Doudou N'Diaye Rose, for example, has led many *sabar* ensembles that were the training ground for many percussionists who play in *mbalax* bands.

Organizations were also created to keep artists up-to-date on new media, technologies, and copyright laws. The Bureau Senegalaise du Droit d'Auteur (BSDA) enforced copyright protection for musicians, authors, and filmmakers. In 1960, existing radio stations were also nationalized and as Radio Sénégal, catered largely to an urban audience. Television, introduced in 1963, along with radio were controlled by the Office de Radiodiffusion Télévision du Sénégal (ORTS), and were given the mission to promote culture. Broadcasts in French and indigenous languages exposed the population to foreign musics such as salsa, jazz, African American gospel, and tango (as *ouverture*) as well as griot epic recitations of Senegalese Sufi saints' religious teachings (as *enracinement*).

The ministry also sponsored spectacles at the Théâtre National Daniel Sorano, which opened in 1965 and was the main venue for concerts by groups from the diaspora, Africa, and Europe. It housed the Senegalese national ballet, theatre, and traditional instrumental ensemble. Its mission was similar to others under the control of the ministry, which was to maintain a “theater rooted in African cultural values, a theatre open to the outside world, and an experimental theatre” (Mbengue 1973:40).

The World Festival of Negro Arts, held in Dakar from April 1–24, 1966, was the premier spectacle of *Négritude*. Artists presented music, theatre, plastic arts, dance, and articles from Africa and the diaspora.³⁷ Senghor's opening essay in the festival's leaflet,

³⁷ Africans north of the Sahara, however, were less represented, which caused ideological

“The Message of Africa,” set the stage: “Senegal in the extreme West of Africa, open as ever to the world, turns inwards upon her past, evaluating her riches, and invites men of all races and all continents to the First World Festival of Negro Arts” (Senghor 1966:10). This one sentence summarized *Négritude*’s goals and presented them to a global community.

The festival was unique, since an independent African country had not presented an international festival of this magnitude focused on black arts. It was an exceptional undertaking that required a great deal of organizational acumen and considerable use of state resources. Moreover, the festival was emblematic of distinct historical moment when many African countries had just achieved or were about to gain independence and embark on their own programs of cultural nationalism. It was a political and cultural event where artists articulated and represented pan-African hopes of independence, realization of civil rights, and actualization of *Négritude*’s concern with historical traditions (*enracinement*) and new innovative works (*ouverture*). Duke Ellington whose recordings had long been part of urban Senegal’s soundscape and whose compositions were a favorite of Dakarois bands, was a featured performer at the festival. In his autobiography Duke Ellington recalled:

Every night in the concert hall the native theatre of a different country is presented without limitations of any kind.³⁸ Every afternoon in the arena there is an outdoor show. Every café and

problems with North African Berbers and Arabs who felt excluded by the focus on blackness. In 1966, the Organization of African Unity sponsored an alternative festival to redress this situation, the Pan-African Festival of Arts, held in Algiers.

³⁸ Groups specializing in indigenous musics came from the Antilles, Brazil, Burundi, Cameroon, Congo, Congo Brazzaville, Dahomey, France, Gabon, The Gambia, Ghana, Ethiopia, Haiti, Ivory Coast, Jamaica, Liberia, Libya, Morocco, Niger, Nigeria, RAU, Senegal, South Africa, Togo, Trinidad, Uganda, US, Upper Volta, and Zambia.

restaurant has its own kind of art in abundance. And every night...I sit and listen to the sea singing her songs of the historic past on the island [Gorée] from which the slaves were shipped. Farther in the distance, I can hear the tribes that have gathered on another island to rehearse for their show next day. And then sometimes I wondered whether it was really a rehearsal, or was it a soul brothers' ceremonial gathering with all of its mystical authenticity...Too much, baby! (Ellington 1973:337)

Ellington followed these recollections with a description of the reception of his performance and a beautiful passage on the global reach of jazz through the metaphor of a tree whose roots are firmly planted in Africa. For Ellington, Dakar was a city of spectacle where, through the lens of jazz and as a descendent of Africa, he experienced and pondered the diasporic connections of black arts, history, and culture through the lens of jazz and as a descendent of Africa. Ellington's experience was one example of how Africans expanded the cultural horizons of the global community.³⁹

Another example was the Afro-American Arts Festival produced by the Spirit House, a performance space in Newark, N.J. run by Amiri Baraka and his Black Arts Movement. Inspired by the World Arts Festival, the Afro-American Festival showcased music, plays, writings, and poetry readings. And like the World Arts Festival, music was given the highest significance as a symbolic register for a positive affirmation of blackness. In the Black Arts Movement's case it was black nationalism that fueled the performances (Monson 2007: 237). More broadly, musicologist Penny Von Eschen deftly analyzes how the World Arts Festival and *Négritude* generated considerable debates over racism, essentialism, and U.S. Imperialism and Cold War policy (2004: 158-

³⁹ Other black diasporic artists included Marian Anderson (US), Louis Armstrong (US), Josephine Baker (US/France), Katherine Dunham (US/Caribbean), Ella Fitzgerald (US), Mahalia Jackson (US), Miriam Makeba (South African/US), and Maria d'Apparecida (Brazil).

163). The debates and tensions led to an increase in U.S. State Department funding for African Americans to tour Africa as a way to offset the image of America as racist and in support of African coups. When these tours reached Senegal they had a profound impact on young *mbalax* artists and Dakarois. These ramifications support how the World Arts Festival fulfilled three goals of *Négritude*: to contribute to universal civilization, to elevate Senegal onto the international stage as a modern country, and to introduce a broader audience of Senegalese to the musics of the African diaspora.

The ministry's support was remarkable for its beneficence and for the introduction of a wide variety of cultural arts to the public. In music, the ministry attempted to create a popular national dance music based on jazz and indigenous styles through sponsorship of groups dedicated to this purpose; the attempt failed because its top-down approach was moderated by a circle of elites out of touch with the dynamics of popular culture. By the mid-late 1960s, musicians and audiences had already begun creating their own style in the streets of Dakar—*mbalax*. Another reason for the failure was that the government still tended to view French as the official language of Senegal despite Wolof having long been established as the *lingua franca* of Dakar.

African socialism also entailed the training of a cadre of civil servants to implement government policy. After independence, there were few experienced Senegalese upper-level administrators—not to mention doctors' assistants, veterinarians, and pharmacists—due to restrictions on access to advanced study and degrees. In response, Senghor created the École Nationale d'Administration du Senegal (ENAS), modeled on the well-known and influential institution in France, to train civil servants in public law, economics, and administration grounded on a “legal-rational-

Weberian-bureaucratic model based on hierarchy and a clearly defined chain of command and the unitary nation-state” (Gellar 2005:49). Since the government was flush with cash from donor nations, along with profits from industries that the government was in partnership with (e.g., peanuts, phosphates, gum, fishing, agriculture), a large bureaucracy was created and staffed by ENAS-trained civil servants. These civil servants were also charged with educating their fellow Dakarois (80 to 85 percent of whom were illiterate) about *Négritude* (Gellar 2005:46). This new group of civil servants, along with successful business people and educators, became the elite of Dakar. It was this elite who patronized and fueled the expansion of the popular music scene in the 1960s and *mbalax* in the 1970s.

In the 1970s, *Négritude* thrived and Dakar remained the center of Senegal’s cultural and political life. However, droughts, declining peanut prices on the world market, over expenditure on government programs, and a bloated bureaucracy created economic and political crises that led to Senghor’s resignation and the abandonment of African socialism. Indeed, in 1980, Abdou Diouf (a graduate of ENAS) took over the presidency and enacted austerity measures according to the guidelines of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and World Bank. This entailed de-centralizing government control over industries, the media, and politics, and a de-valuation of the currency. Diouf decreased funding for the arts yet retained the cultural institutions. With less funding, however, there were fewer state-sponsored spectacles, scholarships, and research. In this economic climate, funding for *mbalax* came from emigrant remittances and sponsorship for concerts and recordings in their host countries.

Négritude influenced an entire generation of Dakarois to consider their blackness

as a valued part of their modern identity and as a connection to a wider black diaspora. This differed from the colonial period when blackness was seen as a hindrance to progress, and where race became the basis for the segregation of the city and political culture, unless one assimilated to French culture and language. What distinguished *Négritude* from other black nationalist movements was that the racial nationalism of *Négritude* emerged from its cosmopolitan formation in Paris; for its use (rather than complete rejection) of French/European political thought; and its commitment to a diasporic consciousness, which became a springboard for Senegalese to think of themselves as connected to the wider global community.

When Senghor challenged the *assimilé* ideal through *Négritude*, he defined and promoted a Senegalese modernity that was part of Western modernity. It was in this context that the pioneer *mbalax* musicians drew upon the ideas of blackness, African culture, and Senegalese connections to a global community to shape *mbalax*.

Chapter 3

Mbalax and Wolofness

Négritude's mission to increase the Senegalese awareness of European and black diasporic cultures (*ouverture*)—balanced by promoting indigenous Senegambian traditions (*enracinement*)—resulted in the acceptance of a transnational black consciousness and a valorization of indigenous traditions, but a rejection of a universalism though Frenchness. No matter how much the elite attempted to reconfigure French language and culture as a passport to the broader world, many Senegalese rejected the cultural and religious values of their former colonizers, such as Catholicism, individualism, and neo-liberalism. Instead, the majority of urban Senegalese were Muslim, spoke Wolof, and practiced Wolof values and traditions as an important way to assert their modern selves—even though their ethnic heritage might be from a different group such as Tukolor, Mande, Socé, or Diola. To be Wolof in urban Senegal was to be a Wolof speaker and to practice Wolof customs regardless of one's ethnic heritage. Being Wolof was a collective, mostly urban, pan-ethnic identity de-emphasizing ethnic prejudice and distinction. A broad adoption of Frenchness, favored by the nationalists to forge a national identity, ran counter to processes already generated by a lay population who had already chosen Wolofness as their collective identity.

Scholars have long studied the dominance of Wolof linguistic, religious, cultural, and political practices in Senegalese society. Political scientists and historians have researched the rise and contestations of Wolof hegemony in Senegalese politics and Islam as first a resistance to, and then an accommodation with, French power (Babou 2007;

Cruise O'Brien 1998; Cruise O'Brien, et. al 2001; Diouf and Leichtman 2009; Marty 1917). Anthropologists, historians, and linguists have focused on how the increased use of Wolof in popular culture, the rise of Senegalese emigration and travel abroad, the growth of Dakar's population, and greater access to new technologies and media have contributed to an urban and cosmopolitan Wolofness (Bugenhagen 2008; Diouf 2000; McLaughlin 2001; Scheld 2007; Swigart 2001).

This chapter examines how Wolof customs (*cosaan*) and traditions (*aada*) contribute to the shaping of Senegaleseness. Specifically, I focus on the most commercially robust form of cultural Wolofness, as well as the most popular and expressive—namely, *mbalax*, the urban dance music of Senegal, a vital practice that has received little in-depth attention in studies on Wolofization.

The study of musical cosmopolitanism in Africa has focused on influences from the African diaspora and Europe such as jazz in Ghana (Feld 2012) and rumba in the Congo (White 2002). While these studies document how Africans use diasporic musics to shape, produce, re-produce, and articulate social identities, the agency of local cosmopolitan traditions remains understudied. *Mbalax* provides an excellent opportunity to address this lack of scholarship through Wolofness.

In his study of musical cosmopolitanism, Martin Stokes highlights the value of agency in the formation of imaginaries or worlds. Stokes claims that musical cosmopolitanism “restores human agencies and creativities to the scene of analysis, and allows us to think of music as a process in the making of 'worlds', rather than a passive reaction to global 'systems'” (Stokes 2007: 6). Similarly, Ingrid Monson studies aesthetic agency as a way to analyze the meaning of freedom in jazz in African American culture.

Monson interrogates how black musicians borrowed aesthetics from African, Indian, European, and Caribbean musics as a strategy to develop unique theoretical approaches to their artistry and as practices countering the essentialism of critics and structures portraying black musicians as gifted with talent but devoid of theoretical heft.⁴⁰

I consider the examination of aesthetic agency a useful way to unravel the explicit and implicit meanings behind Senegalese internalizing musical aesthetics from African American, European, Caribbean, and other African sources to create *mbalax*. This engagement with urban dance musics from abroad—and how they are used in tension with indigenous musics to assert Wolof identity—adds a key layer to understanding musical cosmopolitanism.

Introduction to Wolofness

Three key attributes of Wolofness emerge in these studies: First, how being Wolof is a pan-ethnic, identity characterized by openness to and borrowing from nominally non-Wolof linguistic and expressive cultural practices; second, how Wolof hierarchy, language, and cultural practices reconfigured Islam and influence politics; and third, the Wolof caste system.

The first key feature of Wolofness, its pan-ethnicity, is in turn rooted in a rural Wolofness that has long been cosmopolitan due to transregional migrations, wars, and commerce with different African ethnic groups and Arab tribes, as well as European merchants, colons, and the military. Dakar became the center for a thriving urban

⁴⁰ Monson's work contributes to a growing discourse examining African Americans use of urban popular musics to assert their agency in the face of essentialisms conjured against black culture and history (hooks 1995; Moten 2003). Additionally, Monson's build's on recent diasporic music scholarship using agency as an integral aspect of practice theory (Ramsey 2003, Jackson).

Wolofness due to two factors in particular: first, the successive waves of rural migration to the city, especially by migrants from Wolof territories, and second, the city's prominence as the national center for the production and consumption of popular culture, making it necessary to master Wolof language and customs for commerce, sociality, and survival (McLaughlin 2001; Swigart 2001).

The second key attribute, the dynamics of how Wolof hierarchy, language, and cultural practices reconfigure Islam and influence politics into a system where marabouts broker the services and interests of their followers with the postcolonial government (Babou 2007; Cruise O'Brien 1998), amounts to a form of Senegalese exceptionalism that has contributed to a relatively stable democracy, despite a low level of modernization. The principal actors here are members of the Muridiyya Sufi order; based around their holy city of Touba and from Dakar, the Muridiyya command a global network of merchants and workers whose remittances contribute substantially to the national economy, providing the infrastructure for the dissemination of new media, technologies, and life experiences that influence cosmopolitanism at home (Bugenhagen 2009; Diouf 2000).

The third attribute here is the resilience of the Wolof caste system—less powerful after colonialism, but still a great influence on politics, religion, and popular culture. The system is a hierarchical structure principally divided into the *gëër* and the *ñeeño*, with the *gëër* (non-casted) controlling the distribution of wealth and services to the *ñeeño* (casted) or artisan class (leather workers, blacksmiths, weavers, and griots). Among the casted groups, the griots have retained significant power in the twenty-first century due to their well-documented ability to persevere and use tradition to position themselves in modern

Senegal by quickly adapting to serve the needs and interests of their patrons, religious groups, and political parties (Castaldi 2006; Heath 1994; Leymarie 1999; McNee 2000; Panzacchi's 1994, 1996; Tang 2007).

The above works focus on griots' traditional roles as singers, oral historians, dancers, and drummers, but there is little research on widespread use of *mbalax* singers and musicians using griot practices in *mbalax* performances. In fact, *mbalax* is vital to the practice and representation of Wolofness. *Mbalax* singers, for example, regardless of caste identity, use praise in the style of griots in order to connect with and sustain their Senegalese audiences. Historic Wolof figures and national heroes that receive this praise include Lat Joor,⁴¹ the last Wolof ruler to fight the French; Amadou Bamba, the Wolof cleric who founded the first black sub-Saharan Sufi order;⁴² and Cheikh Anta Diop⁴³, the internationally known scientist and author who linked the roots of Wolof heritage to

⁴¹ During Senghor's presidency (1960-1980) griot narrations of Lat Joor were recorded, aired on the radio, and transcribed as part of *enracinement*. Joor became "the national hero incarnating the aristocratic traditions and values of dignity and sacrifice as a cornerstone for the national ideology of independent Senegal under the single party" (Barry 2001: 22). Children reared on these tales of Joor considered him the ideal African, Muslim Wolof king (*Dammel*), and *ceddo* warrior. As ruler of the Wolof state of Cayor, Joor denied the French permission to build a railroad from Saint-Louis to Dakar, thus ensuring French military action. Forecasting his own defeat Joor gives his son to Bamba and then dies in the last great battle against the French. This image of Joor as the last great Wolof *ceddo* Muslim warrior overrides the history of *ceddo* enslaving the lay population for the transatlantic trade and fighting warrior marabouts. For historical analyses of Lat Joor see Diouf (1981), Mbodj (1986), and Sow (1986).

⁴² Lat Joor's handing over his son to Bamba was symbolic of the transition from violence to non-violence and the rise of a Wolof marabout to national hero. With the fall of the last great aristocracy, Senegalese Sufism would assume the role of shaping and maintaining social order under the leadership of Bamba.

⁴³ Cheikh Anta Diop published three books in quick succession that challenged European essentialization of African history, culture, and civilization. Diop's books include *Nations Nègres Et Cultures* (1954), *L'unité Culturelle De L'Afrique Noire* (1959), and *L'Afrique Noire Précoloniale* (1960).

ancient Egyptian art and science, and argued for Wolof to become the national language of Senegal.

Also of no small significance here is the use by *mbalax* groups of Wolof griot (*gëwël*) drummers. *Gëwël* have long been critical actors in the construction of Wolofness by virtue of the way they link the past to the present, and by their articulation of the concerns of the lay population through dance, music, and praise. Patrons or audience members expect *sabar* drummers to know a wide range of rhythms from the many ethnic groups that constitute the urban Wolof pan-identity. Audiences also expect the drummers to create new dances and remain up-to-date on the latest trends in *sabar*, such as those that surface in neighborhood events. *Gëwël* are uniquely qualified for these responsibilities, since they are the drummers hired by wrestlers, *mbalax* groups, and the women's organizations sponsoring many *sabar* dances.

A Brief History of *Mbalax*

An oft-cited history of *mbalax* found in popular music survey books, magazines, and album liner notes traces the emergence of the genre to the 1970s, when urban dance bands integrated the “traditional” praise singing of griots and the *mbalax* rhythms of the *sabar* into today's “modern” and Afro-Cuban popular styles. Although many bands experimented with these fusions, such as Xalam I, Orchestra Baobab, and the Star Band, it was Youssou N'Dour's focused integration of the *mbalax* rhythms of the *sabar* with electric keyboards and guitars—a style he coined “*mbalax*”—that garnered the most popularity among patrons.

The new style fulfilled urbanites' desire for a music that was African and also distinctly Senegalese. Most importantly, *mbalax* was received as a “modern” style, like

jazz, R&B, rumba, *highlife* (Nigerian and Ghanaian pop), and *makossa* (Cameroonian pop). Thus, by the 1980s *mbalax* had become the dominant pop music in Dakar, led by three pioneer groups: Youssou N'Dour et Super Etoile, Thione Seck et Raam Daan, and Omar Pene et Super Diamono. In the 1990s, women began to lead bands--Fatou Géwél et Sope Noureyeni, Viviane N'Dour, and Ma Sane et Wa Flash--and a new generation of leaders who had apprenticed under pioneer musicians came onto the music scene, including Cheikh Lo, Alioune M'Baye N'Der, Salaam Diallo, and Ismael Lo.

Popular music discourse in the Western press focuses on the biography of bands and their attempts to succeed in the world beat market. Descriptions of *mbalax* are cursory and point to the fusion of modern and traditional musics as a consequence of *Négritude*. Griots are described as critical but their distinct practices are not analyzed beyond their role as historians and their ability to generate tips. Academic writings, on the other hand, examine the cosmopolitanism and politics of *mbalax*. Senegalese scholars chronicle the rise and transformation of *mbalax* as part of a broader history of urban African popular musics, colonialism, pan-Africanism, *Négritude*, and globalization (Benga 2002; Seck and Clerfeuille 1993; Seck and Diarra 1999; Thioub and Benga 1999). Western scholars, emphasizing the tensions that arise from musicians' pursuit and negotiation of their careers in the Western pop and local music markets, were particularly interested in the career of Youssou N'Dour and how he negotiates his obligations as a "modern" griot (for his Senegalese audience), with the desire to be an international pop star (Bender 1991; Duran 1989; Cathcart 1989; Taylor 1997: 125–145). The term "modern" griot, it should be noted, is not a term widely used among *mbalax* musicians;

rather, it is a term N’Dour uses as part of his self-promotion.⁴⁴

Other themes that have begun to emerge in Africanist scholarship include the negotiation of gender issues in a patriarchal Muslim society, and the significance of women griot singers as stalwart keepers of tradition (McLaughlin 1997; McNee 2000; Panzacchi 1996). In general, however, academic scholarship and surveys concentrate on the three pioneers and the idea of the griot in modern music. In fact, there is little scholarship on *mbalax* after the mid 1990s, and scant coverage of innovations by artists other than N’Dour--for instance, the use of trap drums by the Sahel Band, or the emergence of a new gender dynamic in the nightclub, such as the emergence of men dancing to dances that were historically for women.

My account of the development of *mbalax*, while, outlining some of the key events and performers of the *mbalax* tradition so that the reader will have a better understanding of the genre for the subsequent chapters and analysis, cannot hope to be wholly comprehensive. Rather, I provide a broad social historical sketch, derived from academic literature and the Senegalese popular press, from archival research, and from my interviews with participants critical to the development of the genre who have received little attention in the historical discourse because of the overwhelming focus on the pioneers of the craft. Through a closer analysis of *folklore* and *musique moderne*, the categories Senegalese use to describe the practice of *mbalax* as an urban Wolof music across genres, spaces, and places, I intend to add depth to the cursory approaches—the traditional and modern music bifurcation that has marked most accounts of the genre.

⁴⁴ Exceptions to the N’Dour-centric literature include Lucy Duran’s (1996) biographical article of Cheikh Lo, and Patricia Tang’s (2005) article examining how Alioune Mbaye Nder modifies his performance practices for Western audiences.

When Music was European and Afro (1930s–60s)

Between the 1930s and the 1940s, urban Senegalese used the term *musique* as a short hand for *musique moderne*. Initially, *musique* was also considered “European” since it was first introduced to Senegal by an urban elite of French colons, creoles, Antillean administrators, *évolué* from Paris, and French speaking *tirailleurs* (Senegalese soldiers) returning home from service in the French army. Although Antilleans, *évolués*, and *tirailleurs* are of African descent, a lay population of Wolof speakers considered them “European” because of their command of French and affinity for French customs. *Musique* became part of urban Senegal’s soundscape through the elite playing, listening, and dancing to recordings on phonographs and radios in dry goods stores, parties, and nightclubs. A typical program schedule for Radio Dakar⁴⁵ in 1947, for example, included piano jazz, operas, operettas, symphonies, chamber ensembles, theatre music, military marches, religious songs, *grande musique moderne*, dance music, and solo harp.⁴⁶ Favored recordings included tangos by crooner Tino Rossi, jazz by Duke Ellington and His Orchestra, and sones by Don Azpiazo and His Havana Cuban Orchestra. Generally speaking, the genres that constituted *musique* included military marches, waltzes, Western art music, French popular song called *variété*, Afro-Cuban music, Antillean popular music, and jazz.

⁴⁵ In 1932, the French military built and operated the first radio broadcasting station in Dakar. In 1939, the station began civilian broadcasts and by the late 1940s, Radio Dakar was broadcasting up to ten hours a day. In 1951, two channels were created, both of which broadcast throughout West Africa: Dakar Inter and Dakar Afrique. In 1959, the new Mali Federation created Radio Mali which became Radio Senegal when the federation was dissolved. Radio Senegal had a national channel and an international channel.

⁴⁶ *Paris-Dakar*, Samdei, 4, Janvier 1947. 3f. directeur de la Publication Charles de Bretend. Publicite reçue à l’Agence HAVAS-AOF. 58 Ave William Ponty, Dakar.

This diverse *musique* repertoire along with material culture and radio broadcasts introduced urban Africans to the sonic imaginings of Black Atlantic and Western modernities. How Senegalese imitated, internalized, and imbued *musique*, particularly black American music, with new meaning and then fused it, over time, with *folklore* to create a distinctive Senegalese modern music, is a key part of understanding musical cosmopolitanism.

Between the 1930s-1960s Senegalese learned European marches, waltzes, *variété* and choral pieces in French church choirs, missionary schools and military and police bands. Additional instruction came from colonials in orchestras and teachers from the Conservatoire de Musique et d'Art de Dramatique de Dakar (founded by the colonial lawyer Paul Richez in 1948).⁴⁷ Senegalese studied with Africans who played in the municipal orchestra and theatre bands, including members of Lyre Africaine, a jazz group supported by Dakar municipality in the late 1940s, with instruments and rehearsal space. Lyre Africaine's repertoire initially consisted of French *variété* (popular songs), tango, boleros, *mornas* (Cape Verdean dance music), and, eventually, American jazz. Literate musicians also transcribed recordings into *solfege* and shared this knowledge with non-literate musicians (Mariou Gouané, June 6, 2002). Among the repertoire that the French colons and Antillean administrators admired and taught Senegalese musicians was early jazz and Latin music, the foundation for a style of music called "afro."

The Senegalese term "afro" referred to African diasporic popular musics from abroad and elsewhere on the African continent itself, including Afro-American, Afro-

⁴⁷ Although lessons at the conservatory were available, the instruments were too expensive for most African students to purchase. Students got around this problem by sharing the instruments amongst themselves (see Thioub and Benga 216).

Cuban, and African popular musics. Early styles classified as afro in the late 1940s and early 1950s included Nigerian and Ghanaian *highlife*; Congolese rumba; New York and Cuban *son*, rumba, cha-cha, and *bolero* (collectively called Afro-Cuban); Afro-American R&B, blues, and jazz; and Afro-Latin styles from South America and the Caribbean. From the 1930s through the 1950s, Senegalese bands adopted the instrumentation used by their Western counterparts, including trap drums, piano, bass, guitars, and banjos. Horn sections included trombones, saxes, and trumpets. In the 1960s, electric keyboards, guitars, and basses were added when rock, soul, and Congolese modern music became popular.

The first Senegalese modern music group was Lyre of Saint-Louis who, in the 1930s, specialized in European and *variété*. In the late 1940s, a small number of Senegalese groups, such as Lyre Africaine, formed and played afro. By the 1950s, more modern music groups appeared in Dakar and Saint-Louis, often adopting “jazz” or related labels as part of their names to indicate that they played European and afro musics (Saint-Louis Jazz, Grand Diop, Guinea Jazz, Tropical Jazz, and Star Band de Senui). The increase in black modern music groups in the 1950s was a result of urban Senegalese imagining for ways to be modern, black, and free in a post World War II era—where the end of colonialism was more than just a dream. This imagining was fueled partly by the experiences Senegalese had with African American troops stationed in Thiès (located just outside of Dakar) in the 1940s, Senegalese troops returning from duty abroad, and Senegalese politicians returning from France pursuing *Négritude* at home by seeking political office (such as Senghor). These Senegalese and black Americans represented alternative ways of being modern, black, and resistant to white authority (discussed in

chapter 5). Percussionist Gana M'Bow, for example, told me how the black U.S. troops in 1942 not only taught him jazz, but also advised him on how to organize a strike at his local bakery so that he and his co-workers could effectively fight for the pay that the colonial officials had withheld (Interview with Gana M'Bow, June 27, 2002). M'Bow's engagement with black troops exemplifies the significance of agency in cosmopolitanism.

Early African modern music players such as Gana M'Bow, guitarist and trombonist Marious Gouané,⁴⁸ and vocalist Aminata Sow told me they learned jazz from visiting, working with, and listening to live performances of Afro American troops stationed in Saint-Louis, Thiès, and Dakar during World War II. These live performances complemented the imaginings of black American life and culture depicted in magazines, presented on the radio, and described by Senegalese students, war veterans, and workers who lived in Europe. Repertoire could also be learned by playing along with Voice of America radio broadcasts, studying with Africans from other parts of the continent (e.g., Dexter Johnson and E.T. Mensah, *highlife* musicians from Nigeria) and from Europeans who played Afro-Cuban, jazz, and R&B.

Another form of engagement with black music and musicians was through African print and radio coverage of Afro-Atlantic cultures, news, politics, fusion, and music. Although print coverage was aimed at literate urban blacks, movies and radio programs introduced the lay population to the sounds and images of blackness from around the world. African media covered political and social developments, such as the

⁴⁸ Instruments learned from orchestral members and the conservatory include trumpets, trombones, cornets, clarinets, flute, saxophones, banjo, tuba, piano, guitar, violins, drums and bass.

American Civil Rights Movement, Black Nationalism, African independence struggles and *Négritude*, and African student life in Europe and America, as well as jazz from the United States, Europe, and Africa, Afro-Cuban groups, serials (e.g., *Uncle Tom's Cabin*), movie reviews, and Afro-American productions around the world. Of the cultural expressions covered, urban dance music and fashion were the most popular—and the easiest to imitate at home.

Modern music performances allowed Senegalese to articulate and integrate their black, French, and African identities. For example, when *originaires* attended nightclubs and parties, they dressed in both Western and African fashions (men in suits and women in *mbubb*) and partner-danced to Afro-Brazilian, Afro-Cuban, jazz, and *variété*. Partner-dancing in particular was considered distinctly modern, since women and men do not touch in traditional dance. The nightclub and modern musics, especially *afro*, were spaces to challenge both the elitism of the *assimilé* with its attendant tensions between mediating blackness and Frenchness, and the confines of a traditional culture based on rural Wolof values.

Producing and consuming modern musics was an integral part of a developing urban Wolofness that challenged traditional values and the caste system. While music performance was historically the exclusive domain of the griot caste, Senegalese modern musicians came from different caste groups, a unique dynamic in Senegalese society. Now, if one wanted to be a (modern) musician, one did not need to be a griot. Modern music and musicians became commodities and a new occupation became part of the social fabric of Senegal: the professional musician.

These early professional players included sons of marabouts, griots, teachers,

administrators, and civil servants (Mariou Gouané, in discussion with the author, June 6, 2002). Historians Ibrahima Thioub and Ndiouga Benga (1999) note that these musicians earned more income than other *originaires*, and argue that this income (derived mostly from playing for the colonial theater and functions), combined with a freedom to travel broadly throughout French West Africa, was conditioned on their refraining from creating or performing musics deemed threatening to the colonial order.

This colonial control of resources, including French ownership of instruments, constituted significant obstacles to the use of popular music as a form of resistance to colonial hegemony. Senegalese and some Europeans, however, did use modern music to challenge segregation. Africans, for example, performed and danced to jazz and Afro-Cuban musics at interracial parties (Shain 2002:87–88) and nightclubs that catered to the French and elites who adopted the correct dress, language, and behavior (Aminata Fall, discussion with author, June 25, 2002; Gana M’Bow, in discussion with author, June 14, 2002).

An important consequence of this early musical professionalism was the first fusion of Wolof with modern music. Senegalese musicians first learned the jazz and Afro-Cuban lyrics phonetically since they did not know Spanish or English. However, what most historical accounts of early modern music fail to recognize is that Senegalese performers sang jazz in Wolof. Well before the instrumental experimentations with fusion that occurred in late 1960s, this Wolofization of modern lyrics was most likely the first stage towards creating a Senegalese urban popular music. Aminata Sow, for example, sang Wolof lyrics to jazz, blues, and R&B when she performed with Star Jazz in 1949 (Aminata Sow, in discussion and song with author, June 25, 2002).

When *Mbalax* was *Folklore* (1930s–60s)

A review of *folklore* and its early meanings to Senegalese music is required in order to better understand the eventual fusion of the *folklore* and *musique*. *Folklore* was (and remains) the indigenous music of Senegambia. It includes drums such as the Wolof *sabar* and Mande *bugarabu*, wind instruments such as the Peul *tamblin* flute, and string instruments such as the Wolof and Mande *kora*, *riti*, and *xalam*.⁴⁹ The religious music of the Muslim brotherhoods was also considered traditional, since the lines between the sacred and secular have long been blurred from centuries of Wolofization of Islam. African clerisy and the lay population, for example, sang religious texts in Wolof and griots praised Muslim values and heroes at *folklore* events to the accompaniment of the

Initially, *folklore* was not considered “music” by Wolof speakers. Also, there was no single word for music in Wolof at the time. Rather, there were specific nouns and verbs for musical actions and events such as *fo* for playing, *tëgg* for drumming, *fecc* for a dance or dancing, *woy* for song or singing, *tassu* for praise or praising, and *mbalax* for the accompanying rhythm played on the *sabar* or the collective sound of the *sabar* drums. The terms *musique traditionnelle*, *folklore*, and *folklorique* probably became part of the Wolof lexicon through bi-lingual *originaires*, students, and *évolué* who adopted them from French.

Most accounts of this early music history overemphasize a bifurcation of modern music as elite and *folklore* (*musique ethnique* and *musique traditionnel*) as the domain of the lay population. But elites still practiced *folklore* by hiring their family griots for

⁴⁹ For an overview of traditional music in West Africa, see Jacqueline Djedje (2000). For ethnographies on Mande music see Eric Charry (2000) and Ousmane Sow Huchard (2000). For ethnographies on Wolof *folklore* see Isabelle Leymarie (1999), Patricia Tang (2007), and Francesca Castaldi (2006).

lifecycle events and social occasions; black politicians also hired *folklore* ensembles for their rallies, perhaps as a way to solicit votes from the lay population. *Folklore* was also featured as a key symbol of *enracinement* by those who pursued *Négritude*. However, it was the lay population by far that practiced *folklore* as a thriving part of their lives, especially in the African neighborhoods where Dakarois from different ethnic groups began to embrace Wolof culture as their pan-ethnic urban identity.

Despite the elites' use of *folklore*, the idea of it as music proper did not catch on with the general population until the 1970s, when *mbalax* was used as the foundation for a Senegalese modern music by artists such as Ouza Diallo, Omar Pene, and Youssou N'Dour. N'Dour recalls that “[Senegalese] used to think that music meant European instruments like keyboard and guitar; they didn't think of percussion as music. But for me, percussion was the most vital part of music” (N'Dour in Cathcart 1989:277).

The *Sabar* in Dakar

The most popular form of *folklore* percussion was the *sabar*, which existed on the Cape Verde peninsula before the French arrived in 1750 and established the trading post that became Dakar. Master *sabar* drummer Cheikh M'Baye recalls, “My uncle told me that our family drummed here in the *tund* before the French” (Cheikh Mbaye, in conversation with author, November 15, 2007). The *tund* was the area of low rolling hills in Dakar where the modern Novotel Hotel stands today. In response to my questions on what kind of *sabar* repertoire was played, M'Baye replied that “It was [a] Wolof [repertoire] that used Seereer and Tukolor rhythms, it was the same thing” (Cheikh M'Baye, November 15, 2007). Mbaye's statements attest to the long history of *sabar* in the Dakar area and to the longstanding practice of integrating the musics of different

groups into this Wolof musical style. This history and cosmopolitan practice were critical and foundational to shaping of an urban Wolofness that has become a defining feature of twentieth century Dakar.

In the late 1950s with the expectation of independence in the air followed by Dakar becoming the capital of Senegal in 1958, there was a rise of migration to Dakar coupled with an increased demand for the *sabar* and the *musique* folklore of Senegal. This demand increased with the implementation of Négritude and its corresponding focus on enracinement. Dakarois master drummers Mada Seck and Saloum Dieng responded to this increased demand by traveling and researching musics throughout Senegambia and Africa, and using them to animate their *sabar* performances in Dakar. They popularized the *arwatam*, a dance of the Laobes, a branch of the Wolof ethnic group featuring the *tama*, and introduced the *ndaga* dance of the Seereer from Sine-Saloum to Dakar audiences (Seck and Clerfeuille 1993:38). *Sabar* dances were also created from the music of rural ceremonies such as the “Baar M’Baye.”⁵⁰

Sabar dances such as “Baar M’Baye” were popular in Dakar in the 1950s onward, and performed in the private courtyards and streets for the lay population. Even so, although *sabars* had long been part of urban life, it was not until mid-century—when Senegalese were negotiating a path towards independence—that *sabar* became a stronger symbol of Senegalese nationalism in Dakar. Africans increasingly substituted *sabar* for weddings and other celebrations where as Western pop had been popular as a symbol of progress and modernity under colonial rule (Doudou N’Diaye Rose, in discussion with

⁵⁰ “Baar M’Baye” originated from the music of the Lebou baptism ceremony *bëkëtë*, performed on the eighth day after the birth of a newborn to protect the infant from evil (Diop 1990:23; Tang 2007:106–107). It is named after the *gëwël* who danced this piece well (Babacar M’Baye, conversation with author, April, 12, 2008).

filmmaker Francois Bouffault, 1997). The increased demand for *sabar* was in turn met by *g'ewël* master drummers (Mada Seck, Bouna Mbass Guèye, and Doudou N'Diaye Rose) known for their extraordinary performance skills, new compositions, and extensive knowledge of regional dances. Their *sabar* skills and those of others became a requisite for successful baptisms or naming ceremonies (*ngente*), weddings (*taks*), circumcisions (*kassak*), wrestling matches (*lamb*), neighborhood lion dances meant to teach adolescents courage (*simbb*), mutual-aid meetings by women (*tur*), and evening street *sabars* organized by women (*tànnibéer*). These events—and the dances that accompanied them—became increasingly important as symbols of African agency, as Wolofization gained momentum in the 1950s and 1960s.

Mbalax Becomes Musique Moderne (1960s–80s)

When Senghor assumed the presidency, his cultural policy of *Négritude* contributed to the popularity of *folklore* as part of *enracinement*, and *musique moderne* as part of *ouverture*. *Afro* became especially popular among both the elite and lay population, as Senegalese increasingly associated these musics with African independence struggles and the American Civil Rights Movement. *Afro* articulated a musical pan-Africanism that gave voice to the representations of black liberation struggles in the United States, Cuba, and Africa. Senegalese *mbalax* and *afro* guitarist Mac Faye recalls:

After independence, Senegal was very open to influences from everywhere: American rhythm and blues, soul, rock n' roll, salsa, musique Français, and James Brown—he played here in 1970 or '74.... The soul generation of Roberta Flack, James Brown, Otis Redding, Aretha Franklin. We feel this music because [he plays guitar and sings strains from Otis Redding's "I've Been Loving You"] there is a lot of soul, a lot of messages of equality

and fighting for your rights. (Vieux Mac Faye, in discussion with author, August 22, 2002)

In other words, after acknowledging the wide swath of musics that Senegalese listened and danced to after independence, Faye focuses on a romantic soul ballad that simultaneously captures the ideas of freedom from colonization and the optimism of independence as part of a broader pan-Africanism. The meaning of the romance might be there, but the music is first and foremost an explicit political symbol of freedom, with implicit overtones referencing the transatlantic slave trade, a source of connection to Afro Americans for Senegalese. Indeed, while Afro Americans certainly negotiate Western modernity differently than Senegalese, the latter note that both groups are of African descent; Faye empathizes with that shared heritage and a sense of deep “feeling” that came to him from listening to Afro-American music as a youth and practicing it.

One way Faye reconciles these complex feelings that Thione Seck would say is “in the blood” is via hours of practicing to the recordings of his favorite artists—and then faithfully conjuring the soul sound of Redding and other R&B artists—producing a rendition that illustrates how musicians use the power of *afro* to signify and realize multiple meanings of political freedom, nostalgia, and a black cosmopolitanism, via aesthetic borrowings that took on new meaning as musicians imitated and internalized the music of groups playing *afro* and *variété*—i.e., the swath of genres listed by Mac Faye (“American rhythm and blues, soul music, rock n’ roll, salsa, *musique Française*”). Dance bands in the 1960s that played *afro* included the Rio Band de Dakar, Star Band de Senui, and the famous Star Band, an incubator for early experiments with *folklore* and *musique moderne*. These bands represented an emerging postcolonial Senegalese modernity by playing *afro* and *variété*, dressing in Western suits or Afro-Cuban costumes, and by

singing in European and African languages.

In 1960, nightclub owner Ibra Kasse recruited members from Star Band de Senui and Guinea Band de Dakar to play at his nightclub, le Miami, in honor of Senegal's independence. The Star Band became le Miami's house band under the direction of Dexter Johnson, a Nigerian saxophonist originally specializing in *highlife*. However, Kasse was driven to create a Senegalese sound that captured the feeling of political freedom and black liberation, but was distinctly Senegalese. To this end, Kasse added the hour-shaped *tama* "talking" drum to the instrumental lineup of timbales, congas, saxophones, flute, guitar, and bass. Kasse's experiments with African instruments—combined with his entrepreneurial skills—that soon catapulted his club and the Star Band to the top of Dakar's music scene. Other nightclubs followed suit (Baobab, Niani, and Jandeer), becoming places where the mostly elite patrons celebrated independence and an optimistic future under *Négritude* and African Socialism.

Still, at this point, a distinctive sound had not yet emerged, and I suggest that one reason a distinctive sound had not materialized in Senegal, as had happened in Cameroon, Nigeria, Ghana, Tanzania, South Africa, and Zimbabwe, was because of the unique history of the class of *originaires*, who until the mid-1960s had been able to retain a certain amount of political power in communes. Ironically, their eventual loss of that power came not from the West but from Senghor, who in 1966 banned opposition parties and concentrated power in his Progressive Union Party (UPS). I want to suggest that the loss of a multi-party system was a particularly grievous injury to Dakarois whose families had for centuries fought for a vital black political culture, but who were now marginalized under the first president of the independent country.

This political shift came in the wake of an attempted coup, an economy in a tailspin from the decline in world prices for peanuts (Senegal's main export), reduced aid from France, and the beginning of a series of droughts that lasted until the mid-1970s. These and other factors caused an increase in rural to urban migration; the new arrivals further stressed a city already struggling to meet its obligations to provide education, social services, and employment. University students, high school students, and laborers responded to this loss of political freedom and plummeting economy with strikes, demonstrations, and riots (1968, 1969, 1970, 1973).

The civil unrest led Dakarois to seek alternative models of cultural nationalism through Marxism and most notably, an expansion of Wolofness headed up by Cheikh Anta Diop and intellectuals at Institute Fondamental d'Afrique Noire (IFAN). Professor Diop, a Senegalese scientist, social activist, linguist, and historian trained at the Sorbonne in Paris, rejected European superiority and argued for a black African cultural unity that originated in ancient Egypt, the birthplace of civilization. Diop saw language as a key means to shift cultural nationalism away from the Frenchness of *Négritude* to an Africaness based on Wolof. Arguing that the Wolof had linguistic and social features similar to ancient Egypt, he pressed for Wolof to be the official language instead of French, and translated scientific and literary works into Wolof to prove its viability as a language on par with the romance languages. Diop (1977) proposed a scientific model based on linguistic and cultural archeology and the migration patterns of ancient Egyptians and Nubians, that in his view provided the basis for advocating an historical black consciousness that could counter Senghor's *Négritude* focus on African "emotion"

and European “rationalism” (Geller 2005:55).⁵¹

Diop’s prestige as a university professor, combined with his dual fluency in French and Wolof, was attractive to a general population becoming dismayed with Senghor’s awkwardness with Wolof and passion for Frenchness. These ideological conflicts, along with an economic downspin and urban malaise all contributed to an angst that an increasing number of Dakarais sought to appease by way of the Wolofness that had served them so well over the centuries. For this reason, the cultural and political capital of Wolofness grew as the expanding urban population, illiterate in French, used Wolof as the language of commerce and sociability.

In the late 1960s and early 1970s, an early consequence of this turn toward Wolofness in Senegalese expressive culture was the increased appearance of Wolof drummers and singers, sitting in with urban dance bands such as Xalam I, Star Band, and Esperanza Jazz.⁵² The drummers came from Dakar’s leading griot families, and in these early years often played *mbalax* rhythms on congas instead of *sabar* drums, since foreign instruments still evoked a “modern” aesthetic.⁵³ Wolof practices allowed for a diversity and inclusion not achievable in other ethnic practices, and gradually, such Wolof practices as *tassu* and *sabar* were introduced.

⁵¹ On significance of blackness in ancient Egypt and sub-Saharan Africa, see Cheikh Anta Diop (1974, 1981, 1989); on Diop’s impact on see Diouf 1992 and Ralph 2009).

⁵² Through state institutions and programs espousing *enracinement* and *ouverture*, the government attempted to create a modern music by sponsoring bands that played jazz, sang in the national languages, and used a variety of indigenous instruments. These official attempts did not catch on with the public who were already going to nightclubs where musicians and audiences experimented with *mbalax* (Benga 2002a:79).

⁵³ See Tang (2009) for lineages and analyses of master drummers in modern music groups.

The use of Wolof griots was in response to audience desire to include more *folklore* in their dance bands. The *gëwël* Abdoulaye M'Boup a member of the Ensemble Lyrique Traditionnelle at the famed Sorano Theatre in Dakar, was the first *gëwël* singer to successfully fuse traditional singing with a modern group. M'Boup sang with the Star Band and Orchestra Baobab where he mentored Thione Seck, his backup singer, who later formed his own group Raam Daam. M'Boup's recordings with Baobab—and the vocal style he refined—served as a model for other “traditional” singers in *mbalax* groups.

When griot vocalists sang in Wolof, they reached a broader audience than the modern singers who sang *afro* and European covers in Spanish, French, and English. Wolof singers sang not only of romantic love and local issues, but also of topics that had long been the domain of griots alone, such as praises to Senegalese heroes who fought the French, wealthy patrons, Wolof cultural values, and local Muslim saints. Thus, *musique moderne* had now become not only a foreign genre, but one that Senegalese from all social classes could now understand and become more fully engaged with, through lyrics that included local history and values.

One of the most significant transformations of modern music that occurred during this time was the innovation of the young vocalist Youssou N'Dour. In 1975, N'Dour and his musical companions returned to Dakar from The Gambia—where he and other musicians from his Medina neighborhood had played with Moussa Ngom, a pioneer in using the *sabar* drums—and joined the Star Band de Dakar at le Miami club. Like other groups during that time, the Star Band experimented with folklore, but N'Dour's approach was unique: he assigned the *mbalax* rhythm to the guitars, keyboards, and

drums, with sabar players emphasizing the *mbalax* pattern played on the *mbëng-mbëng* drum. By 1977, the Star Band had developed a unique style based on folklore but N’Dour, animator Alla Seck, and tama player Assane Thiam were unhappy under the management of Ibra Kasse. The disgruntled musicians left the Star Band, and formed another group called Etoile de Dakar with singer El Hajj Faye, guitarist Jimi Mbaye, and bassist Kabou Gueye. Etoile de Dakar disbanded and split into two groups, one led by El Hajj Faye called Etoile 2000. The other, led by N’Dour, was called the “Super Etoile” and featured the core ensemble that remains popular on the music scene today as Super Etoile de Dakar.

N’Dour’s rhythmic innovation became a defining characteristic of *mbalax* as a Senegalese modern music valued for its representation of Wolofness at a time when many bands played *afro*. In an interview with ethnomusicologist Lucy Duran, N’Dour recalls:

I saw my role as bringing percussion into my music and putting rhythm into even the melody instruments. So, the guitar and the keyboard in my group also started to play a lot of traditional rhythms, and people accepted this because it was translated into melody. This rhythm is the basis of all my music, right from the early days, and I called it *mbalax*. I took the word *mbalax* because it’s a beautiful and original word, it’s a purely Wolof word and I wanted to show that I had the courage to play purely Senegalese music. It’s a real ‘roots’ word, and it’s the rhythm that the Wolof feel and love the most. Above all it is the rhythm of the griots. (Duran 1989:277)

N’Dour’s use of *mbalax* rhythms in the rhythm section added another layer of Wolofness to the then common practice of singing in Wolof and use of the *tama* in dance bands. To my knowledge, up to this time no one specifically used the word *mbalax* to refer to dance bands that sang in Wolof and used African drums. When people heard a

modern group using indigenous instruments (*tama, sabar, kora, jembe, bugarabu*) and singing mostly in Wolof, they referred to the practice as *traditionnelle* or *folklore*. Other popular dance bands experimenting with fusion at that time were categorized by the modern music category they specialized in, for example, Orchestre Baobab, Number One, and the Star Band were all known for their Afro-Cuban and *rumba* style; Super Diamono had an *afro* and blues feeling; and the groups Sahel, Xalam II, and Touré Kunda were known for their *afro* and jazz sounds. N'Dour similarly fused styles, but his distinctive approach and coinage of the term *mbalax* in the mid 1970s was the perfect mix at the right time. Audiences demanded the style and bands in Dakar, Saint-Louis, Thiès, and Rufisque swiftly borrowed and fused it with their own. The noun *mbalax* then came to represent Senegalese urban popular music itself.

Nightclubs were the initial places where audiences of elite and youth patrons crafted an early *mbalax* tradition in relation to other *afro* musics. The elite, at first, cautiously accepted *mbalax* for several reasons. On the one hand, the new music represented, at last, a local popular sound that stood on par with those from other West and Central African countries —*highlife*, *afrobeat*, *jùjú*, and *fuji* of Nigeria; *highlife* of Ghana; *makossa* of Cameroon; *musique moderne* of Mali; and *souk* of Belgian Congo. On the other hand, the *mbalax* rhythms that the bands played were mostly based on the *sabar* dances that accompanied women's events. Although ideas of primitivism might have colored elites acceptance of these dances in the nightclubs, it was mostly the eroticism of the dances that made them uncomfortable. It was an eroticism that Senghor and others felt was an inappropriate display of traditionalism.

But in fact it was this very uneasiness of elites and elders that formed part of the

draw for youth born circa 1960—the first generation to grow up in an independent Senegal under *Négritude*. For these youth, *enracinement* and *ouverture* were easier to embrace than they were for an older generation raised on the contentious ideas of tradition espoused by the colonial regime. In contrast, the youth were proud of these traditions, as well as being enamored with the modern musics and dances such as the jerk, rock, and soul. They adopted the names and fashions of their favorite singers, such as Johnny for French rocker Johnny Holiday, and Jimi for Jimi Hendrix. Afro hairstyles were in vogue. Some took on these personas because they were rebellious against their parents and saw imitation of these figures as a path to Senegalese modernity (Absa Moussa Sene, conversation with author, 2011; see also Manthia Diawara 1997, 1998).

Businessman Ndiouga Kébé capitalized on the excitement for *mbalax* by founding the Sahel, Dakar’s first nightclub expressly built to showcase Senegal’s new urban music. Kébé recruited musicians from different dance bands for his house band, the Sahel Orchestra. The band became a sensation among the elite and youth. Band members were paid salaries and dressed in stylish bell bottoms, fringe vests, and psychedelic shirts with afro hairstyles. They were famous for their sets of soul, Afro-Cuban, and jazz—followed, of course, by a *mbalax* set. Their innovation to *mbalax* was the use of trap drums, as well as the realization of the first recording “Bamba”— a famed Muslim praise song (discussed in the next chapter).

It was during the *mbalax* sets that dancers and musicians experimented with crossing traditional gender roles. Sahel Orchestra trumpeter, Jean N’Diaye recalls:

The patrons were African intellectuals. They danced like Europeans.... At that time, *mbalax* was beginning, the young people didn’t know how to dance, really, because our *mbalax* dance was not for men. It was only for women, and sometimes gay

men danced but not so much. Because this [*mbalax*] is an individual dance. It's not couple dance.... The [European] dancing was different, they just made 'one-two, one-two,' and the intellectuals just didn't know how to dance. And that was a *revolution* you know, because nobody did anything like that before. (Jean Ndiaye, in discussion with author, April 13, 2000)

Initially, dancers were very conscious of the gender roles of the dances. With the exception of male circumcision dances, dances performed at wrestling events, and professional dancing by the Ensemble National, most *mbalax* dance came from *tànnibéer*.⁵⁴ Men openly dancing *mbalax* in a nightclub was a break from traditional norms. According to musicians and audience members I interviewed, male dancing—along with the eroticism of women dancing *mbalax*—was (and remains) a big draw at nightclubs since it allowed men to watch and dance with women, in a modern space, without having to worry about traditional propriety.

Soon there was a feedback loop between nightclubs, television, and street *sabars*. New dances created by both men and women in the nightclubs were used in the gendered *tànnibéer* and new dances from these *sabars* were done in the nightclub. Television was also an important medium for spreading new dances that were imitated in the nightclubs and street *sabars*. *Mbalax* dancers like Ndao Rabin, Kura Ciao, Doko Sene, Magat Sene, and Alla Seck became television stars by showcasing the newest dance moves that were soon imitated in the nightclubs and *sabars*.

In the mid-1980s, a music industry developed that was supported by the state and private institutions. Radio and television programs, as well as talk shows, were created for the new genre, replete with a system of payola for radio DJs and music video

⁵⁴ Note here that these street *sabars* are not attended exclusively by women but that they are highly gendered occasions for women with men drumming and occasionally dancing.

programmers. At the same time, a nationwide cassette distribution system appeared, run by Talla Diagne from Sandaga market. Culture sections of newspapers and magazines ran features on musicians and music events, complete with reviews, and music videos were produced and directed by personnel at Radio Télévision Sénégalaise (RTS). Youssou N'Dour opened the first recording studio allowing musicians to record in Dakar instead of having to travel to Paris.

Wolofness After the 1980s: *Sopi, Set Setal*

In 1980, Senghor relinquished the presidency to his hand-picked successor Abdou Diouf, who oversaw a structural adjustment program requiring austerity measures. Diouf also reinstated the multi-party system and held presidential and legislative elections in 1983 that he and his Parti Socialiste party won. The reinstatement of multi-party democracy revitalized the hopes of young voters who had long felt marginalized and excluded, both from the governing political party and by opposition groups run by elders who led through a patron-clientelism that included collaboration with marabouts. The government considered the oppositional youth as failing to follow the customary acquiescence to elder authority.

Historian Mamadou Diouf (1996) summarized the state's perspective on youth opposition (aged 11–19) in two categories. One category was the social marginals (*encombremets humains*), an uneducated demographic of beggars, rural immigrants, and merchants. The second category included students or drop-outs from high schools, universities, and colleges who were either unemployed or underemployed. Many of the musicians I worked and played with came from this second category (Groupe Ceddo, Dieuf Dieul).

From 1987 to 1988, student frustration from lack of scholarships, degraded facilities, overcrowded classrooms, and overworked professors led to so many protests and strikes that Cheikh Anta Diop University was unable to grant degrees or conduct business for an entire year. During this time, students either dropped out of school or waited excessively long periods to graduate, only to find their dreams of careers in international affairs and politics, engineering, law, and scholarship deferred due to the failing economy. This crisis was called *année blanche* (the white year) and it was a seminal moment for the musicians I worked with who formed bands during this period—bands that became the modern and *afro* groups I study in this ethnography.

Another round of presidential and legislative elections in 1988 inspired politically active youth to join a coalition of opposition groups led by presidential candidate Abdoulaye Wade who campaigned under the slogan *sopi* (change). However, the incumbent Abdou Diouf—as well as the PS—won amidst charges of fraud and corruption. The youth had expected different results since a large number of them had ignored the religious order (*ndigal*) by the Khalif General (the leading marabout) to vote for Diouf. Violence ensued during what is now referred to as the *Sopi* riots.

In April 1989, rumors circulated that hundreds of Senegalese were murdered and mutilated in Mauritania over grazing rights along the border.⁵⁵ The numbers of dead were exaggerated but, given the already volatile climate in Dakar and the long standing racial politics between these countries, the news nonetheless fueled Senegalese mobs in acts of

⁵⁵ Three transnational events also contributed to urban violence: 1) the maritime border dispute with Guinea-Bissau that was later resolved by the International Court of Justice in favor of Senegal; 2) the dissolution of the Senegambian Confederation that was formed in 1982 to join economic resources and unite military forces; and 3) the Senegalo-Mauritanian conflict of 1989. This latter crisis triggered more riots that escalated to killings and looting.

looting and killing against Mauritians. Senegalese elders were shocked at the carnage which so blatantly violated the treasured concept of Senegalese hospitality and obligation to strangers (*teràngë*) (Diouf 2002:265).

A solution to the urban malaise came from an unexpected source: the youth who created autonomous organizations based on strong Muslim and Wolof values and beliefs. They ignored the political, economic, social, and cultural institutions connected to the state and private industries. Instead, youth formed two types organizations: high school and university groups, and Cultural and Athletic Associations (*Associations Culturelles et Sportives* or ASC). The purpose of these new groups was to bypass the central control of the state and create democratic and collaborative spaces for positive change. The ASCs were a significant contributing factor to the movement of moral and physical cleansing of Dakar called *Set Setal* (“to clean”). The youth literally cleaned and policed the streets under their control.

The *Set Setal* participants were the first generation to grow up in an independent Senegal and their enemies were not the French but their elders who governed the state. The nationalist narratives of the political elite were replaced, overwritten, and challenged by populist narratives of the first postcolonial generation of youth, who were negotiating tradition and global modernity (Diouf 2002: 268–270). The youths renamed those streets they controlled after popular marabouts and heroes, and painted murals of Senegalese and black nationalist heroes on walls. In an analysis of the visual culture of this moment, anthropologists Roberts and Roberts describe the imagery the youths produced on walls and on urban places:

The streets of Dakar soon throbbed with paintings of resistance figures from Senegalese history next to Mickey Mouse next to polemical pan-Africanisms next to didactic images decrying public urination next to the Statue of Liberty next to romantic wildlife scenes next to Batman next to portraits of Amadou Bamba and other saints of Senegalese Islam—with written slogans and political ephemera for punctuation. (Roberts and Roberts 2003:136)

The images and written texts from the African diaspora, Western popular culture, and Senegalese history and culture also included portraits of diasporic and Senegalese musicians (Bob Marley, Jimi Hendrix, Fatou Gwél, Cheikh Lo). These musician portraits were used, along with the other images and texts of *Set Setal*, to promote messages of peace, tolerance, and positive social change (Roberts and Roberts 2003). Along with street patrols, mural painting, street renaming, and organizing, the youth used both *mbalax* and *sabar* to convey the message of the movement and encourage participation. Women organized more *sabars*, which served two purposes: they were sonic symbols of the street culture of Wolofness, and they were practical acts of agency by women, who used the income generated by the gift giving and monetary contributions to provide for their families and social networks (see Morales Libove 2005).

Modern *Mbalax* (1980s–2000s)

During the period of *Set Setal*, *mbalax* grew beyond the social space of the nightclubs that were supported by the patronage of the elite, to the radios, bars, cafés, TVs, and parties of Dakarais, crossing lines of class, gender, ethnicity, and religion. Yet many *mbalax* groups and artists relied on the state for patronage and beneficence through getting hired to play at “mega concerts” (concerts held in stadiums featuring a large number of acts with heavily discounted tickets are co-sponsored by the government and

businesses), radio, and television programming controlled by the state.

Youssou N'Dour and the Super Etoile challenged this status quo by taking advantage of their unique international fame, power, money, and resources. By now, N'Dour owned his own nightclub and had developed a remarkably large and loyal fan base, and in 1989 N'Dour released *Set*, whose title track became an anthem for *Set Setal*. “Set” called for youth to calm their anger and approach their dire situations with a clean heart, mind, and actions. The song criticized elders for ignoring and antagonizing youth instead of listening and caring for them. In Wolof society, subservience to elders is deeply valued, but N'Dour reminded the older generation of their obligations to provide wisdom, security, and order to youth.

Since “Set” was released before *Set Setal*, and was most likely part of N'Dour's live performances before its commercial release, scholars and the media tend to portray the song as a catalyst to the peaceful movement. The repetition of “*Set, set, set, set, set, set, set setal*” in the chorus is not only a powerful hook but also considered an anthem to literally clean the streets, paint murals of Muslim and Senegalese heroes on dilapidated walls, patrol crime-ridden areas, and restore civility (see Bugnicourt and Diallo 1991; Diouf 1992; McLaughlin 2001; Niane, et al. 1991; Roberts and Roberts 2003:135).

However, a closer examination of the lyrics shows another layer of cosmopolitan meaning. N'Dour addresses a fundamental root of Wolof values and history, namely: peaceful conflict resolution (the Wolof origin story centers on the resolution of a fight between brothers brokered by the first ruler of the Wolof, Njaan-Njaan Ndiaye). But N'Dour does this in a cosmopolitan way by situating Senegalese in a world of nations along with the Americans, Russians, and other Africans.

“Set”

Have a clear mind
 Be pure in your heart
 Be sure in your actions
 One day all the world’s musicians will meet
 Music has no frontiers
 One day the Americans
 Will find a new vision
 And the Russians too
 Will see life in a different way
 For there are too many weapons
 And war is terrible
 I have a vision of all Africa
 Being united one day
 Give me your hand
 Give me one chance to know
 What do you think,
 For the future?
 The young people are crying
 Because the older ones are frightening them
 That’s what makes me sad
 They are crying because
 They have no hope

The lyrics balance metaphor and direct criticism without resorting to harsh language, as in hip hop. N’Dour opens with a broad appeal for the Wolof to abandon their anger and to respect the opinions and humanity of others. He clearly identifies the lack of hope among youth due to elder negligence. Although N’Dour was careful to contextualize hope as a universal value, the lyrics had particular currency in Senegalese popular culture for recognizing that traditional Wolof value of respect for elders depends not only on the obedience of youth but also on authorities fulfilling their obligation to equitably redistribute the resources among the population. The final ingredient that propelled the popularity of “Set” was its seamless use of *mbalax pur et dur* and *afro-mbalax*.

Following Set Setal, the infrastructure for the mbalax industry improved. There were more venues for performances, easier access to equipment and instruments, more recording studios, and more collaborations with artists and producers from abroad. Although it was difficult for many Dakarais to make the daily quota to feed their family—and people still suffered from structural adjustment—the demand for *mbalax* rose. With the cessation of violence, more employment was possible via the growing tourist industry. Another source of income came from the remittance economy supported by the religious brotherhoods and Senegalese working abroad.

Digital sampling and improvements in the sound quality of synthesizers also allowed bands to scale down costs by scaling down on personnel, such as horn players. Still, the sound of early *mbalax*, with its strong Afro-Cuban quality, was associated with colonialism and the nationalists. Therefore, having a modern singer and traditional singer was no longer enough—audiences wanted the synthesized sounds they heard in *afro*, as well as the sounds of indigenous instruments which could be achieved through sampling.

Collaborations with producers and musicians from the West elevated the quality and quantity of *mbalax* productions. Londoner Andy Shafté, for example, assisted Youssou N'Dour's production company, Jololi, with their hip hop, *mbalax*, and *afro* artists. Shafté had expertise in digital production and urban dance musics, acquired in London where he worked for Virgin Records and in the acid jazz and hip hop scene such as DJing at the club Dingwall's. Shafté assisted on the production of *Xaar Ma*, an album featuring Youssou's sister-in-law, Viviane N'Dour. His contributions involved realizing Viviane's desire to imitate Mariah Carey's production sound by fusing samples of works by Aaliyah with the *tassu* praise and *sabar* drumming of Mbaye Diaye Faye. Other

notable producers working in Senegal included Mac Fallows, a Canadian keyboardist and composer who arranged Youssou N'Dour's mega-hit "Birimá" for Western audiences, and Nick Gold of the UK label World Circuit Records, who produced Cheikh Lo's *Bambaay Geej*. Before Gold arrived to record Lo's works, they had already been arranged by New Jersey native Thomas Vale, a saxophonist and composer with the Senegalese group Nakodje.

Two new types of bands arose in the late 1980s and early 1990s: women-led groups and "*afro-mbalax*" or "modern *mbalax*" bands. Lead female singers fall into three categories. First, the griot, an urban-traditional singer, like Fatou G w l and Kine Lam, who would adhere closely to the role of the female *g w l* as custodian of tradition and culture. The voice and percussion are the important elements of their sound, and their bands will have a large number of *sabar* players, a *xalam* or *kora* player, and a keyboardist or guitarist. The texts used often address love, Islam, and women's responsibilities.

The second category of lead female singer is the pop star or diva, a category that includes artists such as Viviane N'Dour and Tutti. Pop star/divas sing about the same issues as the urban traditional singer, but the texts also include party songs that often introduce new dances and fashions. Divas in particular dress in more erotic and tight-fitting clothing than urban traditional singers, who favor overflowing robes and dresses.

The third type of female artist, singer/songwriters such as Ma Sane and Wa Flash, do not emphasize eroticism; the attire is conservative but not prudish or traditional. The singer/songwriter plays folk, *afro*, and *mbalax pur et dur*, and her songs include message songs, love songs, and praises to religious and secular heroines. Instrumentation in pop

and diva bands follow the same variations as their male counterparts including *sabar*, trap drums, guitar(s), bass, electric keyboard. Women-led groups perform mostly in music videos, large venues, concerts, and community centers; there is still a stigma attached to women performing in nightclubs even though there are plenty of female patrons.

The 1990s also saw an increase in the number of venues for *mbalax* performances, including hotels, bars, casinos, restaurants, nightclubs, and stadium-based mega concerts. The surprise was the increase of *mbalax* in such hotels as the *Teràngë* in Dakar that tourists patronized, especially Europeans who had historically found *mbalax* too rhythmically dense for their enjoyment. While there are still nightclubs catering to Europeans where *mbalax* is *not* played, such as le Casino and Café Iguana, the general growth in the number of *mbalax* venues attests to the inclusion of Dakarois from across class lines participating in the live music scene. The venues where I conducted extensive research—locales with low admission fees whose patrons ranged from working-class to underemployed and unemployed—sometimes attracted an interesting mix of affluent patrons who enjoyed the intimacy of the smaller venues as well as the experimentation that often occurred when more experienced musicians sat in with the young the *afro-mbalax* groups Dieuf Dieul, Ceddo, Nakodje.

Creating intimacy between dancers and the musicians became an important aesthetic in drawing large crowds. To this end, and two kinds of nightclub festivities emerged that helped to keep the music vital: the after-work party and the *soirée Sénégalaise*. The after-work party was fashioned after the US “Happy Hour,” and was aimed at patrons with disposable income who wanted a place to socialize after work where they could listen to jazz and other *afro* musics. Such clientele included

businessmen, married men with their mistresses, and foreigners already used to the concept. Some clubs hired musicians to provide live music, and this entertainment often consisted of *mbalax* players experimenting with jazz and other types of improvisation.

The *soirée Sénégalaise* was a contemporary configuration of the “traditional sets or parties” trumpeter Jean N’Diaye described as pivotal to the creation of *mbalax*. However, instead of a loose experimentation with African and Western instruments, the *soirée Sénégalaise* modified the street *sabar* format by having both men and women take dance solos, and including additional *animation* such as a wide range of skits, comedy, mini parades, and additional modern instruments.

Salaam Diallo claims to have invented the *soirée Sénégalaise* in late 1992, after his tenure with the group Super Diamono, in Tioossane, the nightclub owned by Youssou N’Dour. A promoter or manager from the nightclub Sahel (Youssou Nippon) saw Diallo’s show and reorganized it with better financing, employing the master drummer Thio Mbaye who was riding a wave of fame from his *sabar* cassette, *Rimbaux* (1993).

As more nightclubs began producing *soirées*, they became important draws in Dakar for several reasons. First, they allowed men to participate and observe *sabar* dancing that was usually reserved for the *tànnibéer*. Second, women dancers used the events as opportunities to conduct informal competitions to join *mbalax* groups as dancer-animators. Third, artists were allotted greater levity to experiment with traditional forms. Fourth, artists could introduce new dances and increase their fan base. Diallo, for example, creates new dances and rhythms (*bàkks*) that he tests out and promotes in the *soirées*, and then uses them in his music videos such as the dances *gissm*, *jekete-jekete*, and *naankat*. (Salaam Diallo, in discussion with author, October 1, 2000).

Styles of *Mbalax*

Although *mbalax* musical styles can range from the heavily percussive *mbalax pur et dur* (Salaam Diallo, Fatou Guewel) to the R&B and soul of *afro-mbalax* (Groupe Ceddo, Dieuf Dieul), features shared between them include language, song structure, meter, and instrumentation.

Wolof is the central language of *mbalax*, but artists often incorporate phrases from French, English, and Senegalese languages into their songs as well. Pulaar, the language of the Fulani and Tukolor, is used as well to a limited extent; Pulaar speakers are collectively known as Haalpulaaren. The few *mbalax* groups featuring Pulaar include Baaba Maal et Daande Leñol, Tidiane et Dieuf Dieul, and Les Frères Guise. Although singing in Pulaar and Wolof attracts Dakar's large Haalpulaaren audience, these groups also sing in Wolof in order to maintain a solid fan base among Wolof speakers, including second- and third-generation Dakarois of Fulani and Tukolor descent who no longer understand Pulaar.

Often the songs, in either Pulaar or Wolof, treat of epic battles held in Futa Toro, the heartland of the Tukolor, and victories against the French led by the Fulani Muslim cleric El Hajj Umar Tall. Tukolor griots (*gawulo*) such as Salaam Diallo, who considers himself a Wolof of Tukolor heritage, sing in Wolof about contemporary conditions and problems regarding ethnicity, such as Wolof hegemony, Tukolor pride, and ethnic essentialism (Salaam Diallo, in discussion with author, October 1, 2000). This use of Wolof to raise issues concerning ethnicity in complicated ways strengthens the power of *mbalax* to reach a broad audience and maintain the pan-ethnic status that underlies Wolofness.

The core instrumentation of *mbalax* groups includes a vocalist, *sabar* drums, trap drums, an electric keyboard, a guitar, and a bass. Additional instruments may include a saxophone, trumpet, flute, violin, accordion, trumpets, *kora*, *xalam*, Fulani flute (*tamblin*), *jembe*, *tama*, and/or *bougarabou* drums. A typical line-up of players includes a *tama* drummer, two *sabar* drummers (who often use other African percussions, such as *jembe* and *gumbe*), a trap drummer, a modern singer, a traditional singer, an electric bassist, a keyboardist, and a guitarist. The most used *sabar* drum is the open-bottomed *mbëng-mbëng* that produces pitches mostly in the medium range, an instrument that drummers use to create the distinctive sharp “pop” that dancers love. Often paired with the *mbëng-mbëng* is the *cól*, a closed-bottom drum that produces a lower range of timbres. The *sabar* is played with an open hand and a stick, which gives it a timbre distinct from the open-handed *jembe*. The percussive texture of *mbalax* is filled out by interlocking electronic keyboard and electric guitar parts, either chordal vamps or single-line repetitive motives. The accompanying keyboard pattern is often called the “marimba” since the player uses a sampled *balafon* or marimba sound on his keyboard.

The *sabar* rhythms most played in *mbalax* come from a traditional repertory, with new patterns created by the drummers. The *sabar* dance “Kaolack” is the most frequently played traditional rhythm in *mbalax*, followed by “Ceebu Gen” and “Baar M’Baye. These⁵⁶ ancient rhythms are constantly revitalized by innovations that occur in street *sabars*, wrestling events, and the nightclubs. New rhythms and dances are also introduced through music videos and guest appearances by artists at *soirées* such as a *jekete-jekete* by Salaam Diallo.

⁵⁶ See Tang (2007) for transcriptions and full description of *sabar* rhythms.

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Mbalax
te tan pax gin ba ra dam bax gin gin te tan

Mbalax Alternate
rwan tan pax gin rwan tan pax gin rwan tan

Talmbat
sa gin tek rwan gin tek pax sa

Tulli
rwan gin pax ja gin

FIGURE 5.12. *Kaolack/mbalax/ndëc*Figure 1. Transcription of “Kaolack” *sabar* rhythm (Tang 2007: 110).

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Mbalax Nder
tan jan pax rwan pa tan jan pax rwan pa

Mbalax
gin ja ca gin ja ca gin ja ca gin ja ca

Talmbat
pa ja gin ja tek pa ja gin ja tek

Tulli
tan gin tek ta gin tan

Figure 2. *Ceebu gen* transcribed by Patricia Tang (2007: 107).

Vocalists are usually categorized as either “modern” or “traditional,” although bands able to feature both traditional and modern singers—or singers facile in both styles—achieve substantial success in Dakar. A “traditional” singer’s style is declamatory, loud, nasal, and interdependent on single-line call-and-response patterns

with a chorus of vocalists or instrumentalists. The harsh timbre and rapid-fire delivery make up an indigenous sound easily recognized and associated with griots who preside over wrestling events, street *sabars*, naming ceremonies, and other occasions. Traditional singers' harmonization tends to be more dissonant than modern singers' since the Western aesthetic of "playing in tune" is less important than the Senegalese aesthetic for emphasizing accents, loudness, and praising audience members.

A modern vocalist has a delivery style influenced by *afro* and the early pioneer vocalists, such as Pape Seck, Doudou Sow, Ouza, and Omar Pene. The timbre of a "modern" voice is smooth in contrast to the nasal quality of griots, with melismas on long syllables often sliding between tonics and flatted thirds and sevenths, similar to the soul artists Otis Redding and Marvin Gaye, who is believed by some to be descended from Senegalese since his last name is Wolof (see Baraka 2009: 114). The pioneer of traditional singing was the Wolof griot Laye M'Boup, who sat in with the early *mbalax* bands of Dakar, including Star Band and Orchestra Baobab. His delivery was harsh, loud, and more dissonant compared to the modern vocalists of his time, imitating the crooning of the R&B and soul singers.

Song structures vary between sub-styles and performance contexts, but there are some features consistent throughout. For instance, lead singers often begin with a verse followed by a chorus of back-up singers or instrumentals in response. This verse/chorus (instrumental) call and response repeats several times followed by an instrumental solo or fast-paced dance sequence similar to the texture found in *mbalax pur et dur*. In live performances after the first few verses the form of the song can change according to how frequently dancers from the audience wish to take a solo with the drummer.

Below is an outline of “Yen Bi” (“The Burden”) from Thione Seck’s album *Favori* (2000). The song structure lays out how tension builds from the first section of alternating verses sung by Thione Seck answered by an instrumental chorus that lead to the second section of *mbalax pur et dur* that features a *sabar* solo and Thione Seck singing extemporaneously over the more percussive *mbalax pur et dur*:

Thione Seck “Yen bi”

Instrumental introduction

Main *mbalax* groove established

Verse (Thione Seck)

Chorus (Instrumental)

Verse (Thione Seck)

Chorus (Instrumental)

Verse (Thione Seck)

Mbalax pur et dur section (*sabar* and *marimba* part is more prominent)

Verse (Thione Seck)

Chorus (Choir)

Verse (Thione Seck)

Chorus (Choir)

Seck improvising over chorus vamps

Unidentified vocalist improvises over chorus vamps

In live performance, this structure is altered and extended by dancers interacting with the *sabar* or *tama* drummer—engaging them in a dancer–drummer dialogue similar to the ones that occur during street *sabars* and other events organized by women where drumming is involved. These dialogues are followed by improvisations and praise singing during the *pur et dur* section, generating a heightened feeling of excitement that Senegalese refer to as “being inside” (*yaangy ci biir*). This feeling, generated by the two-part song structure, improvisations, and praise is similar to the “heightened sensibility” and feeling that Bob White (2008:55) describes in Congolese popular music and that Charles Keil and Steven Feld (1994) describe as “groove.”

Caste and Griots

Wolofness survives in the twenty-first century due in part to the hierarchal caste systems among Senegalese ethnic groups (except for the Diola) that include griots. Although caste systems no longer have the same power as before the advent of colonialism and the spread of Islam, they still influence popular culture and society. While an extensive review of caste in the Greater Senegambia Region is beyond the scope of this project, these systems have been well-documented in anthropology (Diop 1982; Irvine) and ethnomusicology (Charry 2000; Huchard 1999; Leymarie 1999; Tang 2007). The concern here is with how the caste system informs the practice of *mbalax*—from the *sabar* drummers, who are almost all Wolof griots, to the singers and dancers who rely on griot practices to articulate the cultural values of Wolofness.

Senegambians share similar social orders or caste systems, summarized here by historian Boubacar Barry (1998:28):⁵⁷

Ethnic group	non-casted	Casted workers and specialists
Wolof	<i>Gëër</i>	<i>Ñeeño</i>
Manding	<i>Proro</i>	<i>Namakala</i>
Peul	<i>Riimbe</i> (singular <i>Diimo</i>)	<i>Nyeënbe</i>
Soninke	<i>Jambuurini</i>	<i>Nakhmala</i>

Figure 3. Senegambian castes or social orders.

The social order portrays ethnic groups and their corresponding divisions of

⁵⁷ For analyses of the complicated subdivisions of castes, see Brett Bowles and Thomas Hale (1996), Abdoulaye Diop (1981), and Thomas Hale (1998).

occupations by casted artisans and non-casted “nobles.” Historically, the casted served the non-casted. Today, this relationship survives but in a much less rigid form. Marriages, for example, occur across ethnic groups, though not across castes. Anthropologist Abdoulaye-Bara Diop’s work on Wolof society uses a socio-economic category to describe caste division into two groups, the non-casted (*gëër*) and the casted specialists and artisans (*ñeeño*), to which the *gëwël* are sub-group. This socio-economic category is hierarchal, and sustained by endogamy. In precolonial Senegal, the *gëër* ranked at the top of the hierarchy, as individuals of either royal lineage or commoners able to own land. The *ñeeño* are artisans and historically did not own land, but relied upon *gëër* for distribution of wealth and services, which increased with a *gëër*’s accumulation of *ñeeño*-supplied resources. In this way, the groups were mutually dependent upon each other, with wealth concentrated among the *ñeeño*, who were obligated to redistribute it. This was a particularly valuable way for *gëër* to stave off starvation, so long as the *ñeeño* fulfilled their obligations. As Diop states, a *gëër*’s “generosity towards the member of a lower caste is a source of prestige and honor.... It is inconceivable in Wolof society for a *gëër* to receive a gift from a *ñeeño* without giving more in return.” (trans in Villalon 1995:59).

One means by which obligations were monitored was through the Wolof griot caste, the *gëwël*. Although ranked in a sub-group below the other artisans, the *gëwël* held considerable power as historians, mediators of communal and regional problems, and praise singers. They were powerful cultural brokers and intermediaries between the *ñeeño* and *gëër*. A *gëwël*’s interpretation of a person’s moral values and fulfillment of responsibility to others in the community influenced that person’s reputation and social

standing.

This role remains salient in contemporary Senegal. In places like Dakar, griots still praise and criticize members of the community at baptisms, weddings, street *sabars*, and via *mbalax*, as when Salaam Diallo praises the master drummers before him, and when he commends the DJ Michael Soumah for broadcasting *mbalax*. There is also critique in *mbalax*, such as in “Set,” when N’Dour chastises elders in the government (i.e., *gëër*), for not fulfilling their role to the their constituency (i.e., *ñeeño*).

Musicians in *mbalax* also tend to have multiple connections to “griotness.” For instrumentalists such as guitar, bass, and horn players there is relatively little importance placed on griot status since these are considered “modern” instruments. “Traditional” singers, however, often identify and rely on griotness. Youssou N’Dour and Salaam Diallo, for example, are Tukolor griots.

But instead of singing in Pulaar, the language of the Tukolor, Diallo sings mostly in Wolof, and animates his performances according to Wolof traditions. His Wolofness derives from the shared history between the Tukolor and Wolof griots. *Gawulo* were in fact considered the griots of the *gëwël*. That is, when *gëwël* went into battle beside their warriors and kings, it was the *gawulo* who sang their praises when they returned. For singers not born into a griot family, they closely imitate the musicianship and vocal aesthetics of famous griot singers such as Abdoulaye M’Boup, Salaam Diallo, and Youssou N’Dour (when he sings in that style). *Sabar* drummers, on the other hand, are almost always *gëwël*, but there are exceptions, such as Salaam Diallo.

Sabar

The ubiquity of *sabar* in the political and cultural domains of Senegalese society

emerges from a history of Wolof griot borrowing and reinterpreting the musical styles of their Senegambian neighbors. *Sabar* is a critical aspect of the Wolofness of *mbalax* since the accompanying rhythms of the *sabar*, in all of their varied forms, are *mbalax* rhythms from which the popular genre derives its name. *Sabar* can mean many things: a drum or collection of drums; a music and dance style; or an event.

This musical Wolofization has come to comprise an urban Senegalese identity through its use by politicians at political rallies, where government officials use it to promote national culture; by the general population, for family celebrations, wrestling events, mutual-aid meetings; and at *mbalax* performances, where N’Dour and other musicians use it to create the distinctive Senegalese pop sound; as Patricia Tang (2007) argues, it is important to recognize that griots are not only praise singers, but also musicians and dancers.

Sabar drums are made of mahogany, covered in goatskin heads, and are either open- or close-bottomed. Each drum has a specific name but can generically be called *sabar*. The open-headed drums, in descending height, are the *nder*, the lead drum with the widest range of pitches; the *mbëng-mbëng bal*, with a loud bass sound; the *mbëng-mbëng*, often used to play an accompaniment part generically called *mbalax*; and the *tungue*, a high-pitched accompanying drum. The closed-bottom drums are the *cól*, also called *làmb* (the Wolof word for wrestling where this drum is prominent), which has the lowest bass sound; the *talmbatt*, which has a tenor sound; and the *gorong yeguel* or *gorong mbabas*, a recent invention by Doudou N’Diaye Rose that produces a bright, sharp sound, similar to the *nder*, but that requires less strength to play. Most⁵⁸ *sabar* ensembles consist of six to

⁵⁸ See Tang (2007) for detailed material on *sabar* drum construction and performance

eight male *g ew el* drummers, many of who are proficient at dance and praise singing.⁵⁹ *G ew el* specialists in dance (*fetch*) and praise (*tassu*) may be either male or female and often accompany drummers to events.

Sabar repertory divides into two categories: rhythms and *b akks*.⁶⁰ A rhythm is a dance music performed widely among *g ew el* families and characterized by short-cycled polyrhythmic phrases. For example, *kaolack* is the rhythm for the popular dance “Kaolack”—named after the region of Senegal where it originated—that all *g ew el* families play at *sabar* events. A *b akk* is a signature musical composition that may or may not include dancing, has longer drum phases than a rhythm, and usually alternates between polyrhythmic and *tutti* passages. *G ew el* families and troupes compose and rearrange *b akks* to create a style that distinguishes them from other performers. One way this is done is by including *b akks* during a rhythm in order to give the dance a unique “feel.” For example, during the dance “Kaolack,” drummers include *b akks* at their discretion to inspire dancers or in response to a dancer’s request. Another way is for drummers to build their reputations by composing virtuosic *b akks* played between rhythms or layered with them representative of their “style”. For example, Cheikh Tairo M’Baye, leader of the group Sing Sing Rhythm, composed the *b akk* “Fii Mba Fele” (New York or Dakar), a transposition of engine sounds he heard one night on a New York City subway car that has an “American feel” (Cheikh M’Baye, conversation with author,

aesthetics and techniques.

⁵⁹ A rare exception to drumming as a male occupation is the Rosettes, a female ensemble created by Doudou N’Diaye Rose.

⁶⁰ See Patricia Tang (2007) for history, contemporary practices and transcriptions of rhythms and *b akks*.

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In Dakar, participatory events featuring *sabar* include women-organized baptisms, weddings, evening dances, and mutual-aid meetings (*tur*); youth events include the lion dances and children dances (*sabar ngom*); and nightclub events, including *soirées Sénégalaises* and live *mbalax* performances where dancers interact with drummers. These participatory events each have their own particular dynamic and function, but all use the dance circle (*geew bi*) as a space to challenge, redefine, and affirm Wolof cultural values and social norms.

Presentational events include wrestling matches (*lamb*), political rallies, and public concerts where symbols of Wolof identity are represented and manipulated in ways that encourage audiences to contemplate their modern identity. For example at a 1999 Black Uhuru concert in Dakar, a *sabar* troupe danced a piece about the transatlantic slave trade, reminding the audience of their diasporic connections to the reggae that would follow.

Taken as a whole, the *sabar* is ubiquitous in urban Senegal. The *géwël* keep *sabar* salient by responding to their own and their clients' desires. *Mbalax* performances frequently index *sabar* from these various events. The *tànnibéer*, in particular, is frequently brought to life in *mbalax* performances, such as the *soirée Sénégalaise* and in the music itself. The drummer-dancer dialogue from the *tànnibéer* is especially important for creating the desired sense of intimacy and feeling of "being inside."

Tànnibéer

It is 10:30 p.m. I hear drumming on the street. Amy, Moussou, and I go to the corner to find a semicircle of 50–75 chairs. Children aged five to ten run around the

circle jumping and dancing. Two young girls in matching blue *mbubb* direct women to the chairs for which they charge a small fee of 100 cfa. The women are magnificently attired in an array of colors and coolly sit chatting. At one end of the *geew bi* are the drummers (*tëggekati yi*). They are dressed mostly in baggy jeans, camouflage pants, baseball caps, tie-died shirts in African patterns, Nike sneakers and tank tops, and sport bald heads or dreadlocked haircuts. They play pieces, but no one dances except for the children. This is *saaji*, where the drummers warm up, practice, and play various *bàkks*. Drummers still learning their craft use this opportunity to play until they master their skills enough to play in the main part of the *sabar*.

The sound of the drums draws in more people, and by 11:00 p.m., the circle is complete and rows of women stand two- to three deep behind those seated. The drummers play their signature opening *bàkk*, signaling that it is time for the ladies to get ready to dance. This is followed by a *bàkk* that protects the *sabar* drums. Amy gets permission for me to videotape from the women organizers and directs me to a chair. I notice that I am the only guy sitting down. The men stand far back from the circle and teens watch intently behind the drummers.

Finally, the lead drummer comes out into the circle and shouts words of encouragement to the women. All of a sudden, a girl in her late teens jumps up and races to the front of the drummers. She faces the lead drummer and executes the basic step. He pauses, readjusts his drum on the chair, and closely watches the girl and then begins a pattern faster and louder than the previous one. They are locked in a communicative space. For less than a minute they are almost one until she slowly backs off and ends her solo dance with a quick flip of her hips and hands in perfect synchronicity with the drum

cadence. Until the song's completion six minutes later, other women will continue to race into the circle and mimic this pattern. Then, silence. The drummers readjust themselves. They tighten the heads of the drums by banging in the tuning pegs with rocks. Amy motions for me to get up and film within the circle. Cautiously, I do so.

The lead drummer initiates another pattern. He shouts encouragement and directs the players with glances and rhythms on his drum until they lock into a tight groove. This is *ceebu gen*, a popular, hard, fast, and driving polyrhythmic piece. The women and young girls become more animated and jump into the circle with abandon. Next is "Baar M'Baye," which I now recognize. It is a slower piece, and the dancing reflects this tempo. The young boys behind the drummers watch carefully. The piece ends. The lead drummer switches from the high-pitched *nder sabar* to the *djembe*. He plays an opening pattern and then another piece. This is followed by "Kaolack." Two women run into the circle but one moves back out once it is clear that the other is going to dominate. Next, two women enter together and perform synchronized steps. Another girl joins them and then they end abruptly.

A drummer walks into the circle with a bottle of shampoo. He wants dancers to come out and show their stuff and battle for the gift. The young kids start screaming and laughing when a teenaged girl comes out. They cheer her on. Another woman comes out, lifts her dress and reveals her *pañe* or *bééco* (slip) and *bin-bin* (beads worn around the waist, underneath the dress considered sexy and intimate). The *bééco* is bright red and made of silk. Instead of facing the lead drummer, she turns around and her butt gyrates to his drumming. A foot away from him, she moves her hips in isolation from the rest of her body. Her face is cool and detached, and eyes raised up (*ragaju*). The children chant

“*bééco, bééco, bééco ba*” and scream with delight when she finishes. This is the famed *lëmbël* dance, otherwise known as the *ventilateur*, where the hips move in a round movement like a fan, allowing a woman to show her sensuality. Others repeat this intimate dance.

Later, I ask what the chanting meant and am given shy looks and vague references to the hip area. It has been a little more than an hour and the drummers stop. People leave quickly. No one hangs out except for the drummers and children. The street becomes quiet. The women go home and rub their legs and ankles because dancing on the concrete has left them sore.

The *tànnibéer* is a gendered women’s event. However, male griot dancers often participate, especially men from the traditional dance troupes seeking tips and audience feedback on their skills, but their time is limited and controlled by the women hosting the event, who will force male dancers out of the dance circle when they take up too much time. Some scholars argue that the *tànnibéer* serves as an alternative space for women to assert themselves in this patriarchal Islamic society (Panzacchi 1994). The women I interviewed never mentioned Islam. They emphasize women’s control over the event, even over the male drummers. Even though by early 2000s, more male dancers began to appear, the events remained gendered and considered women spaces. It is only in the nightclubs (e.g., *soirée Sénégalaise*) where men can openly gaze at women doing these dances and participate in them as well. Thus, live *mbalax* events are also spaces where gender norms are reconfigured.

Values

The foregoing example of a *sabar* performance demonstrates the vitality of

folklore in Dakar. *Sabar* is not an ancient dance of nostalgia but a critical dynamic of Dakar's identity and the foundation of the urban popular music *mbalax*. The *tànnibéer*, and women-led *sabars* in general, are also practices of Wolof values, most of which fall under *teràngë*, the Wolof concept of hospitality, which dates from precolonial Senegal when travelers moved between the Wolof states of Cayor, Jolof, Bawol, and Bundu, and needed refuge from wars and a respite from the toll of migration and travel.

Teràngë is based on the belief that mothers who provide visitors with food, water, and comfort will ensure that when their children travel they will be well cared for. Also, since a visitor passes many homes but has chosen yours, your home is blessed and the guest is considered a gift from God. The host assists the traveler in finding his/her destination and the things he/she needs.

This practice of *teràngë* remains a critical feature of Senegalese cosmopolitanism, and is used not only as the advertising icon for the tourism industry but also for *moodu-moodu* or *baol-baol*—those who travel from the countryside to Dakar, and then to the Americas, Europe, or Asia, for work. *Teràngë* is readily experienced by cosmopolitans such as myself who arrive in Dakar for work and knowledge and benefit from the *teràngë* of their hosts who share their strategies for survival, along with business and social connections. This expands individuals' social *mbokk*, the network of friends and family that is prized more than material wealth.

Another feature of *teràngë*, and the one most visible at *sabar* and *mbalax* performances, is the sharing of gifts and negotiation of social relationships. Assane Sylla's monograph *La philosophie morales des Wolof* (Sylla 1994 [1978]:86) lists the gift-giving of drinks, money, and shampoo that occurs at the *sabars* and lifecycle events as a

critical dynamic of *teràngë*, since the exchange of gifts and wealth at these occasions represents the significance of the personal and social relationships that tie one to an *mbokk* and are relegated [word choice?] by the value of *teràngë*. Dissertations by anthropologists Morales-Libove (2005) and Beth Buggenhagen (2003) have provided ethnographic data tracing the exchange of large amounts of money at these events, the symbolic meaning behind these exchanges, and their significance in providing an alternative network of financing for women in a failing economy.

Most notable are the *turs* or *tontine*—women’s association meetings—that are usually held monthly for women who pool their money to fund private enterprises and endeavors such as a small business or baptism expenses. Women’s associations also sponsor public interests such as collecting money for schools and recreation centers or health clinics. *Turs* do sponsor *tànnibéer* that are semi-public, but most often such spectacles are held as private parties in courtyards. Here, young women are tutored in *mokk pocc* (“soft thighs”)—social rules and norms that include proper behavior (*sage*) in public and being the perfect mother and wife. *Mokk pocc* instruction balances traditional values, such as maintaining the proper respect for elders (*kersa*) and teaching children *sage*, alongside being an erotic and pleasing wife to one’s husband. Part of this instruction is explicitly given in *turs*, where women are taught erotic dancing—the dancing that “good” Muslim men deem improper when they see it in nightclubs. *Mbalax* singers often praise these values of proper behavior, respect for elders, and “soft thighs”

Finally, *teràngë* can represent political change and influence. During the 1999–2000 presidential elections, “Birima,” a song by Youssou N’Dour that received frequent play in nightclubs, television, and on the radio. The song became the theme song for

N'Dour's organization—a group dedicated to funding micro-financing and, as discussed earlier, one bent on reminding elders to fulfill their obligations to their constituency. The song praised Birima Ngonèl Latir, the *ceddo* Wolof King of Cayor (1855–1859). In the lyrics, N'Dour emphasizes Birima's hospitality through the creation of a new musical style called *mbaboor*, and his patronage of griots who, through *mbaboor*, eased the king's transformation from oppressive *ceddo* governance to more benevolent practices towards peasants.

Ah! Birima! [refrain]
 A day spent in your presence
 Was the picture of hospitality!

This music [*mbaboor*] was transmitted by the griots [verse]
 Who painted vivid portraits of the kingdom.
Mbaboor became inextricably linked to the history of Cayor.
 Most importantly, it forged a new and enduring link
 between royalty and the common people
 where relations had been different before.
 As the classes lived and struggled and celebrated together
 common experience allowed them to identify with one another.⁶¹

In this rendition of hospitality, N'Dour performs the role of the griot by bringing Wolof history and politics into the present. He reminds listeners how the Wolof have long used music as a force for social change and underscores the importance of the griot as cultural broker. Indigenous and modern musical elements sonically represent the past

⁶¹ Translation from the Youssou N'Dour CD *Joko (The Link)* (Nonesuch 79617-2). There have been many versions of the “Birima” attesting to its ongoing popular status. The version played at the parties was from the 1996 Youssou N'Dour et Le Super Etoile cassette *Lii!* (Jololi 956). Later versions include a 1999 hip-hop remix by the hip-hop artists Wyclef Jean and Free on the Youssou N'Dour CD *Joko: From Village to Town* (Jololi SMA 489718-2) and a rearrangement for western audiences by Canadian pop arranger/producer/keyboardist Mac Fallows on *Joko (The Link)*. In 2008, a new version of “Birima,” with guest appearances by western pop artists, appeared as a single and video promoting the microcredit organization called Birima. Cosponsored by Benetton clothing company and N'Dour, Birima provides loans to small scale African entrepreneurs.

and present in the instrumentation (*sabar*, *xalam*, trap drums, electric keyboard, bass, and guitar) and by *mbalax* itself, a fusion of musical styles. The “Birima” video that airs on RTS TV elaborates on these themes by visually placing the story in a contemporary urban context rather than in a rustic past. In the video, Birima walks the city streets in a grand *mbubb*, tipping griots dressed in casual western fashion who play the *xalam*, guitar, mandolin, and *tama*. N’Dour, also dressed in western garb, follows Birima through the neighborhood, praising him in song and with elegant gestures. The video concludes with N’Dour and Birima on the famed Sorano Theatre stage encircled by women dancing in full length traditional dresses. “Birima” links historical Wolof values and lifeways to contemporary urban life through the song’s lyrical content, visual imagery, and musical style and instrumentation.

I now turn to how the values, dances, pan-ethnicity, and genres discussed in the preceding pages come together in a live *afro-mbalax* event.

Ceddo at Toolu Buur

I am in the Medina, the *ancienne Africain quartier* of Dakar; the date is March 23, 2000. The occasion is an evening of *afro-mbalax* by the group Ceddo. This is Ceddo’s weekly gig at the Toolu Buur nightclub, a place named for a Wolof king’s cultivated land (alt: a public garden and space). Located in the rear of a supermarket, if sporting its own entrance, the nightclub is harshly lit and sparsely decorated.

Inside the bar, Wolof is what’s spoken, even though an individual’s ethnicity may be Mande, Seereer, Soçe, Tukolor, or any mixture of the Senegambian ethnic groups. The barmaids and manager serve a clientele who range in age from late teens to late sixties. Young men in their twenties make up the majority of the standing crowd. Many are

underemployed while others are university students studying in Dakar or abroad. Most of them are dressed in a variation of a button-down shirt over a pair of slacks or jeans. Alternatively, the young women dress in ensembles including stylish, form-fitting dresses, skirts, tops, and slacks. These ensembles are augmented by immaculate hairstyles such as the Viviane, named for the diva singer Viviane N'Dour who's *mbalax* hit "Sama Nene" ("My Baby") currently enjoys constant TV, nightclub, and radio airplay.

Abundant and meticulously applied make-up accents the ladies' well-crafted fashion, reflecting a traditional African aesthetic for adornment balanced by a Western aesthetic for the eroticized and suggested nakedness of the youthful firm body, an eroticism that T.K Biaya (2002) considers a characteristic of Senegalese cosmopolitanism. These young women (*jigeen*) often favor the heavily percussive *mbalax pur et dur* over *afro* because it allows them to show off their dancing skills and perhaps attract the eye of a suitor. These skills are learned not only in the nightclub and from music videos, but also from the *sabars* and *turs*, where fun and erotic dancing fosters social relationships and solidifies communal obligations (themselves held together through complex financial dealings). The erotic and other dance moves learned at these *sabars* are balanced by a Wolof code of "proper" behavior (*sage*) so that girls will not be labeled as prostitutes (*caaga*) or as *diskettes*, an ambiguous term for young women whose frequent attendance at nightclubs alludes to questionable morals.

The older patrons (in their thirties to fifties) who occupy the booths also have their own sociality. These include men casually outfit in dress shirts and slacks, along with those dressed more formally, in European suits marking them as *thiof*—street Wolof

to describe men who are a “good catch,” like the popular and tasty local fish.

Accompanying the men are *diongoma*: women respected for their maturity, grace, voluptuousness, stewardship of tradition, and teachings of correct behavior (*yewna*).

Ceddo’s *animation* is highly regarded and a large part of the draw for their growing fan base. A male university student on break from his studies in France says, “I like their modern approach to traditional sounds. It’s a music for us young people. It’s very Senegalese. This is my favorite place to come to when I come home.” The *afro-mbalax* of Ceddo is a balance between the “traditional” *mbalax pur et dur* and the “modern” fusion of various African pop styles such as Congolese urban dance music; Cap Verdean *coladeira* and *funana*; Nigerian *highlife* and afrobeat; African American and Caribbean popular music such as jazz, Afro-Cuban music or “salsa;” and R&B. Ceddo’s facility in shifting between these styles during live performances enhances the *animation* that contributes to the vital drive of the dancing that is the group’s hallmark, *afro-mbalax* sound. This tension of playing with the *afro* and *mbalax pur et dur* styles contributes to the Wolofness of the event and points to how the representation and practice of Senegaleseness is not just confined to indigenous cultural practices such as the *sabar*, but also to the modern musics such as *afro*.

Ceddo’s *afro-mbalax* sound begins after midnight when performances start with an instrumental “jazz” or “fusion” set. I unpack my flute and sit in for a couple of tunes with the trap drummer Lamine “Pape” Diop, bassist Ibrahima “Idi” Diallo, guitarist Ousmane, and keyboardist Badu Diop. We play modal jazz tunes infused with blues and Afro-Cuban phrases. I begin solos with short motives that I repeat and modify until I work out denser lines. We stay inside dominant, minor, and major seventh chords. I feel

uncomfortable, afraid of doodling, so I pause, listen and then create sparse sequences that will put just the right amount of tension on top of the vamps coming from the rhythm section. It's not my first time playing with the group but it is always difficult for me to stop searching for the "one." I cue into the piano and we get into a conversation of call and response. Nods of approval from the group. I am closer to understanding what they mean when they say "*Yaangy ci biir*" ("you're inside and feeling it"). One reason this is possible is because on other nights, I've also been sitting in with pioneer *mbalax* musician Doudou Sow (who is also hanging out tonight) and his group Number One Plus who play an *mbalax* style closer to the genre's *charanga* Afro-Cuban roots. The violinist in that group, William Badji, helps me break out of thinking of improvising in four-bar phrases and to start feeling the different places where *mbalax* musicians feel being inside.

Tonight, I choose to sit out when the *sabar* drummer and two vocalists come on stage and begin the more hard-core *mbalax* set. While Ceddo plays, I stand beside the soundman working the Mackie mixer and greet the owner of the sound reinforcement equipment, Tahir. He is dressed in a black leather suit and Kangol hat tilted backwards, fluent in English, and anxious to be a major player on the music scene as a producer and businessman. Tahir is a *moodu-moodu*, the cosmopolitan Senegalese who works abroad, sends remittances home, and then returns to share his knowledge with the community (on the *moodu* see Diouf 2002, Gueye 2001, Roberts and Roberts 2003). I see him at almost all Ceddo shows, and we talk about the differences between Dakarois who want to live in New York City in order to better provide for their *mbokk*, and black New Yorkers who want to come to Africa to learn about their "roots." We have an ongoing discussion about how Senegalese attempt to reconcile the Wolof value of fulfilling an individual's

obligation to share almost all of one's wealth with family with the American value of individualism, where one seeks to accumulate wealth through saving.

Our conversation ends with him moving onto the dance floor where he flows between different partners and friends, demonstrating old dance moves and creating new ones. Tonight he shows his recent creation involving spreading his legs wide, bending deep at the knees, raising himself on his toes and isolating his hips in rhythmic motions that follow the drummer. Some guys riff on his moves while others do the "Tyson" a dance performed by the Senegalese wrestling champion Mohamed "Tyson" Ndao when he enters the ring with the American flag draped over his torso. The girls, on the other hand, do a whole other range of dances such as the "*jekete*," and "*gissm*," made popular in music videos by Salaam Diallo. While I dance with Tahir, diehard Ceddo fans sing along with the choruses.

As the evening progresses, more and more dancers move in front of the *sabar* percussionist, engaging him in improvised dancing. This is not a *soirée Sénégalaise*, but it is one of the signature features of Ceddo performances, the creation of "intimacy" (that fans adore) through engaging the drummer in a direct dialogue. Some dancers display incredibly complex moves. Others are more subtle and humorous, such as a bald man pretending to comb his nonexistent hair, or another feigning drunkenness by leaning so far over, he looks as if he's about to smash into the drummer. At the last moment he recovers in a spell-binding twist that's synchronized to the music. A woman in her twenties does a variation of the *mulaay jigeen* (see Figure 2). She glides to the front and gracefully rotates her legs and hips in small circles, requiring the drummer to play more softly and subtly. The audience encourages good dancers with smiles and handclapping.

This dancing in front of and with the *sabar* drummer is a highlight and feature of *mbalax* performances like Ceddo's.



Figure 4. Dancer at Ceddo event performing the *mulay jigeen*.

Another reason for Ceddo's popularity comes from how their lyrics index Wolof values of obligation to ones kin and social networks. These values are often portrayed in historical, political, religious, and cultural stories. "Jàmbat" ("Complaint"), for example, is an *afro-mbalax* tune calling for Africans to alleviate poverty and redress the growing discrepancy between the rich and poor. It's popularity partly derives from its video version receiving good airplay on French cable and its topical relevance to the recent presidential elections. The government-controlled RTS television station refused to play

it during the 2000 presidential elections fearing that the lyrics and visuals depicting the poverty of Dakar, ghettos, and the discrepancy of wealth between classes negatively reflected on the incumbent, Abdou Diouf. (Also, Ceddo's video was made by people outside of the tight circle of directors, producers, and programmers at RTS, engendering a territorial rebuff to competition.) With the victory of Abdoulaye Wade, there is hope that the government will relax controls on television so more diverse material, like the "Jàmbat" video, can be broadcast. As Ceddo moves through their set they play "Tiis" ("Sadness"), a medium-slow *mbalax* song of remorse over a brother's death. This is followed by "Niani," in praise of King Lat Joor, one of the last leaders of resistance against the French. Next is "Baax Yaay," a praise to mothers. The group moves into "Neel Tac" ("Be Quiet"), an up-tempo afro-*mbalax* tune that addresses the folly of gossip. "Neel Tac" is similar to *mbalax pur* style, but contains vamps that are more dissonant than those in *mbalax pur*. Next, the band moves to a slow, soulful, bluesy selection with a hint of reggae. This is followed by an afro-*mbalax* tune, "Nabi," an homage to the Amadou Bamba, a Senegalese Sufi saint. The vocalist repeatedly praises "Sëriñ Touba" (Amadou Bamba) and an audience member repeats the praise. The band shifts back to double time, then to slow, then back to fast; this shifting tempo and praise to Bamba sustains the dancers' attention. The evening ends when the drummers play "Ceebu Gen" ("Rice and Fish"), a traditional *sabar* piece that a dancer has requested.

This *mbalax* event revealed how Wolofness includes influences from abroad while remaining grounded in local expressive culture. The opening "jazz" set featured myself and other musicians playing music from the United States and Senegal. The remainder of the evening was dedicated to both *mbalax pur et dur* and afro-*mbalax*,

where *sabar* percussion and Wolof lyrics focused on issues and values that interested the mixed but predominantly young audience: family obligations (“Tiis”), elder respect for mothers (“Baax Yaay”), pan-Africanism (“Jàmbat”), neighborhood social relations (“Neel Tac”), Islam (“Nabi”), and historical tales of heroes specific to Senegal (“Niani”). These themes and style are the current issues of youth who come from Ceddo’s roots in *Sopi* and *Set Setal*.

Ceddo was formed In 1986 by university students from HLM, one of the neighborhoods where the government cracked down on Sopi rioters. Ceddo’s roots in HLM are often cited in the press, and on their website, as a symbol of their local status and affinity for urban youth:

Ceddo is the convergence of different sensibilities, from the heart of the HLM neighborhood, the crossroads of all creative impulses in Dakar, the capital of Senegal. Ceddo is composed of young Dakarais, who combine their urban culture with their ancestral legacy. Courage, a sense of honor and peace, friendship, pride in being Senegalese. These values, found in their ancestors, are now defended by these youngsters from HLM, in a fight for the rehabilitation of African cultural values. This fight relies musically on their afro-*mbalax* style, an exuberant synthesis of sounds from various origins.⁶²

Ceddo was a musical response to the revitalization of Wolof history and culture that came out of *Set Setal*. Ceddo’s lyrics emphasize the values of “courage, sense of honor and peace, friendship, pride in being Senegalese” and respect for elders as the defining criteria of a Wolofness that these youths—known as the Boul Falé (“don’t worry”) generation—embraced and painted in the murals. For this generation, and indeed the broader population, *mbalax* is a vital expression of Wolofness.

⁶² Ceddo webpage, accessed 18 January, 2007, <http://www.sunusound.com/articles/290604.html>.

Saragalal sa Cosaan: A Day and a Night in the Life of Mbalax

It is 2:30 a.m. and I'm at Alizé nightclub in Dakar, watching the *mbalax* performer Salaam Diallo sing his latest hit, “Soirée Sénégalaise” (see appendix I for full translation).

<i>Diallo: Saragalal sa cosaan</i>	Honor your cultural values
<i>Chorus: Baar Mbaye</i>	<i>Baar Mbaye</i>
<i>Diallo: Di Sol yére Wolof</i>	With wearing Wolof clothing
<i>Chorus: Baar Mbaye</i>	<i>Baar Mbaye</i>
<i>Diallo: Nkokel ak sér</i>	A dress and a wrap for the waist

Diallo specializes in dance, drumming, and *tassu*—the Wolof oral art of rhythmic panegyrics. Tonight his *tassu* is supported by *playback* (a French/Senegalese term denoting the use of a recorded instrumental version of the song instead of a live band).

Diallo praises Wolof values and expressive cultural practices considered *très Sénégalaise*, as well as *cosaan*, the Wolof concept of tradition that includes celebration of social history, social structure, and values. Diallo chants “*Saragalal sa cosaan*” (“Honor your cultural traditions and values”) to the *mbalax* rhythm “Baar M’Baye,” a *sabar* piece originally performed at baptisms that has become a standard piece in women-led *sabar* performances. Diallo’s *tassu* praises traditions, items, people, places, food, and values of Senegaleseness. He praises, in particular, the instrumentation and participants of *mbalax*: the *sabar* drums (*gorong*, *cól*, *mbëng-mbëng*, *tungue*), master drummers (Vieux Sing Faye and Doudou Ndiaye Rose), patrons (Michael Soumah), and famous dancers (Kumba Joop). His *tassu* is a veritable social history of *mbalax*, from the *folklore* of *sabar* to the *musique moderne* of *mbalax*. He then praises the religious and cultural values that Senegalese hold dear, such as the pilgrimage to Mecca (*hajj*), hospitality (*tèranga*), obligations to family and friends (*mbokk*), and respect for elders (*kersa*). The audience,

pleased with his praise dance, claps along with his performance—some loudly exclaiming “*waaw, waaw*” (“yes, yes”).

After several choruses of call and response between Diallo and his drummers, the texture of the music thickens when the electric keyboard and rhythm guitar add their own patterns to the polyrhythmic drumming. The tempo increases and the audience dances more energetically. The texture of vocals in Wolof, acoustic drumming, and electronic instruments playing *mbalax* rhythms constitutes *mbalax pur et dur*--a Wolof sound deeply valued by Senegalese. This style of *mbalax* derives from griot practices used by *mbalax* musicians to engage the audience and achieve successful performances.

After this *playback* performance, an emcee keeps the audience engaged while the *sabar* percussionists set up their drums (the very ones Diallo named above). A *sabar* set that includes “Baar M’Baye” begins. Diallo then sits in and leads the drummers, improvising a *tassu* and “animating” women to get up and dance by looking in their eyes and drumming patterns directly at them.

A woman responds to Diallo’s entreaties and leaps from the audience towards the drummers. A gesture of her arm and a bend in her body indicates the dance she wants to execute. Diallo focuses on her, simultaneously following and inspiring her dancing with well-punctuated drum patterns (see Figure #1). After a minute at this intensity, the dancer and drummer conclude with a simultaneous accent of his drum, perfectly aligned with a “pop” from her hips. The dancer coolly returns to the circle of onlookers, and then, dancer after dancer solos. Each showcases her dancing skills, balancing joy, virtuosity, and sensuality with proper feminine behavior that can evoke either competitiveness or bonding among the women, along with desire among the men and women.



Figure 5. Salam Diallo and dancer at *soiree sénégalaise*

The next day at 2:00 p.m., I accompany Diallo to a baptism (*ngente*)—the occasion whereby a mother introduces her newborn to the community, eight days after its birth. This Wolof event lasts an entire day and includes the presentation of gifts to the host—from family, from the guests who make up their *mbokk* (network of friends), and from others with ties to the mother. Female griots preside over the gift giving and praise both the *mbokk* and the host while dancing and singing in honor of the occasion. Male griots play the drums and accompanying *mbalax* rhythms whose sounds and energy contribute to the overall Wolofness of the event. These *mbalax* rhythms, played for the mostly female audience, drive the dancing.

When these rhythms are played in other spaces and places, such as in *musique moderne* and nightclubs, the female audience will associate these patterns with traditional events such as the baptism. For some women at the baptism, the *mbalax* will also allow them to play with new and old moves they learned in the nightclubs, street *sabars*, and/or video clips. So, even though I'm describing a

“traditional” event, we should remain aware that *mbalax* circulates widely in different cultural and performance spaces.

At the baptism, as our cab pulls up to the house, members of an old and well-established griot family greet Diallo with praises in Wolof, accompanied by drumming. We walk under a huge canopy where hundreds of women sit, dressed in brightly colored robes (*mbubb*), spectacular jewelry, and immaculate make-up. Diallo moves at an uncharacteristically fast pace through the crowd and the griots asking him for money. We make our way to the roof of the house and there sits Fatou Géwël, Senegal’s premier female griot and *mbalax* performer. This is her ceremony and she is surrounded by an entourage of matronly women, one of whom is Diallo’s grandmother, who grabs his hand and praises him; he smiles and reciprocates the praise. He then praises Géwël in Wolof, telling the crowd that she has no equal and is honorable. When the praises are completed, Diallo and I quickly take our leave, but not before another group of griots, playing hour-glass shaped “talking drums” (*tama*), praise our attendance.

In the cab, Diallo both compliments and complains. “Sing Sing Rhythm played well, but they always ask me for money, money, money. They are *gëwël*; they know all about your family, your grandmother, where you come from, and recite your history for money and, since I am a famous singer and a griot, they really know a lot (laughter).” I remind Diallo that when he performs, the audience gives him money. He responds “Yeah, but I don’t ask. I just play and perform for myself and others. If they are happy, they give money.” Although Diallo complains about the requests, tipping is a critical part of *mbalax* performance; at the same time Diallo’s disdain for griots’ demands for money, balanced by a real appreciation for their presence, echoes statements and sentiments I’ve

heard from other Dakarois. These layers of desire, distaste, and need for griots is a characteristic of the obligatory relationship between griots and their patrons—one that has remained a vital part of Senegaleseness for centuries, and which continues to bind people to their Wolof heritage and traditions.

That evening, when we arrive at Diallo's apartment in the Medina, I notice the many religious books on his table and the pictures of Senegalese Muslim saints on his walls. He explains his love for his spiritual guide, Amadu Bamba, and the inner peace he feels from singing Bamba's religious writings on a daily basis (*xasaïds*). Before we can explore the significance of religion in *mbalax*, Diallo's uncle bursts into the room with an excited request: "Salaam knows all the African dances and improvises better than anybody else in Africa. He knows all the new Senegalese dances and started many of them! He is a very intelligent guy! But today is my marriage. So he has to come with you to the nightclub to sing and dance."

Marriages (*tak*) in Dakar are weeklong affairs. They incorporate both a religious and a civil ceremony, numerous *sabars* held during the night and day (primarily for the women connected to the *mbokk*), and a mixed-gender formal ceremony in a nightclub or venue where friends and family (*mbokk*) can offer their blessing and gifts—accompanied by the sounds of *musique traditionnelle* and *musique moderne*. It is this latter ceremony that Salaam's uncle wants us to attend. As a family member and a griot, Diallo is obligated to perform and honor this union, which further binds him to the *mbokk*.

After the celebration, Diallo and I go on to another club where he performs a *soirée Sénégalaise*: a Senegalese party featuring live *sabar* drummers at the end of a long night of dancing to modern musics. The *soirée* is distinguished by its use of *sabar* pieces

that come from the urban-traditional *sabars* held in the streets or private courtyards and under the control of women. However, since we are in a nightclub, people bend gender norms with men dancing as many *sabar* solos as women, a shift in “correct” behavior regarding gender that, as we shall see later, is only possible in the modern form of *mbalax*. The party ends at 4:00 a.m. and, as is the norm, we go to the *boulangier* (bakery)—coming full circle in a cycle of events in the life of a griot and *mbalax* performer.

My experiences with Diallo capture the prevalence of urban Wolofness in expressive culture in Dakar. Wolof was the *lingua franca*, and Wolof *sabar* and *tama* drummers played *mbalax* at both the *folklore* (e.g., baptisms) and *musique moderne* events (e.g., nightclubs). I witnessed the circulation of Wolofness through the presence of *mbalax* in different places (the street, courtyard, home, nightclub) and events (marriage, baptism, *soirée*) attesting to its significance in urban Senegalese culture.

Summary

This chapter addressed the lack scholarship on the most popular expressive cultural form of Wolofness, *mbalax*. Through history and ethnography, I examined the complicated ways Senegalese have practiced and assigned different meanings to *mbalax* in *folklore* and *musique moderne*. With regard to *folklore*, I traced the significance of Wolof practices through the influence of griots as percussionists, dancers, vocalists, cultural brokers of values, and historians. I then described how griots mediate tradition and Senegalese modernity as percussionists and as singers (or as models for “traditional” singers) in *mbalax* bands. The meanings of *musique moderne* were traced from their roots in *afro* and European music in order to imagine Western and black diasporic modernities.

From this historical imaging, *musique* became associated with ideas of freedom that were combined with *folklore* to create *mbalax*. For example, the social history of *mbalax* showed the relationship between innovations in musical style and new meanings that corresponded with significant political changes in Senegal, such as *Set Setal* and the election of Abdoulaye Wade.

Analyses of how the Wolof values of gender (*mokk pocc*) and hospitality (*téranga*) are practiced in the discourse of lyrics, aesthetics of vocalists, and the dance of patrons broadened our understanding of the integral tensions that drive the music. Finally, this chapter sought to highlight how the dissonances and resolutions between “traditional” and “modern” aesthetics contribute to the vitality of the music. For example, the popularity of the group Ceddo is derived from their ability to play in both afro-*mbalax* and *mbalax pur et dur* styles. A critical dynamic of *mbalax* not addressed in this chapter was the significance Islam, such as the praise to Senegalese Sufi saints and brotherhoods that are often included in *mbalax* performance. These will be examined in the next chapter.

Chapter 4

Senegalese Sufism in *Mbalax*

On a July evening at the Sunrise nightclub, I listen and watch the *afro-mbalax* group Dieuf Dieul. They play a seven-song set and of those, four center on themes particular to Senegalese Sufism. These include “Khelklom,” referring to a plot of land in a countryside religious community (*daara*) controlled by a marabout who will bequeath it to his disciples, who have farmed it in exchange for his Qur’anic and spiritual instruction; “Bamba,” which praises Amadou Bamba, the founder of the Muridiyya brotherhood, and his non-violent fight against colonialism; “Abdul Aziz,” which praises the *Khalifa General* of the Tijani—the living spiritual leader of the Tijaniyya brotherhood; and “Sey,” honoring Murid life.

The strong Murid representation among these songs derives from Dieuf Dieul’s large Wolof following, especially among Dakarois musicians and their patrons (Dieng 1999). The Murid are recognized as sub-Saharan Africa’s first black Sufi order (*tariqa*), one that in addition to having its own distinct litany of knowledge from the prophet Muhammad (*wird*) and its own history of resistance to foreign oppression and local malfeasance, also boasts global commercial networks providing critical remittances for its brotherhood and *mbokk* at home.⁶³ Inserted into the standard lyrics are phrases

⁶³ The *wird* is a special collection of prayers, verses, phrases, and selections from the Qur’an, specific to a brotherhood. The *wird* is revealed to a brotherhood’s founder by the Prophet either directly or through a dream. A physical communication of the *wird* to a founder, a miracle, is considered the highest of rankings in Sufism. Bamba received the *wird* directly from the Prophet Muhammad in Sarsara, Mauritania, during Ramadan in the

praising Senegalese Sufi Saints, the prophet, and Allah, and in addition to the songs specific to Senegalese Sufism, the singers also praise “secular” topics such as love and the beneficence of patrons.

The substantial number of songs either about or praising Senegalese Sufism is common to *mbalax*. When I asked patrons and musicians why there is so much praise to Muslim saints and themes, the responses were both critical and celebratory. Critical responses included those from the musicians in the *afro* group Gokh Bi, who told me that *mbalax* singers “sing because they don’t know what it really means to be Muslim, their parents are Muslim and they think they are too, but they don’t know what it really means” (Gokh Bi System, in discussion with author, March 11, 2010). Positive responses included “because we are Senegalese,” “it makes us feel good,” and “I love Bamba so much, he fought the French” (patrons and musicians at Sunrise nightclub, in discussion with author, June 15 2004). Pioneer singer Doudou Sow told me, “It’s important not to forget about God. He is everything, in everything. He is responsible for all love, peace, work, spirituality, religion, blackness” (Doudou Sow, in discussion with author, August 14, 2000).

The different responses to my query, touching on notions of nationalism, heritage, commerce, and devotional love, all draw attention to this once foreign religion’s now ubiquitous and distinctly Senegalese practice—and the degree to which it is deeply valued. Still, this ubiquity and Senegalese distinctiveness has been well documented by social scientists as a form of Senegalese exceptionalism. What can an analysis of Islam in *mbalax* contribute to those discourses? What does the practice of Islam in *mbalax* offer

Islamic Calendar year 1321. Sidi Ahmed Tijani, the founder of the Tijaniyya, also received the wird physically from the Prophet Muhammad, in Algeria.

its practitioners that they cannot find in religious music or traditional griot music? What constitutes the practice of Islam in *mbalax*, aside from praise, that indexes key Senegalese Sufi saints, places, and events? What is cosmopolitan about Islam in *mbalax*? What can an analysis of Islam in *mbalax* tell us about tradition and Senegalese modernity?

Recent scholarship on the representation of Islam in popular culture includes T. K. Biaya's (2002) investigation of the cosmopolitanism of eroticism in Senegalese contemporary visual arts as a consequence of the Wolofization of Islam. His analysis includes how the perfumed string of beads (formerly strings of pearls)—of Muslim origin, worn under women's clothes—have become Wolofized erotic objects. Worn for the pleasure of the wearer and her partner, these adornments nonetheless become public when shown teasingly at nightclubs while dancing to *mbalax*. Anthropologists Allen and Mary Roberts (2003) concentrate on how the Murid use the hagiography and iconography of Amadou Bamba as a source of *baraka* or spiritual blessing in visual culture, providing a source of agency in an economy increasingly dependent upon remittances from Senegalese living abroad.

Linguist Fiona McLaughlin, who identifies popular music from abroad as “new,” and indigenous “verbal art” as “tradition” (McLaughlin 1997:560), frames the representation of Islam in popular music as a “new tradition.” McLaughlin's methodology includes analyses of lyrics referencing Muslim symbols (marabouts, poems, holy places) that singers present to their audiences through griot-like praise, singing in a “new tradition.” The singer becomes the conduit through which audiences connects to their marabout—the primary recipient of their praise, instead of Allah or the prophet of

focus in religious songs. McLaughlin's rich and detailed analysis shows how modern singers directly and indirectly praise marabouts through a practice she repeatedly qualifies as a mixture of the sacred and the secular.

In contrast, I suggest that the praise to Senegalese Sufism and the marabouts is neither a "new" tradition nor a new fusion of the sacred and secular. Griots have long sung praises to Muslim saints and events, along with epics or stories of Senegalese life, and modern singers, whether of griot origin or not, continue this tradition. It is in fact this continued tradition that empowers *mbalax* to articulate a diversity of Muslim practices and views that have become important since *Set Setal* and the expansion of Muslim brotherhoods into the global modern capitalist system.

The following chapter will address the above questions and contribute to existing scholarship through analyzing *mbalax* performances, daily events, and religious ceremonies. I aim to explore the practice of Islam in *mbalax* by delineating the way(s) in which Senegalese use Islam for agency, that is, to imagine their own modern identity and cosmopolitanism. I begin with a review of Senegalese Sufism, followed by an in-depth narrative of the practice of Islam in an *mbalax* event, and proceed to analyze the fusion of traditional and religious songs, devotional love, and reconfigured gender dynamics.

By the eighth century, Arabs had conquered North Africa, and by the ninth century had begun to spread Islam along the sub-Saharan trade networks. Arabic influence can be seen in the continued use of their naming conventions for North Africa, as with the Maghreb (sunset, west) for the west; the Sahel (shore or coastline) for the southern border of the Sahara; and the Sudan (the land of the blacks) or *Bilad al-Sudan* for sub-Saharan Africa (Charry 2000:37). Thus, as early as the eighth century, there was

a racial or phenotypical designation of “black” for sub-Saharan Africans. It is likely that the earliest Islamic influences in Senegambia stemmed from the eastern frontiers of the Ghana Empire and from the Sahel, where Berber confederations controlled the markets in the Saharan towns of Awdagost. The cities of Tekrur and Sillam, somewhere in the middle Senegal River, were key sites for trade with the Maghreb (Barry 1998:6, Hrbek and Devisse 1982:361–365).

From these early trade routes, Islam spread unevenly over time. Between the tenth and fifteenth centuries, violent jihads were fought among orthodox Muslims who adhered to the Caliphate in the Middle East, Berbers who favored a more local and flexible Qadiriyya branch of Islam from the Maghreb, and African aristocracies opposed to Muslim subjugation. With the arrival of Europeans in the fifteenth century, along with their demand for goods and slaves to fuel the transatlantic trade, the trans-Saharan trade was disrupted, causing an increase in violence and conversions of animists to Islam, as Muslims could not trade or sell fellow Muslims. By the nineteenth century, alongside colonial expansion into the interior, Senegalese began to form a strong local clergy less reliant on Mauritanian and Maghrebian religious leaders. It is during this time that a Sunni Islam took root under the tradition of Sufism. The three main Sufi orders were (and remain): the Qadiriyya, started in Baghdad; the Tijaniyya, which originated in Fez, Morocco; and the Muridiyya, founded in Senegal and the most powerful brotherhood in the region today. Of these three orders, the Tijaniyya and Muridiyya have the greatest followings. A brief review of the founding of these two orders in Dakar provides the background material for understanding the narratives that Senegalese drew upon to fashion their alternative histories and traditions spurred by *Set Setal*. These histories of

marabout warriors fighting the French (and in one case creating a distinct black Sufism) form the basis for the narratives frequently sung in *mbalax*.

Al-Hajj Umar Tal (1796–1864), a Fulani born in Futa Toro, sought to create an Islamic polity that practiced a more “pure” Islam than the loose practices of his contemporaries. Tal followed the Tijaniyya path founded in North Africa by Shaykh Ahmed Muhammad al-Tijani (1738–1815), an Algerian whose father was a cleric and mother a black African, and who received the wird from the Prophet Muhammad in 1782. Tal received the wird while on *hajj* in Mecca from a disciple of Tijani named Muhammad al-Ghali, who made Tal *xalifa* (Muslim ruler) of sub-Saharan Africa in 1828. Tal then returned to Senegal was forced into violent jihads by the French and African aristocracies—ultimately leading the largest, if short-lived, theocracy in the region. Tal’s military achievements, along with his scholarship,⁶⁴ have long been lauded in versions of “Taara”—a praise song sung by West African griots (Charry 2000:20; Knight 1983) and *mbalax* performers, up to and including today.⁶⁵

Tal’s legacy included converting the warrior slave caste of *ceddo* into Muslims. His lieutenants carried on this training with other *ceddo* after his death. This helped foster the idea of the *ceddo* as warrior Muslims opposed to colonialism—an idea that Dakar

⁶⁴ The *Kitab rimah hizb al-rahim ‘ala nuhur hizb al-rajim* (“The Book of the Lances of The League of Allah The Merciful Against The Necks of The League of Satan The Accursed”), is considered one of the most important works of the nineteenth century in the Muslim world (Hunwick, 1992).

⁶⁵ For traditional *xalam* and vocal performances of “Taara,” see N’Diaga M’Baye on the CD compilation *100% Pure Double Concentré* and the Samba Diabaré Samb cassette *Dieufe Sa Yeuf* (Sandaga 2000). For *mbalax* versions of “Taara” see the Maxou and Lemzo Diamono cassette, *Vol 3: Demb ak Tey*, and the Les Frères Guissé cassette, *FAMA*.

youth, including the *mbalax* group Ceddo, embrace as a symbol of traditional Africa. Tal's legacy also incorporated the spread of Tijanism in its current non-violent form under Malik Sy (1855–1922), as well as the building of Muslim schools and ongoing political cooperation with the French, as led by Tal's grandson El Hajj Nourou Tall (1879–1980).

Malik Sy's contemporary was Amadou Bamba Mbacké (1855–1927), a Wolof cleric educated in the Qadiriyya and Tijaniyya *wirds*. Bamba came from a long line of clerics who served royalty. Bamba was expected to continue this legacy, but when his father died in 1883, he declined to take up the elder's position as advisor to the Wolof king. Instead, he was inspired by the writings and actions of al-Ghazali (1058–1111), a scholar for the Abbasid Caliphate who resigned from his prestigious post to become an aesthetic mystic in pursuit of a "true flight" or *hijra* against one's negative passions (Searing 2009:100).⁶⁶ Amadou Bamba took a similar path after one of the last Wolof kings, Lat Joor, was killed in battle against the French. Bamba pursued the "greater *jihad*" through non-violence, traveling widely throughout the Greater Senegambia Region studying mystical teachings and receiving religious authority from distinguished Qadir scholars in Mauritania.

However, uneasy with the Qadir way and critical of Moor racism and paternalism, European arrogance, and the violent *jihads* pursued by his contemporaries, Bamba

⁶⁶ *Hijra* is the migration the Prophet Muhammad and his followers took from Mecca to Medina in order to avoid persecution from their enemies and the assassination of the Prophet. The *hijra* represents both real migrations from persecution and a metaphor for not fighting a losing battle. The Senegalese marabout Cheikh Umar Tal, for example, led forced migrations *hijras* in the Senegambia Region from European, Arab, Berber, and African enemies. Bamba's non-violent resistance to colonialism and slavery was considered by he and his followers a *hijra* away from negative acts and oppression.

created his own order—the Muridiyya (1884-5). Deriving their name from the Arabic word meaning “disciple” or “seeker,” the Murid emphasized that instead of rote learning of the Qur’an, as favored by some marabouts, the path to paradise was through a disciple following a sheikh’s guidance. This revised marabout–disciple relationship became not only a core teaching of the order, but also a successful recruiting strategy, since it embodied a hierarchical structure bearing strong analogies to the caste system. Bamba also argued that the greater struggle was to battle the *nafs* (the ego-self) through hard work and practice of the *wird*, which Bamba received directly from the Prophet.

This meant that Senegalese no longer needed to seek spiritual guidance from marabouts in North Africa, the Middle East, or Mauritania. The Murid *tariqa* incorporated Wolof hierarchal and organizational principles, providing a political and spiritual way of life that drew adherents from throughout Senegambia. Bamba quickly drew disciples from throughout the region, angering competing marabouts and fostering suspicions from the French that he was raising an army to pursue a violent *jihad*. Between 1895-1902 and 1903-1907, Bamba was twice exiled abroad and then confined to the region of Diourbel (Baol) in 1912, where he remained under French scrutiny. Eventually, however, he brokered a political accommodation with the colonial authorities. In return for the Muridiyya maintaining peace, producing peanuts, and providing men for service in the French military, the French granted the Muridiyya limited religious, economic, and political autonomy.

During the decades leading to independence, the Muridiyya built a solid agricultural infrastructure in the heartland. To the cities Bamba sent trusted disciples such as the Cheikh Ibra Fall, the leader of the Baye Fall, a sub-sect of the Murid brotherhood

that established political and commercial relationships with the urban elite that ensured the continued growth of the order. When Léopold Senghor began his political career he recognized the importance of the political accommodation the Murid had concluded with the French. He sought support among the Murid leadership, which in the 1950s consisted of sons and brothers of Bamba himself.

The Murid provided critical votes for Senghor's campaigns and his Socialist party by way of marabout proclamations to their disciples (called *ndiggels*). This continued from the 1950s forward. However, with the political and economic crises in the 1980s, disciples began to ignore the *ndiggels*, and followers increasingly voted the candidates of their choice. Two reasons for this change were, first, that marabouts and politicians could no longer provide the lands and services that disciples once received for their obedience and labor, and second, that Senegalese emigrants with experience living abroad were challenging the status quo. Nonetheless, the Murid had established international trade networks based on the same principles of work and obligation to the order that contributed to their political and economic success in Senegal. These networks were conduits for remittances that supported families, the brotherhood, and the continued growth of the Murids' holy city of Touba, founded in 1888. At the same time, Murids also introduced new modes of political expression, such as the religious and business organizations called *dayiras*. Created in cities in Senegal and abroad *dayiras* are small religious groups that gather for both religious practice and as mutual aid associations. A feature of some of these groups is a strongly devout practice based as much or more on the miracles of Bamba as on his writings and the teachings of the Qur'an.

Even so, some Murid did not wish to follow this type of practice, and have

pursued an alternative path. Since the 1980s, youth who have been educated in Europe and in Dakar's universities have forged a modern Murid intelligentsia. Their goal is to make the prophet better known through written and spoken works, films, public meetings, audio cassettes, and magazines such as *Ndugal: La Voix du Mouride*, founded in 1981–84. Bamba miracles, however, are deemphasized by the youth intellectuals. These intellectuals claim “Amadu Bamba is still the savior of his disciples, the guarantor of paradise, but he is also presented as ‘the savior of Islam’ in Senegal, as representative of ‘the dignity of the black race,’ and as pre-eminent ‘hero of the Senegalese nation’” (Cruise O’Brien 1988:137). Statements like this are a threat to older Murid leaders with established schools in the countryside, since as literate men, the students can translate Bamba’s work and make it known to a wider audience. Furthermore, the students are able to integrate their studies of African, pan-African, and African American movements into the discourse on Bamba. They have strong organizational abilities and revere heroes within and without Senegal, such as black nationalists El Hadj Malik Shabazz (Malcolm X), and civil rights leaders such as Martin Luther King.

This strain of intellectual has grown alongside other Muslim groups in Dakar, entities who prefer to follow a more universalist approach to Islam that focuses more on self-agency and deemphasizes the marabout–disciple relationship. Instead of declaring their brotherhood affiliation, this new demographic of Muslim insists on being called “Muslim” and not Murid or Tijani. Their beliefs are now becoming part of the cultural landscape of Dakar. They pray in the privacy of their homes and participate in the weekly Friday mass prayers, but they prefer recite the *shahadah* (the first pillar of Islam proclaiming their devotion to Allah) instead of the Tijani or Murid *wird*. As a lens into

the multiple ways Islam is practiced in popular culture today, I now describe an evening of *mbalax* that I later analyze through the genres that make up its musical sound.

Sufism in *Soirée Sénégalaise*

It is February 10, 2000 and I am in HLM, walking to the Alizé nightclub for their *soirée Sénégalaise*. The time is nearing *julli timis* (sunset prayer), the period just after dusk when pious Muslims perform the *salat al-Maghreb*, the fourth of the five daily ritual prayers that constitute the second pillar of Islam.⁶⁷ Muezzins (prayer leaders) announce this sacred time over loudspeakers blaring from neighborhood mosques and over the ubiquitous radios overheard from taxis, shops, and homes. Their amplified calls sonically mark a break in the rhythms, sounds, and feel of the city, helping people transition from the quick tempo and cacophony of the harried workday into the more soothing rhythms of evening activities, including quiet family dinners followed by the graceful preparation and drinking of tea, accompanied by lively conversations. Neighbors gather around televisions in courtyards and living rooms to watch and comment on their favorite Middle Eastern serial on the life of the Prophet, or a popular Latin American soap opera.

Outside these domestic interiors, sections of streets are blocked off for neighborhood events. On some nights, drumming and praise singing from a *sabar* sponsored by a women's group dominates the soundscape. On other nights, disciples of a *dayira* pray, recite, and sing the sacred odes of their spiritual founder, their marabouts, and their brotherhood. I never hear or witness a *dayira* and *sabar* in close proximity or on

⁶⁷ There are five pillars or obligatory acts required of Muslims: fasting, prayer, alms giving, taking the pilgrimage to Mecca, and reciting the *shahada* or creed.

the same nights. However, at *soirées Sénégalaises*, I witness participants fusing the musical and religious features from both of these events in creative ways; ones that continue to bind Muslim identity with Senegaleseness.

When I arrive at Alizé, the trio Les Frères Guissé is playing what they call “African Folk” or what their fans call “soft-*mbalax*.” Djiby (Djibril) and Cheikh Guissé front the group on vocals and acoustic guitars. They sing in unison and octaves, ornamenting their delivery with melisma and nasal timbres similar to the Islamic cantillations heard at *dayiras* and religious programs on television, radio, and cassettes. The Guissés pick and strum their guitars in a style reminiscent of both the palmwine guitarists of the West African coast and the modern day Peul and Mande guitarists in the Futa Toro region of Northern Senegal, the natal home of the Guissés and the historic heartland of the Tukulor Muslim warrior Umar Tal. Percussionist Aliou Guissé accompanies his brothers on bongos, *dumbeck*, wooden blocks, eggshell shakers, bass *jembe*, tenor *jembe*, cymbals, tambourine, chimes, the high-pitched *nder sabar*, and medium-pitched *mbëng-mbëng sabar*. His technique alternates between gentle finger taps on the heads and a hand and stick technique for the louder *mbalax* rhythms. Djiby describes their *sono* as “soft” and “decluttered” (Djibril Guissé, conversation with author, March 30, 2000).

While the soft texture of Les Frères Guissé’s *sono* distinguishes them from louder and more polyrhythmically dense *mbalax pur et dur* groups, the Guiseés’ lyrical content includes a good deal of Muslim repertoire, praising Senegalese Muslim saints, values, and holy places. Audience members show their appreciation with exclamations of “*waaw waaw*” (yes!) and “*eh!*”—especially when the Guiseés sing “*Taara*,” a song praising

Shaykh Umar Tal for his *jihad* against the French and his role in spreading Islam in Senegambia. Songs praising religious figures such as Tal are numerous, and this fusion of religious and political histories points to how Senegalese have long used Islam in strategies of resistance and agency with their encounters with the West.

Later in the evening, the Guiseés sing “La hi la lah,” a song professing faith. Many *mbalax* compositions are based on this phrase and singers regularly interject this phrase between their usual lyrics during live performances. Dancers reverently sing along with lyrics derived from the longer Arabic phrase “Ashhadu Alla Ilaha Illa Allah Wa Ashhadu Anna Muhammad Rasulu Allah.” Recitation of this phrase fulfills the *shahadah* or first pillar of Islam, where one proclaims, “I testify there is no God but Allah, and Muhammad is his messenger.” It is all one needs to do in order to become a Muslim. Although the Guissés do not sing the entire profession of faith, participants acknowledge it as a variation on the *shahadah* by either lowering their heads, placing hands over their hearts, gently swaying, opening their hands or raising them in the air as if reaching towards heaven in a physical gesture publicly demonstrating their commitment to Allah, the Prophet, Islam, and the *ummah*, the global Islamic community. Bodily movements such as this, as well as singing along with the key refrain “Ilaha Illa Allah Wa Ashhadu,” demonstrates Senegalese desire for and acceptance of the inclusion of religious material in popular music. I ask one enthusiastic dancer why they move like this and she responds, “We do this to show we are religious, we are Senegalese, we are Muslim.”

Following the Guissés’ performance, a DJ plays the usual mixture of salsa, *soukous*, *zouk* (Cape Verdean pop), and rap sets, but since this is a *soirée Sénégalaise*, he plays mostly *mbalax* sets. During these lengthy *mbalax* sets of five to eight songs, many

are dedicated to praising the teachings, spiritual lineage, and significance of marabouts of the Senegalese brotherhoods, such as Serigne Mansour of the Tivaouane Tijani, and Serigne Fallou Mbacké of the Murid. During these songs, some dancers and seated patrons sway in ways reminiscent of body movements I witness at *dayiras*. However, some dance with bent knees and hip movements more characteristic of the “sensual” *mbalax* dances. This happens during “Zikroulah” by Fatou Guewel. One reason for the positive reception of these praise songs is their recitations of spiritual genealogies that link believers to a religious heritage distinct to Senegal. Another reason is that *mbalax* performers present these praises in the style of griots, whose skills as animators are revered across different genres.

Islamic content, however, is not limited to these popular sacred pieces. The DJ also plays secular songs about love, celebrations, and family obligations that include lyrics referencing Muslim values. “Sama Nene” (“My Baby”), for example, praises women as transmitters of tradition—a gift bestowed upon them by God, although it is also considered a key Wolof value that predates Islam. Later in the evening, as if in response to this praise, the DJ plays “Soirée Sénégalaise,” the hit *mbalax* song listing key symbols considered “très Sénégalaise.” Among these symbols is a lyric prompting men to honor their mothers by sending them on *hajj* in gratitude for mothers teaching children proper behavior and traditional values. This gift has profound personal significance since in making the *hajj*, one of the five pillars of Islam, the traveler receives forgiveness for all of her sins. Fulfilling the pilgrimage to Mecca also increases the social status of the family in their community, and is celebrated upon their return with an exchange of gifts that further binds the family of the traveler to networks of familial and community

support so critical in the stressed economy (Buggenhagen 2003). Thus, “secular” songs can also reference Senegalese Muslim practices and beliefs laden with personal and broader meanings of historical importance and agency.

At 3:00 a.m., the DJ relinquishes his control of the dance floor to an MC who introduces short skits, a comedian, and a rising *mbalax* star lip-synching to playback. While these activities unfold, *gëwël* drummers set up their *sabar* and form one end of a *geew bi* (circle) that is completed by the audience. The MC leaves and the drummers begin the *sabar* by praising Amadu Bamba and his disciple Cheikh Ibra Fall. The drummers declare “Cheikh Ibra Fall, that’s why there are Baye Fall” and “There is no other like him.” This praise proclaims their dedication to following the principles of subservience to their marabout, as did Ibra Fall towards Bamba. But the *gëwël* are not only disciples, but also *animateurs*, and they fulfill this role with energetic *sabar* drumming that draws women and men into the center of the circle to solo in front of the crowd and drummers. The *gëwël* have creatively represented both their urban Wolof and Muslim identities in sound and dance to the accompaniment of *mbalax* rhythms from the *sabar*.



Figure 6. Baye Fall drummers and dancer at *soirée Sénégalaise* at Alizé nightclub in Dakar, Senegal. photo by author.

At 4:00 a.m., the drumming ends and the lights come up. Patrons quickly exit.

Famished, I go with some musicians and fans to a restaurant for grilled meat and conversation. As on similar occasions, I take this time as an opportunity to conduct informal interviews. Is it improper to sing about Islam in a nightclub where there is such erotically suggestive dancing? Why is there so much praise for Senegalese marabouts? Are praises derived from melodies heard at *dayiras*? One master drummer adamantly claims that it is “not correct” to sing about Allah and Islam in the nightclub. But I have seen him smiling and playing enthusiastically behind *mbalax* singers praising Amadu Bamba. The answer comes from the Salaam Diallo who said:

We are first of all Muslim and I'm a very good Muslim. It doesn't matter where I sing 'Serigne Saliou Mbackè' because I don't sing 'Saliou Mbackè' for others, but for myself. It's what I feel. Artists must sing what they feel and in my heart I *feel* that he's a good Muslim, a good man. It's something natural. (Salaam Diallo, October 1, 2000)

Musicians and fans often assert that praise to the marabouts makes them feel good and that it is “très Sénégalaise”; upon reflection, I realize that I have heard praises to Bamba throughout the day. These responses indicate that the representation of Islam in *mbalax* provides social actors a space and place to engage in the multiple meanings constitutive of the interpretive moves that enhance and represent Senegalese identity.

From my observation of live events, analysis of recordings, video clips, and radio, three dynamics arise that help us understand the practice of Islam in *mbalax*. First, popular singers praise Senegalese religious figures and holy places that have high symbolic value in history and culture. The brotherhoods receive particular attention since they play a critical role in the socio-political economy. Second, *mbalax* offers an alternative space for a unified expression of Muslim worship regardless of brotherhood affiliation. Third, *mbalax* opens a space for women to use the genre as a way to engage, subvert, and toy with the underlying paternalism of Islam. A tension exists between dance and text. Much of *mbalax* dance movement comes from the sensuous and erotic *sabars* led by women. These movements are part and parcel of live *mbalax* events in the nightclubs and videos where praises to Sufism underlie much of the sung text. The art or eroticism women practice in the *sabar* balanced by the “proper” deportment of the “ideal” women is frequently at play on the dance floor. Understanding the interplay of these dynamics requires examining the meaning associated with the features of traditional and religious songs.

Griots and Traditional Songs

Griots have long used epics and praise songs to mediate social conflict, and their “traditional” griot sound is well respected and expected in *mbalax*. Most *mbalax* singers are identified with the griot musical style, or what is popularly called “*animation*,” both because they selectively draw on the musical features of this casted group and, more importantly, they position themselves as cultural brokers in the griot tradition.

There are several reasons why audiences value the sound and the stories of griot songs. First, *mbalax* singers use a repertoire once reserved for the griots and reconfigure it in a modern way. “Taara,” for example, is a well-known griot piece from the nineteenth century describing the *toorodo* revolution that praises Shaykh Umar Tal (Charry 2000:20; Knight 1982). The griot singer and *xalam* player Samba Diabare Samb’s rendition of “Taara” is considered an ideal “traditional” sound by *mbalax* players, and is emulated and reconfigured by vocalists such as Hamdel Lo of Ceddo (Groupe Ceddo, conversation with author, July 5, 2000) and Les Frères Guissé. Samb’s *animation* features an edgy, strong, and slightly nasal vocal timbre that resolves into soft melismatic phrases. When Les Frères Guissé perform their version live, as in the *soirée Sénégalaise* event I described, they condense the lyrics, use a different melody, substitute acoustic guitars for the *xalam*, and use vocal timbre similar to Samb’s but in much more arranged style, where three vocalists sing in unison and are accompanied by guitars and percussion. Despite the musical changes, the audience reception of the Guissé’s version is often enthusiastic and considered “traditional” due to the song’s long history and the Guissés’ ability to perform it in a way that is close to the traditional griot sound (Gora Tal, conversation with author, November 15, 2000).

Second, griots present an alternative African discourse on Islam in the region, one that contrasts markedly with a portrayal of African Islam in colonial and Arab archives as somehow less authentic and polluted by indigenous beliefs, instead of strengthened by them. In the *Epic of the Kingdom of Waalo* (Diop 1996), for example, Muslim figures are included in the origin story of the Wolof people “so that these figures become legitimate agents within Wolof society and culture,” and black Africans are placed in Muslim stories as important figures (Diop 1996:93). Njaanjaan Njaay, the founder of the Jolof Empire, is described as descended from an Arab Muslim father and black African mother. This suggests to the Wolof listeners that their common ancestor already had Muslim roots. In other narratives, griots play decisive roles in reconciling conflicts between indigenous and Muslim values by advising warrior marabouts such as Umar Tal and Lat Joor on matters of conversion, treatment of subjects, and war (Bowles and Hale 1996).

Third, the genealogy and stories of marabouts in griot songs are closely related to and even invoke the heritage of Senegalese listeners. A patron (*gëër*) from the Sy family, for example, will have their griot recite the family history, which includes how their ancestors were seminal marabouts who contributed to the spread of Tijanism through Malik Sy and Umar Tal. One interlocutor told me that her family griot can recite their lineage back five centuries to the era when indigenous clerics called *sëriñ fakk tall* traveled the countryside.

Finally, the sound of the griot includes the kora, balaphone, *xalam* and *sabar*. Griot vocals, instrumentation, and socio-cultural meanings rooted in a history of Muslim expansion became a source and symbol of national pride during the *Négritude* period, and

remained so thereafter. Following independence, griot songs were used to represent postcolonial Senegal at home and abroad. Radio, and eventually television, used the music as a symbol of Senegalese modernity. This recent history, along with centuries of griots performing songs and acting as cultural brokers, laid the foundation for the acceptance of singing praises to Allah and marabouts that occurs in the late twentieth-century *musique moderne*.

Religious Songs

Religious songs (*chants religieux*) are ubiquitous in everyday life. Throughout the day and evening, people can watch television episodes of Islamic sermons, ceremonies, and services in their homes and businesses—or listen to this material on cassette recordings and on radio broadcasts in cars, buses, *car rapides* (inexpensive privately owned minivans that serve as primary form of public transportation), and *sept places* (bush taxis seating up to seven people, often used for travel between cities and suburbs).

Many religious songs are linked to particular brotherhoods, such as the *teysir* with the Tijani, the *xasaïd* with the Murid, the elegies (*Marsiyah*) of the Layène, and the *tabala* drumming of the Qadir. *Mbalax* is distinctive not only for its broad appeal across gender, generational, and ethnic lines, but also because singers praise marabouts and theologians from all brotherhoods and sing *zikrs* (“songs of remembrance” and invocations of Allah or saints) mutually intelligible across orders (see Roberts and Roberts 2003:169). Master drummer Cheikh M’Baye asserts that playing songs from different spiritual paths (also *tariqas*) is not problematic since Senegalese consider their brotherhoods intertwined and as coming from the same roots (*silsila*) (personal communication, November 2007). This does not mean that tensions do not exist between

the brotherhoods—they do—but a hallmark of Senegalese Sufism is religious tolerance and non-violence, a feature that helps Senegalese avoid the religious and ethnic tensions found in other West African countries, such as Nigeria.

Since the Murid, followed by the Tijani, have the greatest impact on popular culture (Bugnicourt and Diallo 1991; McLaughlin 1997; Roberts and Roberts 2003; Swigart 1994, 2001), and are the source for most of the symbols referenced in *mbalax*, a review of the religious sources for those symbols is in order. For example, repeating the name “Sëriñ Touba” in live performances is a crowd favorite since it reveals another one of Amadu Bamba’s many names, indexing him as the founder of Touba, the spiritual home of the order (*zawiya*).

Each brotherhood, in fact, has a unique collection of songs, sermons, writings, excerpts from the Qur’an, and prayers they use in their *tariqa* (often translated as “brotherhood,” in addition to “the path” or “the way”). The foundation of the *tariqa* is the *wird*. During initiation into the brotherhood, the transmission of *wird* from teacher to disciple cements a mystical bond of obligation and respect that is a cornerstone of Sufism and concomitant with the principles of obligation in Wolof culture (see chapter 3).

Attending religious events that include expressive cultural practices, especially music, helps Senegalese remember not only the unique spiritual history and theology governing their *tariqa* and *wird*—balanced with how they are connected to the *ummah* (the global community of Muslim believers),—⁶⁸but also the political history associated

⁶⁸ Michael Sells (2010) summarizes the core relationship between Muslim practice of bringing the past into the present through remembrance. “The Qur’an links remembrance to ritual. The five prayers (initiated by the call to prayer) interrupt everyday life and turn the Muslim community toward the focal point of the Ka’bah. The fasting of Ramadan is a reminder both of the condition of those who are hungry and of the Compassionate (*al-*

with modern Senegalese identity. Singing religious songs at Thursday evening *dayiras*, at religious festivals, and in public spaces (e.g., *sept places* and buses) is a practice that helps followers embody the spiritual, historical, political, and cultural knowledge of Senegalese Sufism.

The *dayira* is the center of the musical performance at religious events. *Dayiras* sponsor, participate in, and often lead the singing at the large festivals, sporadic events, and Thursday evening meetings. The large gatherings are called *gàmmu* by the Tijani and *màggal* by the Murid. The two largest events are the annual Tijani *gàmmu* at Tivaouane, their primary holy city in Senegal, and the Murid *Grand Màggal* in Touba. These annual gatherings are not only important religious holidays, but they also represent Senegalese modernity. The festivals symbolize the emergence of non-violent African Sufi orders as institutions providing social order and acting as social brokers between the colonial authorities and African subjects.

The *Grand Màggal* is Senegal's most popular annual event, requiring a pilgrimage to Touba. Initially this pilgrimage memorialized Bamba's death (1922), but Falou Mbacké (1888–1968), Bamba's son and second *Xalifa-General* of the Murid, changed it to 18 Safar (Safar is the second lunar month in the Muslim calendar), commemorating Bamba's return from exile in Gabon (1907). It was during this exile that Bamba received the *wird* from the Prophet and then created the first black sub-Saharan

Rahmān) through whom sustenance is received. Evening recitations continue the Ramadan remembrance. The Night of Destiny (Laylat al-Qadr) near the end of Ramadan is celebrated by a vigil in remembrance of the coming down (*tanzīl*) upon Muhammad of the spirit (*rūh*). *Zakāt*, contribution to the less fortunate, combines *karam* (generosity) and *dhikr* (remembrance), as the Qur'anic imperative to remember the orphan, widow, and traveler is institutionalized and placed at the heart of religious obligation." Oxford Encyclopedia of the Islamic World. Oxford Islamic Studies Online, accessed January 11, 2010, <http://www.oxfordislamicstudies.com>.

tariqa outside the religious authority of the Middle East and North Africa. Even though the Murid downplay ethnic and caste difference, they still use numerous Wolof cultural practices to secure stability for a *tariqa* capable of political and religious autonomy in the face of globalization (see Diouf 2000). High-ranking leadership positions, for example, are passed to blood relatives instead of through an electoral process.

Derived from the Wolof root *magg*, which means to grow, heighten, and celebrate (Babou 2007: 194fn5), the *Grand Mâggal* symbolizes Senegalese resistance to colonialism (Coulon 1999), Arab racism, and the oppressive caste system. Through singing songs of remembrance (*zikrs*), devotional songs, and performing rituals at the *mâggal*, Senegalese embody these political and theological meanings. Bringing the past into the present through group singing, praying, and other activities in Wolof community spaces and religious places, fosters a shared experience of Muslim identity that becomes synonymous with Senegaleseness. Even the journey to Touba is an act of remembrance as thousands converge on the few highways leading to the sacred site, creating and participating in a travel narrative memorializing the *hijras* of the Prophet later invoked by Umar Tal, as well as the exile and return narrative of the Prophet and Amadu Bamba. When in Touba, the devout perform rituals at holy shrines and participate in *dayiras* where the religious poems of Bamba and his disciples are sung in Arabic and Wolof. The Murid *tariqa* is given shape through sound and practices that will remain part of the lives of participants when they return to their homes.

The descendants of Malik Sy sponsor the annual Tijani *gâmmu* in Tivaouane. (There is also a smaller *gâmmu* held in Kaolack by followers of Ibrahima Niassé.) This gathering occurs on *Mawlud*, the Prophet's birthday, which is also a national holiday.

Historically, the *gàmmu* celebrated the rainy season, a time of renewal and promise of sustenance. Like participants at the Grand *Màggal*, the Tijani sing religious songs from their *wird*, including those written by Malik Sy and his disciples. The devotional poems Sy composed in Arabic to the Prophet are called *teysir* due to the appearance of this word in the first line of one his poems, “Alxamdulillah thiteysir yallahu” (Villalon 1995:297 n.23). Singing religious songs from the Tijani *wird* connects practitioners to a history of resistance to colonialism including the Umarian *jihads* and non-violence of Malik Sy, the *ummah* through North African roots and Tijani branches in West Africa, and the spiritual power (*baraka*) of Abdul Aziz Sy and Mansour Sy, the caliphs of the order and descendants of Malik Sy.

While the *Grand Màggal* and *Gàmmu* at Tivaouane are the largest annual gatherings, there are also smaller periodic and weekly *gàmmus*, *màggals*, and other religious celebrations. The Qadiriyya hold gatherings featuring the Arab *tabala* drums that can be played in the style of a *sabar*, a situation that led one Tijani observer to opine the events as ““folkloristic—somewhere between a *gàmmu* and a *sabar*,”” (McLaughlin 1997:566). There are also daily *dayira* sings among the Baye Fall.

When conducting fieldwork on Gorée, I played daily with the Baye Fall and other Murid. Our informal two- or three-hour sessions sometimes included songs and praises to living and dead marabouts. Except for the more conservative Muslims on the island, there was little reticence towards our fusion of sacred and secular musics. The music we made, which included religious praise, was part of daily life, a celebration of community, and of the values of Islam. From the drumming and repetition of praises I experienced meditative-like states of awareness. Through sound I witnessed how in-group solidarity

was formed through liturgy and music. I became aware of how sound was integral to a daily religious practice made even more profound through frequent wearing of Muslim fashion such as amulets with pictures of marabouts and of a policing among family and friends for “correct” behavior.



Figure 8. Baye Fall reciting *zikr*, Dakar, Senegal. photo by author. The amulets around the neck are pictures of Cheikh Ibra Fall. The patchwork pants represent devotion to the marabout, stemming from when Ibra Fall worked endlessly for Bamba until his clothes were in patches. Senegalese passerby leave alms in the wooden bowl fulfilling the alms giving practice, one of the five pillars of Islam.

From attending *gàmmus*, *màggals*, and other religious ceremonies in Gorée, Dakar, Pikine, and Saint-Louis, it became apparent to me that the *zikr*, featured in all events, carries significant importance. At *dayiras*, *zikrs* are led by a respected vocalist in front of, or surrounded by, seated disciples singing responses. Praises to a religious leader’s name and beneficent qualities are sung for long periods of time, sometimes from early evening until the hours before sunrise. Participants often achieve trance-like states where the usual linear experience of the flow of time disappears. The overlapping call

and response singing is usually unaccompanied, except among the Baye Fall, who drum and dance to the *xiin* (the “first” *sabar* drum, originally from Cayor and Baol, that was played by slaves for the royalty) and other *sabar* drums. The Baye Fall dancing is characterized by a swaying step done counter-clockwise in a circle to the accompaniment of drums and repetition of a *zikr* that helps the practitioner achieve a closeness to God. Success is demonstrated by swinging a large wooden bat over the head and striking the middle of the back. If one does not exhibit or crumple down in pain, as I did, one has achieved a state of closeness to Allah.

The Baye Fall use of the *xiin* and bat is distinct to Senegal but, as with the other ceremonies described above, remains connected to a global Sufi tradition summarized by Babou as a:

system of thought and a method for understanding and learning to control the *nafs* [the ego self] ... based on teachings and practices developed by generations of Sufi thinkers and practitioners. The Sufi system is shaped by actions and behaviors that aim at freeing the human body from the grip of worldly preoccupations in order to gradually lift the spirit toward the neighborhood of God’s kingdom; the ultimate goal is to become a *wali Allah* (friend of God). (Babou 2007:5)

In Senegal, the generations of Wolof clerics (*sëriñ fakk tall*), *shaykhs* (marabouts), and disciples—fighting for emancipation, building Quranic schools, and forming rural *daaras* that become the basis for *dayiras* in the cities—are part of the distinctive traditions that come together and give voice to Senegalese Sufism in the twenty-first century. The distinctive brotherhoods and their *wirds* include original *zikrs*, poems, and theology to battle the *nafs* as well as creating practices that help sustain a religious community opposed to state and foreign control.

Islam in *Musique Moderne*

Songs praising Allah and the Prophet were part of the repertoire of early Senegalese jazz and salsa groups that predated the modern *mbalax* bands. One of the first recordings of praise to Allah was “Yallah Yana” (“God is Everything” or “God is Great”) recorded in the late 1960s/early 1970s by Dexter Johnson and the Super Star band. The leaders praise Yallah, a Wolofization of Allah, and the choral response, “Yallah yana,” is a type of *zikr* that has a pan-brotherhood appeal to a broad audience.

Praises to Allah and the Prophet continued in the 1970s, but musicians and patrons desired a popular music distinctive to Senegal and one way to achieve this was to more fully integrate the religious practices and griot songs that constituted their daily lives and represented their modernity. The response was praise singing to Senegalese saints. The first urban popular dance band to successfully sing and record praises to Bamba was the Sahel orchestra of the nightclub of the same name (Jean Ndiaye, April 13, 2000). The Sahel’s lead vocalist and percussionist, Idrissa Diop, brought together Baye Fall drummers and Sahel band members to collaborate on a composition praising Bamba, something that no urban dance band had done (Diouf 2008a). After receiving permission from the band’s patron, Ndiouga Kébé, Diop began singing praises to Bamba in their nightly performances and used lyrics from the Baye Fall *zikr*. He sang “Xayroulah Xayroulan biya Mbacké Cheikh Bamba/Dierdieuf Amdy Moustapha Diraraw lak/Touba Touba,” lyrics that recognized Bamba as the founder of Touba and a saint close to Allah. He is “the way”—that is, his actions, words, writings, and deeds on morals and ethics are those of Allah and should be followed by Muslims. “The way” is also the sacred path of obligation to the brotherhood, family, and fellow Muslims.

One reason for the success of “Bamba” was the band’s use of mass media. Sahel recorded “Bamba” onto LP, and its release coincided with the launching of Senegalese television. The band performed “Bamba” on television and introduced audiences throughout the country to one of the hippest bands in Dakar, clad in bell-bottoms and tight shirts, blending the sounds of the *sabar* with afropop, jazz, and Afro-Cuban. This *musique moderne*, with lyrics in Wolof and using a Baye Fall *zīkr* praising the founder of the Murid—all through a medium controlled by the state—was a new experience for Senegalese (Diouf 2008a, b). Even though the government attempted to move Senegalese into a postcolonial modernity through French language and culture as a way to avoid ethnic clashes, the state sanctioned this urban Wolof and Muslim cultural expression.

The Sahel band’s success opened the way for other groups to praise Bamba, such as Star Number One’s “Maam Bamba” (Grandfather Bamba), Orchestra Baobab’s “Muhammadou Bamba,” and Thione Seck’s acoustic or soft-*mbalax* version of “Muhammadou Bamba.” The release of these recordings coincided with the downward spiral in the economy and the imposition of austerity measures by the recently elected president Abdou Diouf. Senegalese increasingly emigrated abroad and set up *dayiras* in foreign cities. Their remittances funded brotherhood activities in Touba and Dakar, as well as the burgeoning *mbalax* industry led by Youssou N’Dour.

In 1993, Youssou N’Dour and his cousin Ouzin N’Diaye released “Mame Bamba” on cassette, followed by a Youssou N’Dour solo version on CD in 1994. This song differed from other religious *mbalax* compositions during this period with its emphasis on the conditions of Senegalese life—in this case, the sacrifices of emigrants living abroad—instead of the more typical recitation of genealogies and places. The

lyrics encouraged Senegalese to find solace in the religious poems (*xasaïd*) of Bamba, and to use them as a source of strength and fortitude to continue working in difficult situations.

The man in me changes every time I read your *xasaïd*
 My strong faith in you makes me survive this crazy world
 Now I can go anywhere, because I know you'll be there
 We know your pain will always make us stronger
 Mame Bamba.⁶⁹

Murid followers may recite *xasaïds* at certain times during the day, and repeat them as instructed by a marabout in order to achieve a desired result such as good health, financial stability, or the strength to persevere. By using the first person in this song, the listener is able to sing along as if they were reciting a prayer with N'Dour or participating in a *dayira*. This draws the listener deeper into the song, generating a sentiment more profound than in many of the other religious songs by *mbalax* singers. Perhaps this is one reason for the incredible success of this song among Senegalese in cities around the world. The lyrics above are also sung in English attesting to the long interest in American culture, desire in the lay population to learn English instead of French as a way to first step towards emigrating to America, and influence of Senegalese immigrants living in the U.S. impacting local culture.

By the 1990s, the repertoire of most *mbalax* groups included songs praising Senegalese saints and places. Most were characterized by sound that drew upon the dynamics of the antiphonal *zïkr* and vocal timbre of the lead singer. These musical qualities were fused with the instrumentation of urban dance bands who also drew on griot animation techniques of praising a saint by reciting his spiritual genealogy.

⁶⁹ From the liner notes on the 1994 Youssou N'Dour CD *The Guide (Wommat)* (Chaos/Columbia COL 476508 2).

Listeners connected to these recitations on multiple levels, including the ability to identify one's familial history in the narration and admiring the griot as an indigenous cultural broker distinct to Senegal.

Still, the 1990s saw an increase in songs critiquing the brotherhoods' activities in response to a rising desire for brotherhoods to remove themselves from politics. In this last decade of the twentieth century, *mbalax* became a space for representing the diversity of Senegalese Sufism that I explore in the final section.

Devotional Love (*hubb*)

During fieldwork, singers attributed their frequent praise to marabouts to several factors: a genuine love for their marabout, Senegalese tradition, and audience demand for these praises. I asked Salaam Diallo why does he frequently praise Bamba. Diallo responded in English:

Bamba is my spiritual guide. Because this man is a good man, a good Muslim. I like [love] him because he is modest and very intelligent. He did many things for poor people. He likes children. Because this man likes God and the Prophet Mohammed soooo much. And what father [Bamba] wrote, all Murid, all Muslims must do it. He did it. One hundred percent. Always I sing [about] him. That's why I like him. If I can sing [about] him two or three million thousand times I will do it. (Salaam Diallo, conversation with author, October 15, 2000)

Based on conversations I had with Diallo regarding his own practice and devotion, the use of the word "like" in this context is a synonym for devotional love. Love is the lens through which Diallo approaches being a good Muslim and, by extension, a good Senegalese. He emulates the values that Bamba lived and taught including modesty, respect for others, and education. Diallo practices his devotion

through studying religious texts and recitations of the *zikrs*, as well as poems and *xasaïd* of the Murid at home. He uses these texts as inspiration, if not source material, for his songs and panegyrics (*tassu*) that include the praises: “*Dierdieuf Sëriñ Touba*” (“Thank you leader of Touba”), *Sëriñ Fallou ya baax* (“Sëriñ Fallou you are good”), and “*Nag wara domine*” (“You dominate”). His praise honors the past and brings it into the present, indexing a shared knowledge and history that lifts the hearts of the audience, who respond to his praise by putting one hand over their hearts, bowing their heads, and raising the other hand towards paradise. They also give money to the performer. Diallo’s benefit from the praise includes not only a wide following, but also the strength to persevere and continue performing under difficult economic circumstances.

Diallo’s devotion stems from three cornerstones of the Murid *tariqa*: service to the *sheikh* (*khidma*), gift giving (*hadiyya*), and the Sufi idea of devotional love (*hubb*) (Babou 2007:85–86). Love is the centerpiece of this devotion and fuels the relationship often described by Senegalese through the popular quote from ninth century Sufi mystic Tustari: “The disciple should be in the hands of his sheikh like the cadaver in the hands of the mortician” (Babou 2007:223). In this relationship, marabouts offer spiritual guidance, spells, and amulets of protection, counsel, and even mental health services. When one friend was undergoing a great deal of job-related stress at his company, he relied on his marabout for assistance. One day, on his way to visit his marabout, my friend turned to me and said that in the West we are lucky because we do not have to deal with witchcraft, which he believed caused his stress at work. Hope, courage, and the strength to persevere are among the strongest attributes interlocutors mentioned as reasons for them to support marabouts. Women were particularly concerned with finding

husbands and supporting their families.

Marabouts, on the other hand, receive monetary compensation for their services, and eventually, political power. If their scholarship is strong and following large, they can also rise in prominence within the brotherhood. “False” marabouts, ones who do not follow the *wird* and who exploit and engage in confidence scams, are criticized in the popular press, comics, novels, and occasionally in *mbalax*. The most egregious offense that marabouts can make is the mistreatment of the *taalibe* in their service. As part of his training, a *taalibe* is required to beg for money and food as one way to teach humility. However, some “false” marabouts use it to enrich themselves. These marabouts are disdained and in 1999, *mbalax* singer Cheikh Lo released a video strongly condemning the practice. His soundtrack was “Set” (see chapter 3), and the visuals were shots of children sleeping in rags and begging with cans. In general, however, there appears to be little criticism of marabouts in *mbalax*.

Gender, Sensuality, and Muslim Praise

Mbalax songs fuse griot, religious, and modern musics to create a kind of agency among and for women. At *mbalax* events, when the first notes of Fatou Guewel’s hit “Zikroulah” plays, women often burst into smiles, turn to each other, and dance with joy and reverence. One of Senegal’s most popular *gëwël* and *mbalax* singers, her reputation for devotion to the Murid approaches saintliness. When teenage boys pass the mural paintings based on the cover art of her recordings, they touch the image of her forehead and then their own, in order to receive her *baraka* (blessing) (Roberts and Roberts 2003:155).

Guewel and her music are widely admired by women. She is praised for her

piousness and her status as a *g ew el* able to bring together different genres to allow women to explore their religious and sensuous selves. Fiona McLaughlin also observed this reverence for the singer through her music and performances—events where she assumes the role of the lead singer of a *dayira* and a *taalibe* as part of her *g ew el* duties. In effect, she becomes a conduit to the *baraka* of the Sufi saints she praises (McLaughlin 1997:572). McLaughlin’s analysis stems from a birthday concert in honor of Guewel where famous *mbalax* and *g ew el* singers praised her, and where female patrons dressed in elegant robes tipped her generously for hours. My observation of this overwhelming female patron response occurred in the nightclubs of Dakar and at the *soir ee S en egalaise* event described above. In the nightclubs, the most striking practice I witnessed was when women would turn to the full-length mirrors along the wall and peer at themselves, mid-song. They would observe themselves dancing very slowly during the *zikr*, but when the *mbalax pur et dur* section began, their gaze would move back to the room and they’d continue dancing energetically between themselves.

In both cases, the women’s movements seemed to blur the fine line between sensual and sexual, but when I asked the women about their dancing, they took pains to explain that their moves were not “sexual,” but “sensual,” noting that this is the way they experience the music and message in their bodies. These dancers also explained that looking in the mirror was a way of imagining themselves on music television. This women’s dancing derives from both the expression of piousness that is highly valued in society *and* from the dynamic of women dancing erotically as entertainment for themselves and as part of their strategy to attract men.”

The agency involved here is that women were able to play with ideal forms of

piousness in dance and gesture, yet balance this against eroticism. In this way, “Zikroulah” is an example of how the *mbalax*, fusing genres and indexing cultural meanings, can create the space for a more open choice—a space for the selection of behavior and presentation of self; a space to decide what aspect of their selfhood they wish to portray and experience.

One reason for the popularity of “Zikroulah” is its highly effective fusion of religious, traditional, and modern musics. The song is divided into two parts, beginning as a soft-*mbalax zikr* and then changing into an *mbalax pur et dur*. An all-female chorus begins the *zikr* by singing three heterophonic repetitions of “Xadi Bousso jaariyaa” (Xadi Bousso is close to God). A *xalam* accompanies and elaborates on the melody and chorus, while the *sabar* softly provides non-intrusive rhythms atop the drones of the keyboard synthesizer. Characteristic of *zikr* is the repetition of a name in its many forms, an act Guewel performs with Mame Diarra Bousso’s moniker, accompanied by the instruments whose texture creates the feeling of a *dayira*.

“Zikroulah” by Fatou Guewel. Translated by the author

Chorus [C]

Fatou Guewel [FG]

C: *Xadi Bousso jaariyaa* (3x)
chorus

Xadi Bousso is close to God (alt: one who lives with God).

FG: *Xadi Bousso jaariyatul*

(*Maam* is used with respect for elders and admired people) (audience cheers)

C: *Xadi Bousso jaariyaa*

FG: *Ak Maam Mariyaama Bousso jaariyatul*

(a: *Seydatuna*-formal way to address a woman)

C: *Xadi Bousso jaariyaa*

Women! Emulate Bousso, she is the light.

FG: *Baali Bousso jaariyatul Seydatuna Mariyaama*

*Jigeeen ñee Maam Mariyaama
Bouso
Mooy royikaay bi yeen jigeeen ñii*

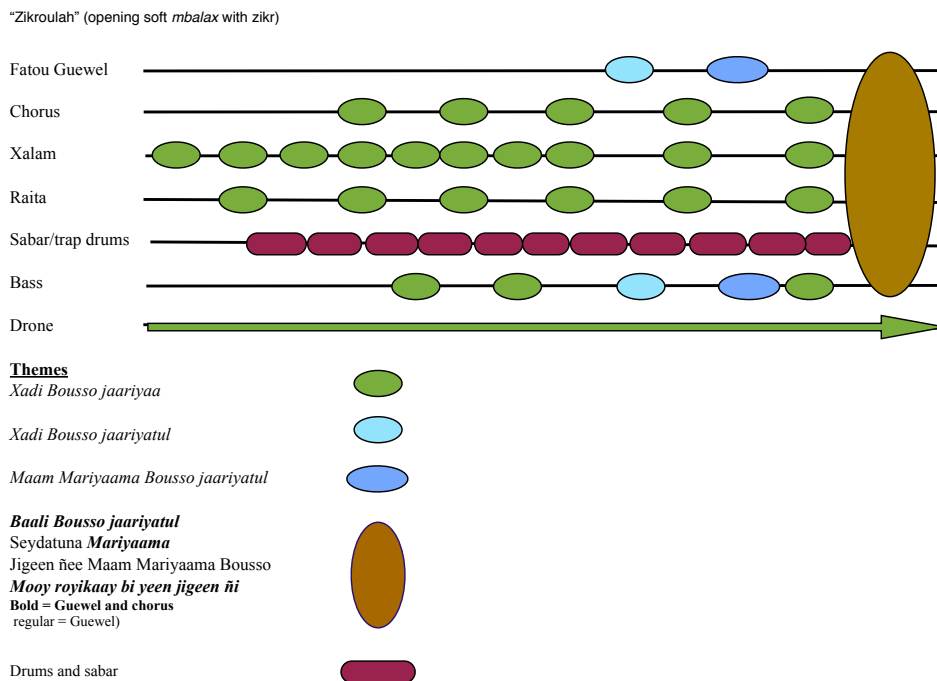


Figure 8. "Zikroulah" opening *zikr* section.

Guewel's voice is considered extraordinary, blessed with the power to spread *baraka* and admirably convey the *hubb* required of a *taalibe*. Guewel is dedicated to this endeavor—the submission of the *taalibe* to her marabout—and has even named her group Sope Noueyeni after this principle, with Sope Noueyeni translating to "Devotion to Sëriñ Ousmane Mbacké," Guewel's marabout.⁷⁰ Midway through "Zikroulah," the *shahadah* is

⁷⁰ The translation of Sope Noueyeni requires an unpeeling of layers in order to get at the heart of the meaning, which is characteristic of Sufi mysticism. McLaughlin explains "The name of the group translates as Love Noueyeni. Noueyeni, from the Arabic 'dual lights,' is an epithet for Uthman, one of the first four caliphs of Islam, and by extension,

invoked and the entire ensemble shifts into an *mbalax pur* style characterized by a faster tempo, denser *sabar* emphasizing the *mbalax* accompaniment, and the keyboardist playing complimentary “marimba” vamps. At this juncture, Guewel recites the spiritual genealogy of her Sufist path. This genealogy includes Maam Diarra Bousso, Amadou Bamba, Ibra Fall, and concludes with Kara Noreyui, the living marabout and descendent of Bamba.

This assertion of agency is docile and is based on the Sufi concept of love. Saba Mahmood, drawing on Michel Foucault (1983, 1997), as well as Judith Butler (1997b), argue for recognition of the agentive power of docility not as an “abandonment of power,” but rather as calling attention to “the specific ways in which one performs a certain number of operations on one’s thoughts, body, conduct, and ways of being” that enable individuals to achieve their desires, dreams, and broader knowledge within a system or power structure (Mahmood 2001:210). For the women of Dakar, this is achieved through *kersa*, a form of piety achieved through practicing shyness as sign of good manners and education (see Castaldi 86; Sylla 1994:85) and *sutura*, how one presents the of self in a respectful and joyous way (Morales-Libove 186). These qualities are deeply admired in Dakar and valued as a type of feminine ideal (*mokk pocc*).

Summary

The aim of this chapter was to describe the external and internal promotion of a non-violent Muslim identity that since *Set Setal*, has become a critical dynamic of popular culture, especially *mbalax*. This re-imagining of Islam and nationhood includes

his homonym Sëriñ Ousmane Mbacké, who is Fatou Guewel’s marabout.” (McLaughlin 2000:fn3. 206)

understanding the different Senegalese Muslim practices that are shaped by transnational forces of colonialism and the global modern capitalist system. This Islamic cosmopolitanism moves beyond the roots of the Arab and North African influences to include the power of media and the medium of television to disseminate new ways of imagining a Muslim community beyond the country *daara* and city *dayira*. Of particular interest, and requiring more research, is how women dance sensually and self-admiringly in front of mirrors in a different “public-private” space than the *sabar*—a place where women go to imagine being Senegalese on the silver screen: projecting images of being modern while at the same time observing the limits of propriety rules—but remaining, always, in the imaginative realm.

Chapter 5

The Cosmopolitanism of Jazz and *Mbalax*⁷¹

The study of the cultural relationship of jazz to Africa has tended to focus on the retention of Africanisms in African American music⁷² and the versioning of Africa in jazz.⁷³ The influence of US jazz on music and culture in West Africa⁷⁴ has been less well documented. Since the 1930s, Senegalese musicians and fans have borrowed, internalized, and incorporated jazz into their popular music and culture as an aspect of how Senegalese modern identities have been configured. These identities are intertwined with globalization processes, and bound up with the mediation of pre-colonial, colonial, and national histories, as well as current relationships to the West, Middle East, and other African countries (Diouf 2002).

The appropriation of US jazz has been and continues to be a vital element in the representation, practice, and living-out of Senegalese modern identities, both through the

⁷¹ A different version of this chapter was published in *Uptown Conversation: The New Jazz Studies*. Eds. R. G. O'Meally, B. H. Edwards and F. J. Griffin. New York: Columbia University Press, 2004. 224-249.

⁷² Africanisms in American music and culture has long been a topic in ethnomusicology (Dauer 1985; Floyd 1995; Herskovits 1941; Maultsby 1990; Nketia 1974a; Waterman 1952; Wilson 1974). A notable exception to this dynamic is John Collins (1987) study of jazz in Anglophone West Africa and Seven Feld's (2012) study of jazz cosmopolitanism in Accra, Ghana.

⁷³ See for example, Norman Weinstein (1993) and Ingrid Monson (2000).

⁷⁴ Scholarship on jazz in Africa has concentrated on the Southern hemisphere (c.f. Ballantine 1993; Coplan 1985; Turino 2000). For recent scholarship on jazz in Senegal, see Thioub and Benga (1999) and Benga (2002).

mimetic performance of US jazz, and through its internalization into *mbalax*. The ways in which local Senegalese cosmopolitans have learned and interpreted jazz, through sustained appropriations from French and US sources since the mid-twentieth century and from local versionings of jazz in the Senegalese popular music scene, position this music as a living and vital cultural force. In the cities of Dakar and Saint-Louis, modern, Senegalese identities, seen through the lens of cosmopolitanism, become multiply mediated through the appropriation of New World musics into Senegalese musics.⁷⁵

This chapter views jazz as a prime aspect of Senegalese cosmopolitans' recognition and meditation of similarities and differences of interests with people from the African diaspora. Unlike, Paul Gilroy's (1993) black Atlantic model investigating similarities and differences between English and American blacks *in* the diaspora, I investigate musical engagements and collaborations *between* Africans and African Americans. Paying attention to African agency in the black Atlantic, Lorand Matory argues, liberates the idea of Africa from its originary status to the dynamic ways that Africans and African expressive culture has long influenced black consciousness across the Atlantic (Matory 2006). My research redresses Gilroy's lack of attention to the influence of African music and musical collaborations between African Americans and African musicians as acts of agency promoting ideas of freedom (Monson 2007), racial justice, and a cosmopolitan blackness.

⁷⁵ Ethnomusicological writings have discussed appropriation in popular music from the stance of Western pop stars using world music with respect and admiration while benefiting financially and professionally from an unequal power relationship afforded through major recording artists under contract with large music corporations (Born and Hesmondhalgh 2000; Feld 1994b; Taylor 1997). My use of appropriation demonstrates the reverse—that is, how Senegalese musicians incorporate Western musics to their benefit, in order to articulate their cultural identities.

By examining how Senegalese cosmopolitans interpret and integrate US black music and cultural forms, we can better understand cosmopolitanism in African urban centers where there is a strong ideological allegiance with US blacks. The following description of a play that took place within a large international jazz festival in Senegal will illuminate aspects of how Senegalese view themselves within a pan-African imaginary sustained through cosmopolitan networks.

The Billy Jones Odyssey

I am in Saint-Louis, the *ancienne capitale* of Senegal; the date is June 3, 2000. The occasion is the Saint-Louis Jazz Festival, a major annual event founded in 1990 and spanning five days, that invokes the memory of Saint-Louis as a major jazz center in West Africa from 1945–57, as well as celebrating Saint-Louis’s ongoing association with jazz in West Africa. An open-air drama called *L’Odyssée des Origines* was performed by a local youth troupe from the primary and secondary schools and colleges in Saint-Louis. Director, educator, and *animateur* Madame d’Aquino authored and conceived the play in collaboration with the students, professional musicians, actors, and theater professionals. The story’s main character is “Billy Jones,” an African-American jazz musician invited to perform at the festival. The figure of Jones is cast as a world-savvy jazz musician, a portrayal based on Senegalese experiences with U.S. jazz musicians involved in the Saint-Louis Jazz Festival. His journey becomes a transformative experience in which he discovers his musical and cultural roots by immersing himself in Senegalese music, art, and culture.

Scenes enacted via music, drama, and dance take place in different places in Saint-Louis. Between scenes, a *sabar* ensemble and *tama* drummer lead a procession of

Senegalese, European, and West African spectators to the different places on the island where an act will be performed. Also attending the procession are actors, a forty-foot masked serpent made of cloth, and performers costumed as *moderne* and *traditionnel* instruments, thus dissolving the space between spectacle and reality (performer and audience). “Jones” carries a clarinet and is dressed in a Western suit. During one of these processional interludes between scenes, I am walking beside a *tama* player who praises and welcomes me, as an African American, to Saint-Louis. I reciprocate his praise—according to Senegalese cultural practice—by giving him a crisp bill. The story begins with Jones’s arrival by train, where peddlers sell him a drum and take him on a tour of the city. They encounter a festival of masks led by the costumed serpent and, after a dance in the round accompanied by *sabar* drumming, Jones enters a cave described in the program as a “rhythmical space” where he hears a ballad in the “universe of Saint-Louisian jazz” that suggests an “attractive and magnificent unknown.” Jones is drawn further into the culture and history of Saint-Louis when a procession of *signares*⁷⁶ performs a dance honoring the water spirit Mame Coumba Bang, once a princess who lived near the water and yearned to know its mysteries. One day she was swallowed by an enormous shell and returns to “a nothingness that allows her to reach the imperceptible. During this time, she sometimes comes out of the waters under various forms and brings protection and support to Saint-Louisians” (D’Aquino 2000).

The dance mesmerizes Jones, who finds himself pushed by the performers toward the house of a *signare*, where he sees in the “cracked walls a secret immaterial

⁷⁶ Senegalese *métisse* women from the colonial period were renowned for their beauty and entrepreneurship. *Signares* were often the partners of colonial administrators while they were estranged from their wives in Europe.

atmosphere which intoxicates this musician to look for his origins.” The past and present are conflated, and Jones meets a *signare* from the past, along with an old man who was a friend of his grandfather; the pair proceed to relate the history of Saint-Louis to Jones. Bedazzled by these encounters, Jones goes to the river to seek solace. At this juncture, the actors, dancers, and musicians perform *sabar*, *folklore*, salsa, jazz, and fusion songs. In the finale, Jones calls forth Mame Coumba Bang by playing his clarinet. Upon her arrival, they are joined via the acknowledgement that Jones has discovered his past and can therefore move confidently into the future.

Inside the Odyssey

The play’s blending of indigenous and modern cultural signs, time, and music illuminates the Senegalese’ perception of themselves—and African Americans—within a black Atlantic imaginary that encompasses the African diaspora and Africa. Characters are costumed in Senegalese *mbubb*, Western suits, and as musical instruments (e.g., *kora*, bass, electric guitar, *djembe*, and *sabar* drums), while mythical figures such as Mame Coumba Bang, *signares*, and the giant serpent interact with the contemporary Jones character. Time and place are conflated to express connections across the Atlantic and continuity between the past and present. For example, Jones tours the city’s colonial places (the Governor’s mansion, the *signare*’s house, and the train station) and spiritual sites (the waterfront and the cave), all locations where he interacts with figures and myths representing the present as well as the colonial and precolonial past.

Indigenous and Western-derived musics are combined to reveal contemporary Senegalese identities. For example, the *sabar* played at the round dance signifies both present and past, in that it is a historical genre still vital in contemporary Senegalese

culture. When *sabar* is combined with the rhythm section of electric bass, piano, and guitar to perform songs in salsa, jazz, and fusion styles, a major characteristic of Senegalese cosmopolitanism and modernity is invoked--namely, the appropriation of New World styles into Senegalese music.

Jones's odyssey demonstrates the longstanding Senegalese interest in jazz. Like many cultures around the world, Senegalese recognize the American origin of jazz, but also assert their own version. In doing so, Senegalese assert their contributions to a pan-African or *afro* consciousness. For example, the program notes for the Billy Jones Odyssey refer to jazz as "Afro-American," and the production itself is based on an American jazz musician discovering his African roots. When Jones enters the cave and hears a ballad from the "universe of Saint-Louisian jazz," it is an affirmation of a distinctive Senegalese jazz voice. This claim of a Senegalese jazz consciousness is based on acknowledging the African contribution to jazz and the ongoing practice of borrowing and internalizing African-American music into Senegalese popular music and culture.

There are actually two main characters here, Jones and Saint-Louis. Jones is a traveling cosmopolitan who attains awareness of his place in the world through the tutelage of Saint-Louisians, and Saint-Louis is portrayed as a postcolonial city whose nexus is jazz. Complex transatlantic histories and contemporary relationships between the United States, France, and Senegal are illuminated in the narrative, music, and dance. Saint-Louisians assert their agency as citizens of the world and de-center jazz from its US base.

A historical overview of jazz in Senegal illuminates complex cultural, social, and global processes that are embedded in the Billy Jones Odyssey, including the role of

cosmopolitans in spreading, performing, and producing jazz in Senegal. Jazz festivals contribute to establishing jazz as part of Senegal's urban and national character, and the following analyses of jazz performances in Dakar reveal how jazz-imbued cosmopolitan interactions help to fashion, the Senegalese voice.

Early Influences (World War I–1950s)

Senegalese living in France during World War I and the inter-war years were the first Senegalese cosmopolitans to encounter jazz. It is likely that during World War I, the music of the forty-four piece 369th Infantry Regiment Harlem Hellfighters band, led by Lieutenant James Reese Europe and drum major Noble Sissle, was heard by French and Senegalese soldiers stationed in France, who returned to Senegal with jazz recordings and experiences of Reese's performances. Further, more than 135,000 soldiers from French West Africa and nearly 200,000 thousand American black soldiers (Stovall 1996:1–24) stationed in France, the opportunity for cultural and social interactions between the French, Americans, and Senegalese was clear. During the interwar years, Paris⁷⁷ became a center for jazz and a meeting ground for African Americans, African Caribbeans, and French West Africans. In the 1920s, expatriate black Americans fleeing a post-war racist backlash in the United States, including artists such as Josephine Baker, began to make the Montmartre section of Paris home. Through their influence, jazz became extremely popular in their adopted city. Parisians patronized dozens of jazz clubs in Montmartre, where they danced the Charleston and Black Bottom.

By the 1930s, an expatriate US black community was established, and many

⁷⁷ Much of material discussed in this section comes from Tyler Stovall's *Paris Noir* (1996). See Brent Edwards (2003) for a contemporary and groundbreaking study among the black intelligentsia, writers, and artists of the interwar years.

artists, writers, painters, and musicians involved in the Harlem Renaissance visited this community. White French musicians, who had been experimenting with jazz in the 1920s and sitting in with African-American musicians, began to form their own groups. This rich exchange and dialogue can be heard in several recordings from that time, such as the 1935 sessions that featured Stéphane Grappelli, Django Reinhardt, Coleman Hawkins, and Benny Carter— found on the album entitled *Coleman Hawkins and Benny Carter* (Stovall 1996: 96).

Additionally, in 1930s Paris black students and intellectuals from French West Africa, the French West Indies, and the United States socialized and exchanged ideas about art, culture, and politics in Africa, Europe, the Caribbean, and Americas. Léopold Senghor wrote of the literary Clamart salon (1929–34) of Jane, Paulette, and Andrée Nardal where the Nardal sisters played US jazz, danced, and discussed the works of Harlem Renaissance writers (such as Langston Hughes, Countee Cullen, and Claude McKay), racism, and other topics. The exchange of ideas at events such as these inspired young black writers like Senghor and Aimé Césaire to found their own literary and cultural journal, *L'Étudiant Noir* (March 1935). This publication signaled the beginning of *Négritude* (blackness), a philosophical black humanist movement which took as its driving force the spread of knowledge of black culture and history to better humankind. Thus, in Paris, Senegalese cosmopolitans such as Senghor broadened their cultural horizons and began to identify with an African diaspora, developing strategies for asserting agency against racism and colonialism.

Jazz was an important part of Senegalese students' social and cultural life in Paris. As Tyler Stovall (1996) notes, in this cosmopolitan Parisian community, African

Americans and blacks from the French colonies interacted in jazz clubs (e.g., Bricktop's), nightclubs that featured music from the French Caribbean (e.g., Bal Nègre in Montparnasse), and parlors (Stovall 1996: 82–118). These musics, and the students' political activities would play prominent roles in influencing the urban character of Senegal upon their return.

In 1942, the United States military occupied the port city of Dakar with detachments quartered in Thiès and Saint-Louis. Sailors stationed in Dakar brought with them instruments, records, and dance styles from the US Percussionist Gana M'Bow recalls:

I was not yet 20 years old and at that time lived in Dakar. My best friend was the chauffeur of a grand marabout. When he was free, my friend would come pick me up in the marabout's gigantic black Cadillac and we ploughed through the city, in every sense, to listen to this insane music which leaked out of the dashboard's radio and which "Voice of America" used to broadcast. This is how I came to know jazz. A little time after in 1943, the first contingents of the American army arrived, and I constantly approached these orchestras of black American musicians to see at last who was making this crazy peoples' music and to be able to touch them and to speak with them. (in Lenormand 1996:136)

M'Bow's experience with the soldiers, musicians, and US radio programs led him to pursue a career as a percussionist with jazz musicians. Through the radio, and via interaction with the soldiers M'Bow interpreted for, he learned and performed jazz. His quest led him through Paris, New York City, and Boston where he acquired new experiences and knowledge from master musicians that would change his worldview. In 1948, he moved to France and performed in Paris with French and American musicians such as Pierre Michelot, René Urtreger, Percy Heath, and Kenny Clarke. M'Bow would later work in the U.S. with artists such as Max Roach and Sonny Stitt.

Saint-Louis, like Dakar, was a key center for jazz. Between 1945 and 1957, the capital became a major jazz hub for West Africa. The city served as the economic, political, and artistic center, where intellectuals, artists, businessmen, colonial administrators, soldiers, journalists, Mauritians, Senegalese, Arabs, *sabar* ensembles, and griots filled the streets and clubs, listening and dancing to jazz bands and orchestras. Saint-Louisian musician and local historian Marious Gouané recalls that, in 1945, US troops in Saint-Louis played jazz marches and fanfares in the town square. After these pieces, the band would play jazz. According to Gouané, the first Saint-Louisians to begin performing jazz were the griots, who were particularly attracted to the blues and up-tempo dance pieces (Marious Gouané, in discussion with author, June 6, 2002).

Photographs from the 1940s indicate that bands such as Amicale Jazz, Saint-Louisian, and Sor Jazz (whose typical instrumentation included banjos, accordion, snare and bass drum, alto saxophones, guitar, and trumpets) imitated the performance style of New Orleans music. Saxophonist Abdoulaye N'Diaye (son of Saint-Louisian saxophonist Baraud N'Diaye) recalls “they dressed exactly like the New Orleans style. They were serious about music with the dress, ensemble, tie, and they have the same drums you see. One sock cymbal, you know, that was the same you see in New Orleans” (Abdoulaye Ndiaye, in discussion with author, April 13, 2000).

This early imitation of the music, dress, and instrumentation of New Orleans jazz style indicates three key aspects in this Senegalese appropriation. First, jazz was an urban music that resonated with Saint-Louisian pride in their cosmopolitan status. Second, jazz was a music created by US blacks and not French colonials; Thioub and Benga (1999:218–221) argue that the appropriation of jazz by Senegalese constituted an implicit

rupture with French hegemony, rather than an overt political act of resistance. While these authors also claim that the colonials favored the tango, *paso doble*, French song, and waltz in their segregated clubs, to be sure, other French connections were forged through the Parisian experiences of Senegalese. Finally, jazz was an urban dance music that appealed to Senegalese in the cities.

By the 1950s, Senegalese were playing their own version of bebop. Groups such as Star Jazz and the All Stars emerged, with talented soloists including saxophonists Baraud N'Diaye, Papa Samba Diop, and Abou Sy, trumpeter Mustapha Diop, guitarist Cheik Tidiane Tall, vocalist Aminata Fall, and bassist Ady Seck. Images of African-American musicians in Paris and the United States appeared in periodicals such as the West-African magazine *Bingo*, which ran features and photographs on Lionel Hampton, Lil Armstrong, Louis Armstrong, Don Byas, Duke Ellington, Sidney Bechet, Charlie Parker, and Mary Lou Williams, and photographs of Senegalese bebop and swing groups show ensembles of men dressed in sharp Western attire, in contrast to the New Orleans groups with their identical uniforms. The audience dressed similarly to the bebop band members, with women in both African and Western styles. Senegalese awareness of Western clothing style demonstrates an additional layer of monitoring of American cultural products as the reality of independence came closer.

Jazz, Salsa, *Variété* (1940s–70s)

As Senegal embraced nationhood, African diasporic popular musics were more widely incorporated into Senegalese popular culture. Since the 1940s, Latin music such as the cha-cha, *pachanga*, rumba, *paso doble*, *charanga*, *bolero*, and mambo had become popular with Senegalese who, since the 1960s, refer to these styles as salsa. These styles

were found throughout French West Africa and diffused by Electrical & Musical Industries (EMI)⁷⁸ record company, which had absorbed England's Gramophone Company Ltd. and the American company, Victor. After World War II the "GV" or "Spanish" records from Havana in the 1940s and 1950s contained over two hundred titles, most of which were recorded before the war and later reissued as a bid to boost sales. One tune in particular, "El Manicero," composed by Moises Simon, combined *son* and *pregón* rhythms, capturing the imagination of Senegalese and many West African bands (Mukuna 2000:109). Additionally released *sones* included "Sacudiendo Mis Maracas" by Sexteto Habanero, and other styles such as the *bolero* "Elixir de la Vida," by guitarist Miguel Matamoros and his Trio Matamoros, and the samba "Madalena" from Banda Rico Creole. A wider range of styles were later released, such as calypsos and African popular musics from artists such as Shake Keane and the West African Swing Stars, who also covered E.T. Mensah songs (Stapleton 1987:21).

Senegalese jazz bands in the 1940s and 1950s, such as Sor Jazz, St. Louisian Jazz, and Orchestre du Grand Diop at the Moulin Rouge nightclub in Dakar, played rumbas, marches, and waltzes for elites with strong cultural ties to France. By the 1950s through the 1960s, Cuban and jazz music dominated most nightclubs in Senegal's urban centers, solidifying these genres in the tastes of the general population. By the late 1960s, however, the style and repertoire of the group Xalam I signaled the way in which jazz

⁷⁸ EMI was formed during the Great Depression in June 1931, from a merger between the Columbia Gramophone Company and the Gramophone Company Ltd., both of which were British-registered but mostly owned by American interests such as RCA Victor. These labels had already absorbed the French Pâté label, Lindstrom (owner of the Parlophone label), and other Latin American companies in the 1920s—as well as the famous logo picturing a dog listening to a gramophone, a trademark known as "His Master's Voice."

would be used in Senegalese music. Young musicians who had grown up hearing jazz and salsa now blended *traditionnel* melodies and rhythms into their songs. Eventually, the practice of playing sets that combined *traditionnel*, soul, rock, salsa, African pop, and Senegalese popular music became known as *variété*. Jazz in Senegal became associated with a wider range of genres stretching beyond traditional American jazz.

As the 1960s progressed, 45 r.p.m. records of popular music were brought into the country by elites who had been living in Europe. In addition to salsa, new popular music genres came to Senegal. Saint-Louisian Khalil Gueye recalls that parties in his youth featured three genres. First, the “long-haired” kids listened to pop and rock ‘n’ roll played by the Doors, Rick Nelson, Johnny Hallyday, and Creedence Clearwater Revival. Second, the “slick hairs” enjoyed soul music played by such artists as Etta James and Otis Redding. Finally, a third group of young people dressed in Latin American styles and favored Cuban music by groups such as Orquesta Aragon, Bravo, and Ray Barretto. (Khalil Gueye, conversation with author, August 28, 2000). On the back of the disc covers were illustrations of dance steps corresponding to that of the record’s popular music style. Thus, aided by the traveling cosmopolitan, new dances were appropriated by Senegalese youth.

Of these three genres, salsa proved the most resilient in sustaining a prominent space in Senegalese popular music and culture. Still, Senegal’s independence in 1960 inspired Senegalese to create their own national popular music. In the late 1960s, during nightclubs’ *variété* sets, Senegalese instruments were added to the prevailing instrumentation of guitar, keyboards, electric bass, horns, drums, and timbales. *Sabar* drums were added to the percussion and their rhythms played on the keyboards and

guitars, transforming these harmonic instruments into tonal percussion. Senegalese from all social classes were drawn to the new sound. This was the birth of *mbalax*, the creolized expression of these genres, featuring *sabar* rhythms.

Mbalax represents a national identity based on the internalization of foreign genres (jazz, Cuban music, soul, highlife, and afrobeat), blended with indigenous music and performance practice styles to mark a cosmopolitan formation of Senegalese identity. The integration of jazz within *mbalax* reflects the intersection of French and African diasporic circuits maintained through musicians, elites, and cosmopolitans inflecting their experiences onto local scenes that operate on Senegalese cultural principles. As *mbalax*'s popularity rose as a national dance music, US jazz became associated with foreign musics and became increasingly perceived as a listening music.

Institutionalizing Jazz (1960s–90s)

In 1966, the Senegalese government, led by Léopold Sédar Senghor, hosted the Festival of Negro Arts, which featured Duke Ellington,⁷⁹ Josephine Baker, Marian Anderson, Louis Armstrong (the first major US jazz artist to visit Senegal in early 1960s), Ella Fitzgerald, and Katherine Dunham. The aim of the festival was to celebrate the diversity and unity of Africans and people of African descent, promote *Négritude*, commemorate Senegal's peaceful transition to independence, and encourage a pan-African unity agenda among the newly-independent African nations. The festival was a

⁷⁹ See Ellington (1973:337–339) for his description of his performance. Lenormand (1996:26) suggests the repertoire was “Ko Ko,” “Black, Brown, and Beige,” “Black Beauty,” “Black and Tan Fantasy,” “A Drum is a Woman,” “Creole Rhapsody,” “Sophisticated Lady,” “Ebony Rhapsody,” and “Liberian Suite.” Likewise, Ousman Socé ([1955] 1993) and Weinstein (1999:37–47) provide insightful fictional accounts of Ellington's relationship to Africa.

success and has continued under various names in other countries. Subsequently, under Senghor's direction, the government participated in sponsoring jazz musicians such as Phil Woods, Frank Foster, Irene Reid, and an All-Star Big Band directed by Billy Taylor that featured Frank Foster, Jimmy Owens, Kenny Rodgers, and Slide Hampton playing music by Ellington and Basie. Additional sponsorship by African-American organizations such as the Jackie Robinson Foundation forged new economic and political links between African-American and African institutions.

The US State Department likewise sponsored jazz events to promote American culture with artists such as Dizzy Gillespie, Duke Ellington, Louis Armstrong, and Pharaoh Sanders. The US government continues to promote jazz in Senegal through lectures, concerts, mass media events, and the Jazz Ambassador Program of International Cultural Exchange, begun in 1998 as a collaboration between the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts and the United States Information Agency (USIA). The program blends the Kennedy Center's mission, "the provision of opportunities for people of all ages and backgrounds to learn about and to experience the performing arts" through "its commitment to the recognition and celebration of the rich heritage of the American people," and USIA's goal of promoting "mutual understanding between the United States and other countries through a series of educational and cultural exchange activities" (Center 1999). In the 1999–2000 season, the group chosen to perform for the West African leg of the Jazz Ambassadors program was a trio, the Jazz Messengers, from Mississippi whose repertoire (e.g., Ellington, Paul Webster, John Lewis, and originals) reflected that year's theme honoring Duke Ellington's 100th birthday. Concerts were held at the US ambassador's home and at the French Cultural Center. The group conducted a

master class at the American Cultural Center, but an arranged television appearance was canceled because of the station's inability to provide the necessary technical support for broadcast. Thus, the group's official itinerary was restricted to venues accessible to Dakar's middle class and elite.⁸⁰

Similarly, France promotes jazz in Senegal through its Centres Culturels Français (French Cultural Centers; CCFs). This program hosts many jazz, salsa, and blues concerts and provides access to literature, films, and lectures, but reaches a restricted audience of mostly French administrators, business people, tourists, NGO staff, diplomats, and educators followed by an African elite, and Western students such as myself. Dakarois whose primary language is Wolof are less likely to attend CCF events due to the center's location and mission to promote Frenchness, a mission that conjures the contested discourses of *la mission civilisatrice* and *Négritude*. The CCF is located in the *plateau*, the downtown section of Dakar that is the center of Senegalese tourism, banking, politics, and business. There is a vibrant nightlife of nightclubs, hotels, and restaurants that cater to foreigners, tourists, Lebanese, and Africans with higher levels of disposable income than the average Dakarois struggling to make the daily quota of money needed to feed the family (*dépense quotidienne*). The *plateau* is also renowned as a hub of vice where many venues have a highly visible prostitution scene and consumption of alcohol that is offensive to the Muslim and Wolof values of many native Dakarois. Finally, Wolof speakers are reticent to subject themselves to a segment of the CCF clientele, the "*Française Française*," French immigrants, workers, and military personnel who do not speak Wolof, dislike *mbalax*—especially *mbalax pur et dur*—and embrace the *mission*

⁸⁰ Unofficially, the group visited but did not perform at Sunrise Jazz.

civilisatrice. One way the CCF mitigates the negative representation of Frenchness by the *Française Française* and *plateau* vice industry is to program *afro-mbalax* performers who incorporate jazz into their styles such as Frères Guissé and singer Cheikh Lo. These *afro-mbalax* groups draw European and African audiences whose tastes are drawn to the jazz influences. Jazz, then, becomes a critical nexus in the promotion of France's multicultural policy to recognize and respect difference in the Francophone world.

Shortly after the Jazz Ambassadors' performance, the British and Italian embassies sponsored jazz concerts showcasing their nation's performers.⁸¹ The goal of these events was to promote cultural and business ties. Recognizing Senegal's history with jazz, the British and Italian embassies sought to expand Senegalese identification of the genre with a wider international arena. This was achieved by sponsoring jazz concerts in public venues with low admission fees, with programming that included collaboration between Senegalese and European musicians based on jazz-fusion styles more accessible to Senegalese. British officials told me that jazz was chosen in order to dispel Senegalese notions of Great Britain as a country without a black presence (Lemou Laconte, in discussion with author, September 6, 2000).

These instances of musical exchanges through workshops and collaborations enhance Senegalese knowledge of jazz performance practice from the West, constituting another example of jazz infusion. However, an ironic tension exists in

⁸¹ The British Council's jazz program began as a way to rectify the aggressive promotion of French, Canadian, and American culture through music. The British Council jazz concerts have included groups Jazz Jamaica in 1996, Angry Hearts in 1998, and the Dave O'Higgins Trio in 2000. The O'Higgins group conducted three four-hour workshops with students of the Dakar conservatory. Instrumentation included bass, trap drums, guitar, saxophone, *balfon*, and jembe. A jam session at the Alizé nightclub between the British and African musicians also drew French performers. I was unable to attend the Italian jazz event or conduct in-depth interviews with their diplomats.

that the European nations' goal of promoting their distinctive character relies on jazz's ability to articulate a pan-African black consciousness. For example, the British use jazz to advertise Great Britain's racial diversity and inclusivity. However, the group that performed in Senegal, the Dave O'Higgins Trio, included only one black member, Jamaican drummer Winston Clifford. Therefore, it was the musical elements grounded in transnational exchanges and the racialized overtone of jazz that overrode the embodied enactment of racial inclusion.

Saint-Louis International Jazz Festival (1990–2000)

In 1990, Xaabab Thiam, Badou Sarr, Pape Laye Sarr, Abdu Aziz Seck, and Abdu Diallo founded the Saint-Louis Jazz Festival as a way to resuscitate the city's cosmopolitan status, and in the hopes of promoting tourism (and the city's international reputation) through the development of its cultural and artistic life (Badou Sarr, conversation with author, June 2, 2000). The first concert was in a garage, but the following year, the festival was granted official governmental recognition and received financial assistance from the Saint-Louis Centre Culturel Français. In 1992, the CCF took over the festival, creating discontent among Senegalese because ticket prices rose beyond the general population's ability to pay and because the five founders' input was reduced. In response to popular pressure and press criticism, an alliance was formed in 1993 between the Senegalese organizers and the CCF. The union lasted until 1999, when complete control was given to a newly formed Senegalese association (Ousmane Diallo, in discussion with author, June 1, 2000). The founders' goal of creating an internationally recognized institution that would revitalize the economic and cultural life of Saint-Louis was partially realized, but because the CCF pulled its financial and administrative

backing, the festival suffered from the lack of technical support, sponsorship, and organizational experience (Badou Saar, June 2, 2000).

Currently, the festival lasts three days and falls somewhere between late May and early June in order to coincide with school and European vacations. During the festival, hotels are filled to capacity, and families rent out space to visitors at elevated prices, boosting the local economy. Attendees are largely Europeans, non-governmental organization employees working in West Africa, Senegalese and returned Senegalese immigrants, students, bureaucrats, professionals, and academics. Performances are spread throughout the city, with headlining acts confined to the “in” or main stage, where tickets are required. All other performances are relegated to the “off” stages, which are free to the public. Nightclubs and restaurants with names such as the Blue Note and Marco Jazz provide venues where off-stage musicians collaborate.

For Senegalese, it is crucial to have an American artist present. In the past, American guests have included Jack DeJohnette, Herbie Hancock, Archie Shepp, McCoy Tyner, Jimmy Johnson, Hal Singer, Joe Zawinul, Steve Coleman, Johnny Griffin, Liz McComb, Elvin Jones, and David Murray. Other nations, primarily from the francophone countries, supply the bulk of performers, such as groups led by Lorraine Desmarais (Quebec, Canada), Nathalie Lories (Belgium), Hervé Meshinet (France), Olivier Temime (France), Robert Jeanne (Belgium), Manu Dibango (Cameroon/Paris), Xabaan Thiam (Senegal), Ray Lema (Democratic Republic of Congo), and Moncef Genoud (Switzerland). The inclusion of many European and white performers as well as black artists showed the power of jazz to transcend racial categories and become a symbol of freedom to many people living in the country—including those who represent the former

colonialists and those who suffered under the colonialists.

Main-stage festival concerts begin at 9:00 p.m. while free, off-stage performances are held throughout the day and late into night, featuring local *mbalax*, fusion, jazz, and afro-beat groups. Through the years, programming foreign performers on the main stage and Senegalese on the off-stage caused tension among Senegalese musicians and patrons. In turn, organizers responded that the *creation*—the collaboration between African, American, and European artists that is sometimes produced after few days of rehearsals—is a sufficient response to this criticism. *Créations* have included collaborations with African musicians from The African Project in 2000; Olivier Temime Quartet (France), Kayou Band (Cameroon), and Yande Codou (Senegal) in 1999; Harmattan (Senegal) in 1998; and Steve Coleman and the Five Elements with members of Afro-Cuba de Matanzas and conguero Miguel “Anga” Diaz in 1997. Other collaborations included the 1996 performance of the Conservatoire National de Musique Doua Seck Orchestra, conducted by guitarist Pierre van Domaël (France) and saxophonist Pierre Vaïana (Belgium) in 1994–95.

Collaboration between festival and Senegalese musicians also occurs in workshops and jam sessions in Dakar and Saint-Louis. These informal settings provide an opportunity to exchange knowledge about African and international styles and rhythmic concepts, as well as Western jazz performance practice. For Senegalese, jazz became an international music that could be appropriated, commodified, and used to express their modern voice among francophone countries, as well as a pan-African imaginary that includes French West Africa, America, and Europe—a “world music,” an

international phenomenon that provides a nexus for participation in the global sphere.⁸²

Additionally, these collaborations illustrate how cosmopolitans from afar broaden the cultural and musical horizons of local cosmopolitans. As John Tomlinson (1999) states, “the first characteristic of cosmopolitanism, then, is a keen grasp of a globalized world as one in which ‘there are no others’” (Tomlinson 1999:194). In this environment, the use of jazz as a musical medium diminishes the distance between different cultural and musical positions. Through improvisation performers draw on their respective life experiences and musical practices to explore and create sounds articulating their modern identities. George Lewis observes that a valued dynamic of improvisation among jazz musicians is how “notions of personhood are transmitted via sounds, and sounds become signs for deeper levels of meaning beyond pitches and intervals” (Lewis 2002: 241). Jason Stanyek (2004) extends this observation to explain how musicians from different black Atlantic cultures engage in collective learning through improvisation. For Stanyek, Pan-African musical collaborations are “where musicians use an open understanding of simultaneous (inter)action to actualize an environment in which exposure to new ideas, and adaptation, speculation, and transformation are paramount” (Stanyek 2004: 96). The collaborations spurred by the festival offer musicians a bridge to explore different and similar approaches to each other’s individual and collective narratives through improvisation.

The inclusion of francophone circuits in understanding the formation of

⁸² The literature and discourse on world music focuses on the cultural politics, marginalization, and commodification of non-Western music in the global market (Feld 1994a, b; Meintjes 1990; Taylor 1997) and of the musics of ethnic minorities. My use of (and play on) world music, in this case, is broad. It is intended to describe how jazz allows Senegalese to engage with musicians and musics throughout the world.

Senegalese modern identities (e.g., colonial policies, an elite with close ties to France who disseminate jazz and pan-African ideology, the inclusion of francophone musicians, and political clashes in the Saint-Louis Jazz Festival) broadens Paul Gilroy's conceptualization of the black Atlantic (1993), which focuses on the construction of black, modern, transnational identities of Britain, North America, and the Caribbean. For Gilroy, one aspect of black modern identity elaborates the way in which residual horrors of slavery and imperialism expressed and embedded in black music "contribute to historical memories inscribed and incorporated into the volatile core of Afro-Atlantic cultural creation" (Gilroy 1993:73). This resonates with Hervé Lenormand and the Saint-Louis Jazz Association's history of jazz in Senegal (Lenormand 1996, 7–13), which cites a history of violence as one of the primary factors for the birth of jazz in the United States and its dissemination into Senegal, where locals understood the genre's relationship to slavery, racism, colonialism, and wars. Further, the expansion of jazz into popular Senegalese culture as a result of U.S. military occupation, influence of elites, government sponsorship, and integration into nightclub performances demonstrates a musical continuum that harkens back to Senegambians who were shipped to French Louisiana in the 17th century. As new technologies and media facilitate the spread of information and travel between global cities increase, jazz in Senegal becomes a way to negotiate evolving modern identities in the African diaspora in the 21st century.

Interpreting Jazz

Three performance-types characterize the live jazz scene in Dakar: first, a group

doing a *variété* set who will include jazz;⁸³ second, small jazz ensembles that perform bebop, post-bop, blues, modal, and fusion standards; and third—the most widespread—a *mbalax* group that will play jazz for the first three or four songs (usually originals and fusion such as Joe Zawinul’s “Mercy, Mercy, Mercy”) before their lead singer enters the stage, after which the band plays solely *mbalax* tunes. Additionally, jazz has been disseminated through television programs, movies, radio, CDs, LPs, and cassettes.

Jazz and Sabar: Jammin’ at Club Alizé

Jazz in Dakar nightclubs is influenced by locally trained musicians and cosmopolitan Senegalese who travel, work, and study abroad, accumulating social and cultural knowledge that they internalize and, upon return to Senegal, share with local cosmopolitans. Tanor Dieng, manager of the well-known nightclub Alizé, explains the spread of jazz as linked to

[p]eople who were studying overseas, I mean France or in the States or the intellectual people who used to listen to jazz music for a long, long time before the 60s. In the time of Billie Holiday or Louis Armstrong, those kinds of great musicians since then, they listened to jazz. And a lot of jazz musicians from the States came and performed here. People listened to it, and the students at the University when they listen to music it is mostly jazz and that’s why jazz is very expansive here. Dakar is the capital of jazz in West Africa. . . . Having friends all over the world, wherever they play jazz they bring the CD or cassettes. You never get into a car with a cassette deck without listening to jazz music. (Tanor Dieng, in discussion with the author, May 1, 2000)

Dieng identifies a cosmopolitan network between France, Senegal, and the United

⁸³ For example, vocalist and drummer Pape Niang’s sets include an instrumental, “Ruby, My Dear” (resembling Thelonius Monk’s version); Roberta Flack’s version of “Killing Me Softly” sung in English with a reggae back beat; Stevie Wonder’s “I Just Called To Say I Love You”; “When the Saints Go Marching In,” sung in imitation of Louis Armstrong; an *mbalax* tune; and an a capella intro with a 2+3 clave beat, followed by *sabar* drumming.

States that is traversed by musicians, students, elites, and intellectuals. Senegalese cosmopolitans in this network listen, internalize, and then share their knowledge of jazz among friends and family in Dakar, contributing to the development of a Senegalese jazz sensibility. Dieng continues:

We feel like jazz belongs a little bit to us. It seems like it was coming from here. The way the *beat* is, the complaint, the singers. We feel close to jazz, we feel it when we listen to jazz. Even if 99 percent don't speak English, they don't know what the singer is saying, what is interesting is that they feel the beat of jazz. Dixieland or any type of jazz, they feel it. (Dieng 2000)

Dieng recognizes jazz as a transnational phenomenon with African roots and voice.⁸⁴ His emphasis on the beat and melodic qualities of jazz as musical elements Senegalese can associate with (above an understanding of song texts), demonstrates an understanding of Senegal's incorporation of jazz into their popular music over time, and of historically syncretic practices from the New World based on West African music elements such as those embedded in the ring shout (Floyd 1995:35–48).

In the 1970s, Dieng attended New York University and immersed himself in the jazz culture of Greenwich Village. He vividly recalls the night he attended a jazz club on Seventh Avenue in New York City, where the headlining act was Stan Getz. Later in the evening, Jimmy Owens walked in and jammed with Getz's band. The magic of that night and similar ones inspired Dieng to institute a nightly live music jam session at Alizé. His

⁸⁴ One way of viewing this phenomenon is described by Samuel Floyd (1995:8–10) as cultural memory. Floyd defines cultural memory as “a repository of meanings that comprise the subjective knowledge of a people, its immanent thoughts, its structures, and its practices; these thoughts, structures and practices are transferred and understood unconsciously but become conscious and culturally objective in practice and perception” (Floyd 1995:8). However, as I have shown, Senegalese have been listening to jazz, rhythm and blues, soul, salsa, and blues since the 1940s; therefore the vocal “sentiments” and feelings that Dieng refers to include the appropriations of US black music as they work in Senegalese black Atlantic imaginations.

idea was to have an “after-work” party modeled on the US “Happy Hour,” an environment in which people could relax, socialize, and negotiate business after work. “The Senegalese beat [*mbalax*] is too jumpy, you see,” Diang told me. “And to make those people relax and so on, jazz was the real music I felt like giving to them. In my own opinion, the best music to relax to is jazz. It’s a listening music” (Diang 2000). Diang created an environment in which musicians could improvise, experiment with new forms, and have regular gigs, thus addressing his and some musicians’ resentment of *mbalax*’s “stranglehold” over musical life in Dakar. Diang’s after-work party, a result of his elite cosmopolitan experience in New York, in turn influences local Senegalese cosmopolitans’ awareness of practices abroad and fosters an environment for interchanges that further the sharing of knowledge.

Tuesday nights at Alizé are devoted to *soirée Sénégalaise* and feature *mbalax*. The evenings begin around 8:30 p.m. with cocktails and recorded jazz on the stereo. The audience is comprised mostly of upper-middle-class businessmen, government workers, Senegalese who have been living abroad, and young women. At 9:00 p.m., a jazz or improvisation ensemble performs. The musicians are usually members of popular *mbalax* bands who formed ensembles to explore jazz. The repertoire from one such group, Fenni Fare (*mbalax* musicians in Omar Pene’s band), includes tunes frequently heard in Dakar such as “Billie’s Bounce,” “Donna Lee,” “Misty,” and a funk tune. Often, Senegalese musicians substitute chord progressions during the solo sections, such as blues changes played during the solo passages of “Donna Lee.”

In general, there is a lack of knowledge of US jazz theory and repertoire. Senegalese band leaders who have studied and performed under knowledgeable

musicians such as Americans Sam Sanders and David Murray improvise close to a song's chord changes, and sets consist of diverse repertoire. For example, Abdoulaye N'Diaye's sets consisted of a twelve-bar blues, "I Remember April," "Stella by Starlight," "All Blues," "Fifth House," "Impressions," "Darn that Dream," "Beautiful Love," "Body and Soul," "Nardis," and some free improvisation. N'Diaye learned US approaches to jazz through his apprenticeship with the US jazz musicians Murray and Sanders when they visited, worked, and performed in Dakar. N'Diaye and other musicians take this knowledge from their sessions with the Americans and share it with other local musicians who have similar but different experiences, thus creating a local habitus that will share some similar characteristics with other jazz locals.

By 12:00 a.m., patrons dressed in both indigenous and Western-style clothing arrive for the *mbalax* set, which features dancing to the recorded hits of Senegal's popular stars. At 3:00 a.m., the dance floor clears and an MC (master of ceremonies) entertains the audience with jokes and announcements, followed by a popular salsa, *mbalax*, or rap artist who lip-synchs a song they are promoting. Around 3:30 a.m., *sabar* drummers enter and perform a combination of standard *sabar* repertoire (e.g., *ceebu jën*) with modern instrumentation, such as a keyboardist playing jazz riffs and melody lines from Dave Brubeck's "Take Five" in duple time as opposed to the original's meter in five/four. As the evening progresses, a circle forms and a standard *sabar* repertoire is performed, without electronic accompaniment, with dancers from the audience entering the space one at a time, usually dressed in *mbubb*. Women wearing European clothing borrow a cloth *pagne* to wrap over their hips and cover their legs. The dancing involves one person locked in dialogue with one drummer. Successive dancers comment or

compete on a previous dancer's performance via more energetic or expressive movements, often creating new dances and gestures. This is a re-creation of the *sabar* circle (*géew bi*) in which *taasu* (a partially improvised praise singing), dancing, and drumming occurs throughout Senegal.

The evenings at Alizé become forums for improvisatory experiments in which different styles are blended, syncretized, and developed. The *sabar* drummers and musicians influenced by the early jazz set and recordings take these influences, alter them according to their own aesthetics, and then experiment with them within traditional *sabar* performance practice aesthetics. Later, these experiences are internalized and incorporated in varying degrees in *sabar* and *mbalax* performances inside and outside the club. Diang's after-work party allows musicians to experiment with the American jazz repertoire, incorporate that knowledge into their playing, and develop their own styles. These musicians then perform in different venues and reach a wider audience in the network of the Dakar nightclub scene. For example, within walking distance of Alizé are three nightclubs that cater to a less affluent audience and a wider network of musicians that often includes players from Alizé. In this scene, Senegalese musicians who have traveled abroad with *mbalax* bands on the world music circuit frequently sit in and jam with various groups. These musicians, and those from Alizé, collaborate and share their knowledge within a more culturally and musically restrained club scene that caters and adheres to the working-class Senegalese who do not desire too much innovation.

Cosmopolitans such as Senegalese elites, soldiers, and musicians spread jazz and their cultural knowledge of foreign places throughout Dakar and Saint-Louis, thus influencing Senegalese popular culture and music. However, in the nightclub, jazz was

blended with local music styles and other African-American musics to create *mbalax*, which emerged as the primary signifier of Senegalese national identity. Today, Senegalese claim jazz as both part of their heritage and as a vital link to modernity in the black Atlantic. Local cosmopolitan musical and cultural horizons are expanded due to the frequent collaborations in the nightclubs of Dakar and events such as the Saint-Louis jazz festival. These collaborations amongst Senegalese musicians and US musicians are mediated within working-class clubs that foreground Senegalese musical and cultural tastes.

Jazz and *Mbalax*: Sunrise Jazz Club

Near Alizé are three nightclubs: Sahel, Toolu Buur, and Sunrise Jazz. Connected to Sahel is Sunrise Jazz club, a small space that features jazz, *variété*, afropop, and *mbalax*. Toolu Buur is across the parking lot and is known for salsa, *mbalax*, and salsa-*mbalax*. Unlike Alizé, the clientele is lower- to middle-class; these clubs have lower entrance fees and free admission on certain nights. This zone books and attracts a wide range of artists. The atmosphere in the area welcomes musicians to sit in on each others' sets. One group that frequently invites musicians to sit in is Dieuf Dieul, who named their style "Mandingo *mbalax*"--yet fans refer to it as "jazz *mbalax*." Dieuf Dieul is influenced by afro-beat and musicians such as Jimi Hendrix, George Benson, Lee Ritenour, David Murray, and Miles Davis.

The set begins with a quartet of bass, drums, keyboard, and guitar playing original compositions characterized by theme statement, solos, and another theme statement. Solos are not improvised within fixed song forms (e.g., AABA or AAB) but begin and end with statements of themes by the lead instruments when the soloist, working within

the collective, communicates sufficient tension via a trajectory signaling the conclusion of his solo. After two songs, alto saxophonist Abdoulaye N'Diaye joins the group, utilizing phrases and patterns found in US jazz.⁸⁵

By the fifth song, the “jazz set” is over and the emphasis is now on *mbalax*. A vocalist and two *sabar* drummers join the group; the *sabar* players fuse *moderne* grooves with traditional rhythms based on *mbalax*. The singer’s vocals (mostly in Tukolor) are melismatic and slightly nasal, reflecting Senegal’s long association with the Arab north. A *tama* player joins the ensemble and the overall sound emphasizes the percussion over harmonic progressions, which is reflected by the audience members dancing improvised steps in duet with the lead drummer. The evening’s energy level increases as more dancers engage the percussionists, particularly when a *sabar* plays a *bàkk*, the highly demarcated solo passage in which the player improvises and “says something.” Throughout the night, guest musicians and singers sit in, adding their voices to the collective while appreciative audience members give money to the singers and drummers that have taken them to higher levels.

This performance reveals key nuances of Senegalese perceptions of jazz. When the *sabar* drummers began, the other instrumentalists considered the jazz set finished because they were relegated to performing mostly accompanying, repetitious phrases. However, audience members still considered the *mbalax* jazzy because the

⁸⁵ N'Diaye first studied under his father, Baraud N'Diaye, a jazz saxophonist influenced by Ben Webster and Lester Young. He pursued his studies at the École Nationale des Artes (with an unnamed Russian), followed by intense tutelage under Detroit saxophonist Sam Sanders, when N'Diaye learned Charlie Parker solos (“Billie’s Bounce,” “Donna Lee,” “Confirmation,” “Dewey Square,” and “Yardbird Suite”). N'Diaye also learned John Coltrane solos (by ear and from books) and remarked to me during a rehearsal that he was influenced by Coltrane’s rhythmic variations of melodic phrases.

instrumentalists occasionally took lengthy improvisatory solos and used dissonant harmonies, such as diminished chords, in contrast to other *mbalax* groups who refrain from extended solos and dense chords. Additionally, there were performance characteristics common to US jazz used during the *mbalax* set such as repetition of phrases, riffs, call and response, extensive use of hemiolas, polyrhythms, musicians sitting in, and intense communication between dancers and drummers. Further, Senegalese drummers, musicians, and dancers were engaged in musical dialogues reminiscent of US tap dancers and big bands and Lindy Hop dancers in ballrooms (Malone 1998).

How do Senegalese musicians perceive jazz? Dieuf Dieul's musical director and keyboardist Njankou Sembene explains:

Jazz is more complete than other music. The possibility of jazz. Senegalese music depends mainly on the rhythms, percussions. With the rhythms, for example, the instruments do not really, really express [things] because there are rhythms and the singers on it. Because there is not very very long times when people in Senegal started to know piano, organ, guitar. Before we know the *balafon*, the *kora*, the *xalam*, the flute. Even today there are instruments that we cannot play well, that's why, because of this, a young country, jazz [is important], we need to listen, to listen to jazz ... to learn and with this knowledge to join with African music. We can show to all the people you know. With this we can have a nice knowledge. (Njankou Sembene, in discussion with author, February 3, 2000)

For Sembene, jazz is a music whose meanings are submerged (compared to *mbalax*) under dense harmonies and performance practices not common to Senegalese popular music.⁸⁶ When these jazz practices are blended with indigenous music, a fusion

⁸⁶ In general, Senegalese musicians do not read music or intensively study Western jazz harmony and performance practices. However, Sembene (and Senegalese musicians who have studied under Sam Sanders) constantly seek information on jazz performance from

can emerge that expresses a modern Senegalese identity characterized by the historical and present ambitions to incorporate music and cultural dimensions from the African diaspora into local cultural expressions.

Dieuf Dieul and David Murray

The Dieuf Dieul performance analyzed above followed a concert for the UNESCO summit on education held in Dakar. Many of the concert's musicians were members of Dieuf Dieul and guest soloists at Sunrise Jazz. David Murray, an American composer, bandleader, and saxophonist who had been collaborating with Senegalese musicians since 1996, selected, rehearsed, and directed the musicians for the April 28, 2000, UNESCO date. Instrumentation included a *kora*, *balon* (five-string bass harp), a Fulani flute, Wolof and Diola *sabar* drums, guitar, voice, and alto and soprano saxophones. Matters of tuning and strategies for leaving space open for performers during solos were based on Murray's aesthetic as a jazz musician. For example, since indigenous African instruments with limited tuning ranges were blended with chromatic instruments, issues of tuning were complex. For Murray, the instruments were far "out of tune," whereas for the other musicians, texture and rhythm took precedence over intonation. During the UNESCO rehearsals, Murray's consistent guidance on the nuances of tuning resulted in the musicians who performed later that evening (at Sunrise Jazz) taking additional time to tune up. This example represents one way in which a US jazz musician influences practice at the local level.

There is a tension between the primacy of rhythm as an essential cultural marker

of Senegalese identity,⁸⁷ and harmony as an identifying marker of jazz and transatlantic modernity. For Senegalese, rhythms can represent specific aspects of their lives, since drumming occurs at multiple community events and is entrenched in performances that negotiate and articulate people's existence. For example, the tonal character of drums such as the *tama* may imitate speech as well as convey messages. In *sabar* performances I have witnessed, *tamas* immediately repeat the sonorities and rhythms of spoken text by griots. In griot recordings such as *Keepers of the Talking Drum* (see Mangin 1999) or on cassettes by Salaam Diallo such as *Soirée Senegalaise*, one can hear drums repeating spoken phrases.⁸⁸ This close relationship between rhythm and meaning marks a nuanced similarity and difference between jazz and Senegalese popular music that Murray conceptualizes in terms of “language” and “languageness”:

We [African Americans] have a language inside of our music. In most African music, the rhythms are words, expressions, meanings, and codes. Our language [US English]—maybe because our language was never our own—is not in our music, especially now in jazz ... so we are mixing a *languageness* with a music that is *language*. Like, there we have big similarity and a great big difference. The differences are bigger than the similarities in that regard. (Murray 2000, emphasis mine).

For Murray, Senegalese rhythms contain more direct referential meanings to society and culture, which differs from US jazz in that jazz communicates ideas further divorced from spoken language. Murray's “languageness” in US jazz is in fact an aspect of the

⁸⁷ A plethora of scholarly material discusses how music and rhythms are integral to West African society and culture (Bebey [1969] 1975; Chernoff 1979; Nketia 1974; Waterman 1990). See also Kofi Agawu's (2003) work questioning ethnomusicologists' attention to rhythm as essentialist and the response to these assertions by Veit Erlmann (2004) and Louise Meintjes (2006).

⁸⁸ For an analysis of drumming and speech in *sabar* see Patricia Tang (2010).

complex relationship between language and music used to mediate and express twentieth-century African-American and American culture and society (see Monson 1996). Further, when Murray claims that the “language was never our own,” there is resentment and a sense of loss over the disconnection from Africa due to violence and racial oppression from the new world slave trade—a condition that many black cultures across the Atlantic share (Gilroy 1993:80–81, Ralph 2009).

Murray broadens his discussion of similarities and differences in his experiences with Senegalese musicians to improvisation. He continues:

A lot of times, the concept of improvisation in African music is not as far advanced as in jazz. Like, a guy will play what he knows in African music, but not so much that they won't play what they don't know. In jazz, we'll play the stuff we know, but great improvisers will jump off a cliff and go into an area that he don't know nothing about and land on his feet. I'm trying to get the African musicians to jump off that cliff, too.... I want them to build a world around themselves. It would be great if they could do that more often.... The drummers build a base for us to build our improvisation on. In the end, sometimes it ends up being that. And then you bring them into it by doing that. After a while, it becomes infectious and then they might get it that way. Once they hear something, they can copy it and say “yeah okay.” But a lot of African people want to tell you that this is a rhythm from this country and we have to play it right and they don't want to mess it up. “This rhythm is from Mali.” You talk to Mor Thiam or somebody like that, “This rhythm is from the Ivory Coast, and this rhythm is from South Africa.” And their language is [in] that but don't mess it up. So, me, I wanna mess it up. (Murray, January 8, 2000).

Recognizing that Senegalese and American musicians take a different approach to performing, Murray descends into the music and drumming with his “languageness,” communicating on sonic levels created from different perceptual origins but relying on the percussionists to establish a common ground for improvisations. When mutual understanding is achieved, ideas are presented, copied, and varied. In this instance,

rhythm is used as a way to bridge different conceptions of performing jazz and to facilitate the influence of US jazz into contemporary Senegalese music. Although Murray emphasizes difference as a space for the mediation of blackness between himself and African musicians, a dynamic that Stanyek (2004) considers paramount to Pan-African collaboration, Murray's quote and my observations of his work with Dieuf Dieul reveal that similarities are just as significant. As Murray describes, it is only after the *sabar* and trap drummers build a base for improvisation, can he and the musicians explore new terrain. This exploration is made possible by the long history of Senegalese imitating and internalizing *afro*, and jazz in particular, into local musical practices. From this history Senegalese become familiar with African diasporic musical elements including syncopation, timbre, polyrhythms, repetition, and a vocal and melodic quality associated with the blues.⁸⁹ These elements are also critical to indigenous musical practices such as *mbalax*. Instead of focusing on analyzing difference, I suggest a subtle redirection to analyses focusing on the tensions between similarity and difference. This redirection broadens our understanding of how cosmopolitanism is practiced and how ideas of blackness are mediated in performances.

Murray's project also realizes two goals within this black Atlantic collaboration. First, Senegalese musicians can realize their desire to explore international musics and, second, Murray is able to pursue his artistic and political agendas. He aims to create:

African-American music mixed with African music to come together to make a meeting point, not something that is a slogan but something real ... something that is totally different than what we could do alone. Joint forces. I'm looking for a total meeting. I don't want to fuse, I've tried other fusions but to me that would be the most powerful music that I can think of, the best African music with the best jazz. I'm not interested in going to Cuba and mixing, I mean that's been done. I'm not from Cuba; I'm from somewhere in Africa. I'd just like to find that place and know that I've touched

⁸⁹ See Kubik (2000) for a detailed discussion regarding connections between the United States, Caribbean, and Africa within the blues.

home. Look, I went to a place where I'm supposed to be from. I went to find the face of my mother, the face of my father and to find out where the fuck I'm coming from, doing the roots. Doing the roots thing trying to find out where my people are coming from. Just like what you're doing. You're trying to find out where you come from and then when you see the face of your mother you say, "Okay, I probably came from here." You see the face of your grandmother you see and say, "Oh yeah maybe I came from here, all right." (Murray, January 8, 2000)

Africa as home is a powerful idea in African-American culture. US jazz musicians have long been mediating this and other aspects of African imaginings in music, from accounts of musicians who remember Congo Square in New Orleans to musicians who visit and live in Africa, or mediate the idea of Africa in their music today (Weinstein 1993). Even though Murray was born in the United States and now lives in France, Africa remains a powerful imaginary home, his "roots," where he seeks the knowledge and connection to his origins that Billy Jones found in Saint-Louis or that Senegalese feel in their *mbalax* and *sabar* rhythms. Murray's spiritual, political, and personal quests provide an example of contemporary transnational flows centered on the idea of a black Atlantic realized through music. Through performing a mix of *mbalax* and jazz, recording the CD, *Fo Deuk Revue* (i.e., *foo dëkk*: where are you from?), traveling and working in Senegal, and equitably distributing publishing rights among the composers of *Fo Deuk*, Murray aims to create an idiom that reflects the current situation of cosmopolitans in the African diaspora and West Africa—an idiom informed by greater access to information through new technologies and media. Likewise, musicians in Dakar, Senegal, are involved in similar processes of collaborations with US artists such as Murray, and in the appropriation of New World musics such as jazz to articulate their modern identities.

As a result of the multiple ways that Senegalese modern identities (e.g., black, French, African, and cosmopolitan) have borrowed, interpreted, and incorporated jazz into their popular music (especially *mbalax*) and culture, jazz in Senegal has become more than just a genre; it is an imaginary where the ideas of roots, pan-Africanism, and connection to the West are celebrated. With its institutionalization by governmental organizations and national festivals, jazz is identified with Senegalese society and the world of nations. In this way, Senegalese musicians claim jazz as both part of their cosmopolitan heritage and as a vital link to modernity in the black Atlantic.

Conclusion

It is a Saturday evening, April 8, 2000, and I am at the Sunrise Jazz club in the Medina. Tonight vocalist and drummer Pape Niang headlines a *variété* event featuring mostly *afro* styles based on diaspora urban dance music accompanied by *mbalax* rhythms. As I approach the club's entrance I gaze upon the life-size murals of John Coltrane as he appeared in the late 1950s and early 1960s and to the right, Miles Davis in his last incarnation as a fusionist of contemporary black music in the 1980s. Inside the club is packed. The patrons' age range spans from youth in their twenties to elders in their sixties. In the audience I recognize the usual regulars, but tonight, there is an increased number of intelligentsia: teachers, journalists, and bureaucrats who associate jazz with their youth when the music was the soundtrack of *Négritude*. Foreigners rarely come here; they prefer the clubs downtown in the Plateau and in the hotels and casinos.

The atmosphere is intimate and surprisingly familiar. I am drawn to the pictures on the walls of Thelonius Monk, Dizzy Gillespie, Charlie Parker, Joe Zawinul, Bill Evans, Lester Young, Billie Holliday, Sonny Rollins, Miles Davis, and John Coltrane. The pictures remind me of similar ones that hang in the Village Vanguard in New York City. For my Senegalese friends who have traveled abroad the pictures similarly evoke transnational memories and also of nostalgic past when Dakar was the jazz capital of West Africa and the American jazz masters were admired and respected as creators of an idiom and style that pointed to an alternative way that Africans could be modern than the black *assimilé* offered by the French. One alternative way that Senegalese practiced their modernity, or Senegaleseness, was through *mbalax*, an indigenous popular music that has

as many expressions as jazz. This *variété* event, for example, portrays a more explicit engagement with the African diaspora imaginary than this dissertation's opening anecdote narrating the *mbalax pur et dur* performance of Thione Seck and his group Raam Daan. In the Seck event, urban dance from the diaspora came from a DJ and the *mbalax* was played live by four percussionists, a rhythm section, and Seck on vocals. Alternatively, at the Niang event *afro* performances of the diaspora music was live and accompanied by a sole *sabar* percussionist. Even though there is admiration and respect for African diasporic styles, Senegalese artists remain committed to asserting their own presence in the black Atlantic, a central theme of this dissertation.

During the evening of *variété* Pape Niang sings many soul songs in Wolof, French, and a little English, a mark of the cosmopolitan. Guest vocalists sit in who often sing in a traditional style that Senegalese associate with rurality, *cosaan* (tradition), roots, and the griot tradition of: singing praises to wealthy patrons; bringing the past into the present with fables communicating Senegalese values, heroic deeds of warrior kings and Muslims who fought the French; and praises to Senegalese Sufi saints. The Sufi leaders most praised this night are the Murid Cheikh Amadu Bamba and the Tijan Abdul Aziz.

Tonight guitarist Vieux Mac Faye sits in with the group. Mac is a popular sideman for top *mbalax* groups and famous for his jazz improvisation skills. The audience is in rapture because this is Pape's original lineup from years ago when he and Mac played *variété* for twelve years in the hotels around the Dakar Region. Tonight's line-up is two electric guitars, electric bass, trap drums, electric keyboard, and *sabar* and *djembe* drums. Pape is known for his renditions of African American black music such as Stevie Wonder's version of "I Just Called to Say I Love You", "Killing Me Softly" sung

in English with a reggae backbeat falling somewhere between rhythm and blues artist Roberta Flack's original version and the Fugees' hip-hop version, and Ray Charles's version of "Georgia. Mac's improvisations on "Ruby My Dear" and a twelve-bar blues accompanied by *sabar* drumming elicits cheers from the crowd and requests for more. The group performs a version of jazz fusion guitarist George Benson's interpretation of "On Broadway." However, Mac and Pape's version differs from Benson's with the inclusion of the *sabar* drum to the standard jazz fusion texture. Mac plays the head as Benson does, and sings in a heavily French accented English. During his solo he scats in unison with his guitar, much like Benson's trademark style, but it is not a note-for-note rendition of Benson's solo. Mac's interpretation includes imitating the *mbalax* rhythms and timbre heard on the *tama* (talking drum), a style that distinguishes him from other guitarists and adds a distinctly Senegalese sound.

After the set, the Mande griot Soribe Kouyaté takes the stage. His *kora*, a 21-stringed harp-lute, is modified with tuning pegs (instead of leather strips) and a pickup. Soribe begins with Phil Collins's "In the Air Tonight" something I hear frequently on the radio and in other musicians' repertoires. The percussionist sits behind Soribe and plays a soft pattern on the *djembe*. They improvise a vamp. *Mbalax* keyboardist Njankou Sembene joins them and explores the diminished chord voicings that jazz composer and saxophonist David Murray taught him on a recent Dakar visit.

This *variété* event highlights an engagement with African diaspora musics and expands our understanding of the circulation of *mbalax* in Dakar. The visual images of African American musicians, both inside and outside Sunrise Jazz, accentuate the sonic renditions of diaspora played by Pape Niang's group who fuse and slide between soul,

reggae, salsa, and the blues. Senegalese build upon these diaspora foundations with *mbalax* drumming, praise singing in Wolof, and improvisations on the kora. Tales of love (“Killing me Softly”) and the American landscape (“Georgia) encounter praises to Senegalese Sufi heroes. The improvisations, variations, and transformations of the wide swath of genres in a format borrowed from the French *variété*, attests to the resiliency of the Senegalese cosmopolitan practice to include their sound in the matrix of a transnational black consciousness and Western modernity.

Understanding the musical expression of this cosmopolitan blackness has been a central concern of this dissertation. My approach to understanding the broad features of cosmopolitanism relied on a model focused on three dynamics: internalization through the socialization of foreign ideas and musics over decades into local culture, intensive engagement with the expressive cultural practices and material culture of strangers, and understanding the influence of other transnational formations on local lifeways. At the *variété* event, for example, the musicians’ ability to improvise and collaborate across idioms comes from decades of internalizing diaspora and other foreign musics into Senegalese urban dance through attending concerts, often sponsored by *Négritude*, and from playing, dancing, and listening to urban dance musics in public venues and private places. Engagement with diaspora musics occurs through material objects and collaborations with artists from abroad such as Mac Faye learning George Benson licks from a cassette recording and David Murray hiring and working with Nankou Sembene on the *Fo Deuk Revue* (1997) recording and tour. Lastly, playing Afro American dance music along with indigenous genres indexes the histories of the American Civil Rights Movement and *Négritude* that figured prominently in the two generations of musicians

performing at the *variété* event. These three features of cosmopolitanism facilitated the representation of different identities and enabled the production of new ones as musicians improvised and created new pieces that articulated their modern lives.

This dissertation has been an extended meditation on both the representation and practice of Senegalese cosmopolitanism and modern identities in popular music. I have been concerned with the pivotal role music plays in the lives of Senegalese and how it intersects with politics, culture, religion, and imagined communities. I explored how the agentive power of cosmopolitanism was used by Senegalese to counter essentialism from the West and confront political corruption, urban malaise, and poverty at home. Urban dance music has been a key ingredient in this cosmopolitan project. Nationalists used urban dance music in a top-down cosmopolitanism to assert a postcolonial Senegalese identity to the world through sponsoring international and local festivals, concerts, and cultural institutions. Lay Senegalese used a bottom-up practice of cosmopolitanism, principally through *mbalax*, to shape, produce, and reproduce their modern identities in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries.

This dissertation is the first English language monograph of *mbalax* to-date and the first ethnography on musical cosmopolitanism in West Africa that focuses on an urban dance music created in Africa and not an adoption of a diasporic genre such as Ghanaian rap (Weaver 2009) and jazz in Accra, Ghana (Feld 2012). Agency is highlighted in these studies of musical cosmopolitanism in Ghana, attesting to the influence of Paul Gilroy's *Black Atlantic* (1993), a pivotal work for its inclusion of agency as a critical feature of a transatlantic black modernity. However, Gilroy did not include African agency in his transoceanic model. My research joins that of other

Africanist and diaspora scholars who rectify this omission by including African culture and literature in the discourse of black Atlantic studies such as anthropologist Lorand Matory's (2005, 2006) investigation of Candomblé across the Atlantic, art historian Robert Farris Thompson's (2011) exploration of the arts across in the Afro-Atlantic, and literary scholar Brent Edward's (2003) analysis of literature and expressive culture between Africans and the diaspora during the inter-war years.

My search for African agency in the black Atlantic and global modernity led me to investigate the history and practice of Wolof, black, and Muslim identities. In the hundreds of music performances and cultural events held in Senegal every week, the Wolof *mbalax* rhythm figures prominently either in the urban dance music or traditional *sabar*. This ubiquity of *mbalax* parallels its longevity. Since the founding of the Wolof Empire in the thirteenth century the *mbalax* accompanying rhythms of the *sabar* has been part of the social life of the Greater Senegambian Region. As Wolof hegemony grew over the centuries, so too did the *sabar*. One of the core values of Wolofness is openness to the lifeways and expressive cultures of strangers. The musical expression of this value was enacted through griots' incorporating the rhythms and dances of different ethnic groups into the *sabar*. Over time as different ethnic groups became subsumed into the Wolof so too did their rhythms, songs, and dances. This translocal cosmopolitan dynamic remained strong during colonialism and thrived in the postcolony when popular musics from the West and other African countries circulated widely in Dakar. By the 1970s urban Wolofness was firmly in place and *mbalax* became an urban dance music that was the musical expression of a postcolonial African subject. The cosmopolitanism of Wolofness that was based on cultural values from the thirteenth and fourteenth

centuries continues to shape urban Wolofness in the twenty-first century.

Griots, the curators of tradition and expressive cultural practices continue to influence Senegalese society and culture. Almost all *mbalax* bands use Wolof griot drummers and many singers are griots. For modern singers who are not griots, knowledge and facility with the performance practices of this caste group are requisite for successful performances. For example, *mbalax* singer Ousman “Ouza” Diallo’s, use of griot animation practices (Ouza is not a griot) contributed to the success of “Le Vote,” a song and video that criticized voter fraud during the recent presidential elections. Griots remain deeply valued in Dakar for their skills as cultural brokers and representatives of the lay population. Youssou N’Dour, for example, is now the Minister of Tourism after a failed bid for the presidency in the 2011 elections. Through *mbalax* and the use of new media and technologies these singers achieved prominent and influential positions in Dakar that transcend the historical marginalized role of the griot.

Concomitant with the expansion of Wolofness in Senegal was the rise of Islam, the second of the three identities explored in this dissertation. *Mbalax* is a particularly potent site for conjoining the different meanings and practices of Sufism in Senegal through the agentive power of docility. That is, through practices that proclaim submission to a marabout and Allah, practitioners activate the strength and faith they need to achieve their desires, dreams, and broader knowledge within a Muslim framework (Mahmood 2001:210). In *mbalax* docility is practiced through invocation of the *shahada* (profession of faith), praise of Senegalese Sufi warriors who fought the French, and prominent marabouts of the Senegalese Sufi brotherhoods. This praise simultaneously indexes ideas of nationalism, Wolof values, and women’s agency.

The third identity, blackness, is invoked in *mbalax* primarily through the internalization of African diaspora and African popular music practices that Senegalese have performed, danced, and listened to since the 1940s. Even though there are multiple generations playing *mbalax*, the cultural policy of *Négritude* and its legacy of promoting black pride through popular music serve as a powerful ideological fulcrum for imagining Senegaleseness.

My research of *mbalax* offers a more complete understanding of Senegaleseness as well as new perspectives on cosmopolitanism. The investigation on the roots of Senegalese cosmopolitanism led me to consider cosmopolitanism beyond Western post-Enlightenment narratives. By tracing the practice of *mbalax*, Wolofness, and Islam in Senegal I found that a local cosmopolitanism existed as far back as the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. The cultural values taught through performances of the Njaanjaan Njaay Epic are also at the core of contemporary Senegalese values and cosmopolitanism such as respect for the cultural practices of strangers, non-violent conflict resolution, and mutual obligation between castes and classes to respect and take care of each other. These core values counter essentialism from the West that portrays Africans as primitive, ordinary, and disconnected to global modernity. What could we learn if we paid increased attention to other local cosmopolitan formations such as the Yoruba and Swahili where social hierarchies are not governed by a caste system and include griots?

Future directions

As one of the first ethnographies on musical cosmopolitanism in West Africa that investigates an urban dance genre indigenous to the region and not a versioning of an African diasporic genre, I consider two areas that deserve more attention: dance and *afro*.

In anthropologist Steven Feld's ethnography of jazz cosmopolitanism in Accra, Ghana (2012) he focuses on listening histories and experiences of listening to develop an idea of acoustemology. Like Bob White's ethnography on *rumba* in the Congo, Feld uses the stories listeners tell of their early encounters with music to reconstruct a history of cosmopolitanism. I think there is a wealth of information that could be discovered by delving more deeply into the dancing histories of *mbalax*, such as tracing the circulation of dances between the nightclub, music videos, wrestling matches, and the streets of Dakar. When speaking with Sallam Diallo I was struck by how many dances he had created. At the *soirée Sénégalaise* that he and other musicians performed, the evenings began with a *mélange* of musics from Africa and the diaspora and culminated at the end of the evening in *mbalax pur et dur* and *sabar*. Throughout the course of the evening dancers adjusted their moves to rhythms developed under different historical and contemporary conditions. Understanding the historical and contemporary social and cultural conditions that give rise to certain dances will reveal important knowledge on how dancers embody ideas of diaspora, blackness, Wolofness, and Islam. But more importantly, I would like to untangle the internal logics of dance and how it contributes to feelings of being inside or "*ci biir*." There is more to be said about the relationship between joy and dance in the global and local circulation of music (see Stokes 2007: 14-15).

Lastly, I want to take the idea of blackness in *mbalax* a step further than my focus on diasporic connections to include African relationships. Most scholarship on blackness in West African expressive culture references diasporic connections because of the real and imaginary links across the Atlantic. Most scholarship focuses on the differences and

similarities between Africans and the African diaspora (Hayes 2001; Ralph 2009, Stanyek 2004). I take a cue from the Senegalese interest in *afro*, that is, African popular music on the continent that is often strongly influenced by music from the diaspora. But *afro* in West Africa is also about internalizing and engaging with other African popular musics such as Congolese rumba, *musique moderne* in Mali, and South African jive. Are the issues Africans encounter with other African popular musics similar to those of *afro* musicians in the diaspora? I believe investigating how musicians' playing *afro* on the continent and abroad play, experiment, and improvise with tensions between different genres.

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Appendices

Appendix I

“Soiree Senegalaise” 1998. Salaam Diallo *Ya Ma Saf*. Cassette. My translation from the Wolof.

Opens with *tassu* and *sabar*.

<i>Waaw Koo kooy Taala Sekk Jéeri</i>	Yes it is Tala Seck Jeeri
<i>Gooru Aja ñan</i>	Brother of Aja Niang
<i>Waaw!</i>	Yes
<i>Uh! Huh!</i>	Uh Huh!
<i>Cëy lii</i>	Yes!
<i>Ndax Lan</i>	Why? (response to tama question)
<i>Bëkëtë Bëkëtë</i>	Baar mbaye <i>rhythm</i> begins
<i>Baar Mbaye</i>	[recited at sabars and <i>ngente</i>]
<i>Bëkëtë Bëkëtë</i>	[name of rhythm and sabar dance,
<i>Baar Mbaye</i>	drummers are playing the rhythm here]
<i>Tey ma dem la Mbuur geej</i>	Today I go to Mbour Beach
<i>Baar Mbaye</i>	
<i>Auberge des Coquillages</i>	<i>Auberge des Coquillages</i> (Seashell Inn)
<i>Baar Mbaye</i>	
<i>Kër Tata kati</i>	Home of Tanta Kati
<i>Baar Mbaye</i>	
<i>Soirée Senegalaise</i>	Senegalese party
<i>Baar Mbaye</i>	
<i>Mba ma dem la “Sahel”</i>	I’m going to Sahel nightclub
<i>Baar Mbaye</i>	
<i>Mba “Thioissan”</i>	To Thioissan nightclub
<i>Baar Mbaye</i>	
<i>Tey ma dem ba “Biddéew”</i>	Today I go to Biddew nightclub
<i>Baar Mbaye</i>	
<i>Mba ba “Ravin”</i>	To Ravin nightclub
<i>Baar Mbaye</i>	
<i>Mba ba “Kili”</i>	To Kilimanjaro nightclub
<i>Baar Mbaye</i>	
<i>Si “Edouardo”</i>	To Edouardo nightclub
<i>Baar Mbaye</i>	

<i>Deggat ma sama musique réew</i>	Listen/Understand my country's music
<i>Baar Mbaye</i>	
<i>Muy mbalax</i>	To the <i>mbalax</i>
<i>Baar Mbaye</i>	
<i>Jox ma sama "grand boubou"</i>	Give me my <i>grand boubou</i> (robe)
<i>Baar Mbaye</i>	
<i>Samba Sembe</i>	(male clothing)
<i>Baar Mbaye</i>	
<i>Maraa kiis</i>	Arab shoes
<i>Baar Mbaye</i>	
<i>Suma jigeen</i>	My sister (ladies)
<i>Baar Mbaye</i>	
<i>Saragalal sa cossan</i>	Honor your cultural values/traditions
<i>Baar Mbaye</i>	
<i>Di sol yére Wolof</i>	With wearing Wolof clothing
<i>Baar Mbaye</i>	
<i>Ndokel ak sér</i>	Blouse and wrap that goes around the
<i>Baar Mbaye</i>	waist, smock-like blouse
<i>Tey baas ak mariñeer</i>	
<i>Baar Mbaye</i>	
<i>Séru Kumba Lawbe</i>	The wrap of Kumba Laobe (or Koumba
<i>Baar Mbaye</i>	Lamba, a generalized name for a Laobe
<i>Ak Baba Kumba Lawbe</i>	woman used by tassu praisers)
<i>Baar Mbaye</i>	
<i>Kumba Lawbe Kura jël ya</i>	The boubou of Kumba Laobe
<i>Baar Mbaye</i>	
<i>Ubil Layti Ngalam ka nan moolu</i>	
<i>Xujja Paate Sambala Ganjuleen</i>	
<i>Baar Mbaye</i>	
<i>Baayu Coro</i>	Father of Choro
<i>Baar Mbaye</i>	
<i>Ne bilaay goor ga</i>	The noble
<i>Baar Mbaye</i>	
<i>Luraa</i>	Laurent
<i>(tassu & bàkk)</i>	
<i>Waaw.</i>	Yes!
<i>Uh huh!</i>	Uh huh!
<i>Ndey saan</i>	Wow!
<i>Aah!</i>	Aah!

(Baar Mbaye rhythm)

<i>Jox ma gorong gi</i>	Give me the <i>gorong</i> (sabar drum)
<i>Baar Mbaye</i>	
<i>Jox ma thiol gi</i>	Give me the <i>thiol</i> (sabar drum)
<i>Baar Mbaye</i>	
<i>Ana bal bi</i>	Where's the <i>mbung-mbung bal</i>
<i>Baar Mbaye</i>	(sabar drum)
<i>Ana Tungune gi</i>	Where's the <i>tungune</i> (sabar drum)
<i>Baar Mbaye</i>	
<i>Tëggal Farwu jar</i>	Play <i>farwu jar</i> (sabar dance and
<i>Baar Mbaye</i>	rhythm lit: "worthy boyfriend")
<i>Ceebu jën</i>	Ceebu jën (sabar dance/rhythm)
<i>Am ndëj</i>	Am njdëj (sabar dance/rhythm)
<i>Baar Mbaye</i>	Baar Mbaye
<i>Yanaab</i>	Yanaab (sabar dance/rhythm)
<i>Dinañu Waalo, waalo, waalo</i>	We will dance the Waalo-waalo- waalo
<i>Vieux Sing Faye</i>	Vieux Sing Faye
<i>Baar Mbaye</i>	
<i>Doudou Ndiaye Rose</i>	Doudou Ndiaye Rose
<i>Yamagoor Seck</i>	Yamagoor Seck
<i>Ma Sekk Faatma Njaay</i>	Ma Sekk Faatma Njaay
<i>Michael Soumah</i>	Michael Soumah (DJ, animator, producer at RTS)
<i>Woowal ki la do mballaxi</i>	Name the players of mballax
<i>Raas</i>	Select or pick
<i>Sa giis, Sa giis, Sa giis</i>	Your understanding or you see

@ 2:15 (electric instruments enter)

<i>Soiree Senegalaise</i>	Senegalese party
<i>Ñoo ko noom</i>	It is for us
<i>Nanu leen ko fonk</i>	We respect it
<i>Ku mel me Pape Njaas</i>	Pape Ndiaye your work on
<i>Sa liggéey ci mballax</i>	mbalax is fruitful
<i>Rafet na lool</i>	It is nice/good
<i>Ndey Eric Barbosaa</i>	Cousin of Eric Barboza
<i>Allaji Mbaye</i>	El Hadji Mbaye
<i>Yaa bëgg Senegal</i>	You love Senegal
<i>Taanata mbax xura mbällllax xagin</i>	

*Taawran gin gin
Ru mbappax papax
Gin gin
Ru rëmbax, rëmbax, rëmbax
Gin gis
Cëy!.....
Ci cin
Rāggi kin sa gin
Ee! Ee! Aa!*

Onomatopoeia of sabar
rhythms in tassu-like phrasing

*Waay Yow xale bi a mën a fecc
Kii Kan la?
Nguuda Njaay ak Badu Njaay
Demleen ngoon
Raagi giis (6x)*

Who is this woman dancing so well?
Who is she?
Nguuda Njaay and Badu Njaay
They go dance

*Rëw Rëw Rës
Tey ma seeti lawbe Senegal
Rëw Rëw Rës
Laobe Senegal a baax
Rëw Rëw Rës
Kii mooy fecc bu bees bi
Nu ngi tudd
Gisal mi may deme
Damay jekki di dem*

I'm visiting the Laobes of Senegal who are
very friendly and nice

Laobe Senegal is good

This is a new dance
The name of it
Watch me dance
I'm dancing it

*Yaa ma saf
Ma saf la
Yëfyi safante la Kat*

I like you
You like me
The thing is to like each other

Bu la bëgge bëgg ko

If you like it, like it, its important to just
like each other

*Yëfyi safante la kat
Bu lo noppe nopp ko
Yëfyi safante la kat
Xana giso fireel Bacilli*

It needs to be shown/reciprocated
If he loves you, love him
The thing is to love each other
Don't you see how Bacilli and Kana are
happy
Both
Love is reciprocated
It is not griot
Nor géer
No
Its important to love each other

*Aka ñaar
Yëfyi nobabbante la kat
Amul gewel
Amul géer
Amul
Yëfyi safanet la Kat
Xana gise Kumba Joób*

Ak Soose Njaay
Yëfyi sofante la kat
Lat Mbay dikkal

(Tama solo)

Luy jaay sa ja ba
Yäppu xar
Yappu nag
Yeelu mbote (11x)

Luy jaay sa ja ba
Tamaate ak Salaat akum géjj

Luy jaay sa ja ba
Banana ak sanaana ak bannax

Gisal ni may deme
Damay jéggi di dem
Gisal mi may deme (11x)

Lat ñówal
Yeen a mëna laaj
Soo ame jabar loo koy may
Kilo oor
Soo ame jabar loo koy may
Si woo jamãa
Soo ame jabar loo koy may
Yóbbu yaayam nãkka
Soo ame jabar loo koy may
Di ka foowal di ko reewal
Soo ame jabar loo koy may
Di ko raay di ko léebal
Soo ame jabar loo koy may
Yéena mëna laaj
Soo ame jabar loo koy may
Bu may foón ma koy foón

Watch how Kumba Joop
 And Sossé Ndiay love each other
 Love is reciprocated
 Lat Mbaye. Come on!

(Tama solo)

What do you sell at the market
 Sheep meat
 Beef meat
 Leg of Lamb

What do you sell at the market?
 Tomato, lettuce, and smoked fish

What do you sell at the market
 Bananas and things like that

Watch how I do it (progress)
 I'm going for it
 Watch me do it

Lat? Come on!
 You ask too much
 What gift should you give to your wife?
 A Kilo of gold
 What gift should you give to your wife?
 A diamond signet
 What gift should you give to your wife?
 Send your mother to Mecca
 What gift should you give your wife?
 Pamper and cradle her
 What gift should you give your wife?
 Caress her and sing her songs
 What gift should you give your wife?
 It is you that asked me
 What gift to give your wife
 If she embraces you, respond

Appendix II

“Yen bi” (“The Burden”), Thione Seck, 1999. *Favori*.

Verse

Bi ma gaa yi jàmbo
Yow yaa ma wèttali ee (2x)
Adama Baxaaw teewuma
Maam oo, Maam bóoy

Verse

When the guys have failed me
 It is you that have accompanied me
 Adama Bakaw is not here
 Oh grandfather (Amadou Bamba)

Chorus (instrumental)

Verse

Bi ma yen wi diise
Yow yaa ma wèttali ee! (2x)
Adama Baxaaw teewuma
Maam oo, Maam bóoy

Verse

When I was heavy
 You’re the one that kept me company
 Adama Bakaw is not here
 Oh grandfather

Chorus (instrumental)

Verse

Bi ma yen wi diise
Yow yaa ma wèttali ee! (2x)
Adama Baxaaw teewuma
Maam oo, Maam bóoy

Verse

When I was heavy
 You’re the one that kept me company
 Adama Bakaw is not here
 Oh grandfather

Mbalax pur et dur section

Sabar solo

Verse

Jere jëf ee Maam bóoy (2x)
Dègg na sa wax
Xam sa yoon Maam bòoy
Jere jëf ee Maam bóoy

Verse

Thank you grandfather (riffing)
 I heard you saying
 I know you are the path grandfather
 Thank you grandfather

Chorus

Jere jëf ee Maam bòoy (2x)

Chorus

Thank you grandfather (riffing)

Verse

Yàlla rekk ay buur
Gëm naa ko, Maam booy
Yàlla rekk ah man
Gëm naa ko, Maam booy
Jere jëf ee Maam bòoy

Verse

Only the lord is king
 I believe him, Grandfather
 Only God
 I believe him, Grandfather
 Thank you grandfather (riffing)

Yoon bi leer na, Maam booy

The road is clear, Grandfather

Chorus

Jere jëf ee Maam bòoy

Verse

Yow mi may deey yoon wi (3x)

Yow mi may samal yoon wi

You who tells me the ways

You (grandfather) who protects me
protects the road

Chorus

Jere jëf ee Maam bòoy

I cannot pay you back

Verse

Alxamdu li laaxi (2x)

Yàlla rekk ay man buur

I thank you God

God's the only king

Some phrases sung live

Amuma sa fay Maam bóoy

Yow mi may seppi xam xam

Naam oo

Yow mi may jammal yoon wi

you who gets knowledge for me

I cannot pay you back

Thank you

you who helps me take the right path

Alxamdu li laaxi (2x)

Yàlla rekk ay buur

I thank you God

Only the lord is king

gëm naa loolu man

Yàlla rekk a mën

I believe that myself

only god can do anything

Translations by Timothy Mangin

Appendix III

Listening Guide to CD

- Track 1: “Doomu Baay” (“My Brother”), Thione Seck, 1999. *Mbalax 2000*, Dakar: Bootleg CD. This dissertation’s opening anecdote begins with this song. This *mbalax pur et dur* piece uses the classic two part structure where the first part (0-2:50) is medium tempo with complete stanzas of lyrics and dancers swaying gently from side to side. After a thirty second musical interlude (2:20-2:50) the second part begins (2:50) with a faster tempo, louder *sabar*, vocalist riffing on stock phrases and praise singing, and dancers moving more energetically, some of whom engage the drummer in call and response.
- Track 2: “Yen bi” (“The Burden”), Thione Seck, 1999. *Favori*. Cassette. Dakar. Cassette. This song was used as an example of the verse/chorus structure of *mbalax*. At 2:04 the syncopated and signature keyboard part of *mbalax* called the “*marimba*” is clearly heard.
- Track 3: “Kaolack.” Named after a region in Senegal, the Kaolack rhythm is used in many *mbalax* songs. This track is an excerpt from the longer *sabar* “Kaolack” piece played in street *sabars*.
- Track 4: “Kaolack” *bàkk*. A *sabar* piece begins with a *bàkk*, a composed section that represents the unique style of the *gèwël* performers and distinguishes competing *sabar* groups from each other.
- Track 5: “Kaolack,” Sing Sing Rhythm and Cheikh Taïrou M’Baye, *Mame Bouna*. 2003. CD. This is the complete version of “Kaolack” that includes the *bàkk* followed by the main “Kaolack” rhythm, variations, and improvisations by the lead drummer
- Track 6: “Ndiaye,” Orchestra Baobab, *Baobab N’Wolof*, Originally released in the early 1970’s, “Ndiaye” features Abdoulaye M’Boup, the first *gèwël* to successfully fuse traditional singing with *musique moderne*. M’Boup influenced *mbalax* singers such as Thione Seck, Doudou Sow, and Youssou N’Dour. Additionally, this piece and exciting use of electronic effects by the guitarist’s use of reverb (4:40) and distortion (5:33) on top of a reggae skank rhythm.
- Track 7: “Bamba,” Sahel, *Sénégal Flash: Kaolack* (1993). Originally released in the early 1970s on LP, “Bamba” was one of the first *mbalax* recordings and distinct for its use of a *zïkr* and ample use of *sabar* drums when timbales and congas were preferred. The piece follows the format of a *sabar* dance, opening with a *bàkk*

followed by a main rhythm. Vocalist Idrissa Diop, uses the Wolof panegyric *tassu* throughout the piece.

- Track 8: “Baar M’Baye” *sabar* rhythm excerpted from *Mame Bouna* (2003). This is the rhythm that Sallam Diallo used in “*Soiree sénégalaise*.”
- Track 9: “Soiree Sénégalaise ” Salaam Diallo, *Ya Ma Saf* (1999). A popular *mbalax pur et dur* song featuring *tassu*, *sabar*, interaction between vocalist and drummers, two part song structure where the fast part begins with the marimba part (2:12). See translation of lyrics in Appendix I.
- Track 10: “Sama Nene” (“My Baby”), Viviane N’Dour, *Entre Nous* (1993). “Sama Nene” was a hit in 1999-2000. The song follows a two-part structure with a guest appearance by Youssou N’Dour’s lead *sabar* player Mbaye N’Diaye Faye who performs *tassu*. This was one of the songs women enjoyed dancing to while facing the mirror. The piece encourages women and men to respect each other, with a strong emphasis on women obeying men.
<http://youtu.be/Ahk8zSgyiMI?hd=1>
- Track 11: “Jambat” (Complain), *Duwees. Ceddo* (1998). An *afro-mbalax* piece critiquing poverty and corruption that became popular during the 1999-2000 elections and was seen as a threat by the incumbent ruling party as a threat. The video was aired on private cable instead of the free channel on RTS.
- Track 12: “Zikroulah zikr” is an excerpt from the longer “Zikroulah” Fatou Géwël. This excerpt is the slow zikr section that precedes the faster paced section. The women’s timbre and vocal quality are representative of traditional and religious songs.
- Track 13: “Zikroulah kaolack” is the second half of “Zikroulah.” The underlying *mbalax* accompanying pattern is based on the “Kaolack” *sabar* rhythm in the street *sabars* led by women.
- Track 14: “Zikroulah,” Fatou Géwël. *Mbalax 2000* (2000). Another popular piece heard in the nightclub praises the mother of Bamba and serves to instruct women on the ideal qualities of Muslim propriety. Géwël’s voice represents an ideal pious woman and curator of tradition. This is *mbalax pur et dur*.
- Track 15: “Abdul Aziz Sy,” Dieuf Dieul, *Fo Deuk Revue* (1997). An example of *afro-mbalax* sung in Pulaar, produced by American David Murray, and features improvisations by Murray that fits into *mbalax* rhythmic feel. The arrangement was honed in the mixing studio but first charted in the *Teràngë* nightclub in Dakar.
- Track 16: “Taara,” Samba Diabare Samb, *Dieuf Sa Yeuf*, (1999?). An example of traditional *gëwël* vocals and a *xalam*, the Wolof lute. Traditional *mbalax* singers emulate Samb’s traditional vocal style. This song recalls the Muslim *toorodo*

movement and praises Shaykh Umar Tal. Frere Guissé's also sing a version of this song.

Appendix IV

Glossary of terms

<i>addiya</i>	A gift presented to a marabout.
<i>bàkk</i>	The composed sections of a <i>sabar</i> piece that represents the style of the performing <i>gèwël</i> ensemble.
<i>baraka</i>	A spiritual blessing or grace often ascribed to a marabout who exemplifies ideal qualities of a Muslim and person.
<i>daara</i>	A religious school in rural Senegal led by a marabout.
<i>dayira</i>	A Senegalese Sufi group that meets regularly in the city to review and sing the teachings of their marabout and the founder of their brotherhood. <i>Dayiras</i> also provide material support and social networks for a members to pursure commercial endeavors.
<i>gàmmu</i>	A Tijaniyya religious celebration held on the prophet's birthday (<i>Mawlud</i>).
griot	Originally a French term for the social order or caste of dancers, drummers, musicians, historians and curators of tradition found widely in the Greater Senegambia Region.
<i>gèwël</i>	A Wolof griot.
<i>gawulo</i>	A Tukolor griot. The <i>gawulo</i> are also the griots of the <i>gèwël</i> .
<i>màggal</i>	A Murid religious celebration. The annual <i>grand màggal</i> held in the Murid holy city of Touba is the largest religious celebration in Senegal.
marabout	A generic term for a Muslim religious leader.
<i>mbokk</i>	An individual's family, friends, and intimate social network that provides spiritual, financial, and moral support.
<i>ndigal</i>	A directive issued by a marabout to his or her followers.
<i>ngente</i>	A baptism on the eighth day of a baby's life. The baby's name is proclaimed to a gathering of <i>mbokks</i> related to the parents.
<i>sëriñ</i>	A Sufi leader, marabout.

shahadah

Profession of faith that fulfills the first pillar of Islam.
"*Ashhadu Alla Ilaha Illa Allah Wa Ashhadu Anna Muhammad
Rasulu Allah*" "There is no God but Allah, and Muhammad is
his messenger."