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PARALLEL WORLDS? COMMODIFYING ETHNIC DIVERSITY IN THE PARIS WORLD MUSIC SCENE

(Submitted for review. Co-authored by R.C. Kloosterman)
4.1 INTRODUCTION

Migrants from less-developed countries may face all kinds of obstacles in trying to eke out a living in advanced urban economies. Often lacking in resources (human, financial and social capital) finding a job or setting up a business can be difficult. Many migrants, however, do possess a resource which, in principle, can be useful. Their cultural or “ethnic” capital, which can be traced back to their countries of origin, may give them a competitive edge in creating cultural products such as clothing, dance, and music. Converting their rather unique resources into sellable products, though the process of commodification, is, however, anything but straightforward. The term commodity itself is one that has left social scientists across disciplines inspired and perplexed. From its use in the field of political economy and economics, more recently the term has been instrumental in discussions on the cultural economy and the rise of cultural industries more specifically. At times in the cultural field, the term commodification has been associated with the incursion of industrial standardisation in the production of cultural goods, creating an opposition of commodification to culture, as if the former were a (threat of) degeneracy of the latter and a subsequent predestined loss of autonomy for the individual (Adorno and Bernstein 2001; Adorno and Horkheimer 2002).

A review of definitions and applications of the term reveals highly subjective and often contradictory interpretations (Castree 2004), ranging from a focus on the value of objects, their alienability, and their potential to be bought and sold in exchange for money (see Jackson 1999 for a review). While from a Marxist perspective a commodity is an object intended primarily for exchange in the context of the ‘institutional, psychological and economic conditions of capitalism,’ applying a definition involving the production of use-value for others reveals the presence of commodities in pre-capitalist societies, notably in the form of barter (Appadurai 1986: 86). Appadurai insightfully noted that an understanding of what commodities are can only be achieved by considering how they are in particular moments in time and space, that is as objects ‘in motion,’ in a (potential or actual) state in their lives (Appadurai 1986: 16). The ‘candidacy’ of things to the commodity status should not be understood as an inevitable, temporal phase prior to commodification, but rather as a disposition in relation to the wider, contextual framework governing the exchangeability of objects (Appadurai 1986: 83). Rather than understanding commodities as a result of a specific production process, we share Appadurai’s view that ‘the flow of commodities in any given situation is a shifting compromise between socially regulated paths and competitively inspired diversions’ (1986: 85), not precluding a reversal of objects to a non-commodified state. There is not a linear, directional or purposive process of commodification, but rather a change in the nature of objects, resulting and contingent upon frameworks of value and exchange. The ‘significance that is attached to commodities differs markedly from one place to the other’ (Jackson 1999: 104). This has translated in calls to explore commodities as they move along trajectories, from production to exchange and consumption (Appadurai 1986) and more recently an agenda for the study of the
Our research combines these insights by offering an analysis of how commodification of a particular expression of culture, namely world music, takes place concretely. How, in other words, do sounds drawn from diverse cultures across the globe become goods of economic value in processes of production and consumption? What role do migrants play as potential vectors of this musical diversity? World music offers a highly pertinent case, given its complex geography entailing the diffusion of ‘local’ sounds to ‘global’ audiences (Guilbault 1993; Connell and Gibson 2003), via the intermediary of a limited number of production centres in Western Europe and North America (Taylor 1997). Our vantage point for this paper is the world music cluster located in Paris, and more particularly the mediation of musical diversity in multiple economic and cultural networks therein. While we will delve in more deeply into world music later, we should here raise the caveat that our research takes the mobilisation of cultural differences as inherent in world music itself. Indeed, research on commodity culture has highlighted transnational inflection of commodity stylization as a business resource, via the mobilisation of ethnic markers (Crang, Dwyer et al. 2003). In this paper, however we do not pass judgement nor seek to understand whether this mobilisation is an explicit strategy to gain access to employment for instance (for a case study on the Ecuadorian tourist industry and the negotiation of identities, see Crain 1996), although we will come back to this point in our conclusions.

Following a methodological précis, we start with a brief discussion of the processes of commodification in the cultural industries and what their distinct features might be. Here, we highlight the complex ecologies of cultural production and the role of intermediaries in articulating the relationship between supply and demand (section 2). With these building blocks, we turn our attention to the formulation of a new concept, namely that of the *commodification gradient*, as a socially embedded negotiated passage, albeit not an irreversible one, between creativity *in posse* and its commodity status. We use this to explore an interactionist approach to the world music opportunity structure and the dynamics of commodification of culture therein (section 3). Our framework is subsequently applied to the study of the Paris world music cluster, highlighting how commodification occurs along parallel value chains, exemplified in the presence of three market ‘clouts’: notably community, traditional and contemporary world music markets (section 4). We conclude with some pointers on the use of the term commodification in the cultural industries, its cultural and geographical dynamics, and an agenda for further research.

**Methodology**

This paper is based on a mix of qualitative research methods. The more substantive source of data comes from rich, non-directive interviews with key economic actors in the world music cluster in Paris (from the creative sphere, to loci of production and consumption). Following a review of Planètes Musiques (CIMT 2007), a directory of world music companies in France, respondents were selected on the basis of longevity in the industry, positions of responsibility at the head of key companies and institutions
in the field, and individuals in representative functions within the numerous (world) music sectoral associations. Interviews were conducted in 2008, at a time of inter-cluster mobilisation in support of a bid for public funding for a world music association to ease the adoption and transition to digital media. It was, hence, a time of reflexivity and questioning about the nature and direction of the cluster. In total, we conducted 38 interviews with key intermediaries in the cluster (label managers, venue directors and programmers, promotion agencies, artist managers, sectoral and cultural associations, record shop owners, and journalists, see Annex at the end of this chapter for a full list of respondents), providing a sample representing the core areas of the production of recorded music and live performance, and knowledge thereof. In addition, in summer 2010 we sent out an online survey to 252 musicians within the world music cluster, achieving a full response rate of 6.3%\(^1\), and a further 14 incomplete questionnaires (5.5%). In order to respect the privacy of these individuals, all interviews have been coded in the text. To complement the findings, secondary sources were gathered, particularly artists’ profiles, interviews and biographies, using specialized media (Mondomix and Radio France Inter websites) and mainstream newspapers (Le Monde and Libération articles and reviews over the last ten years).

### 4.2 COMMODIFICATION IN THE CULTURAL INDUSTRIES

Cultural industries are defined as activities concerned with the production and marketing of goods and services that have aesthetic or semiotic content (Bourdieu 1971; Scott 2000), serving primarily an ‘aesthetic or expressive, rather than a clearly utilitarian function’ (Hirsch 1972: 641). Cultural industries are very much part of the post-industrial urban economic profile, showing structural expansion due to high-income elasticity combined with a strong dependence on agglomeration economies and, hence, urban milieus (Power and Scott 2004; Scott 2004; 2006a). While maintaining a characteristic metropolitan linkage, also resulting from competitive pressures that encourage agglomeration of production, cultural industries are characterised by globalisation of output circulation\(^2\) (Lash and Urry 1994; Scott 2004; Lash and Lury 2007). Before approaching the specific case of world music, we identify two aspects which are relevant for our understanding of commodification in the cultural industries more generally. The first is the disarticulated yet networked nature of production in the cultural industries (Scott 2000; Grabher 2002), based on contractual and transactional relations of production (Caves 2000); and the second is the bearing of processes of intermediation, notably given the highly fluctuating demand for cultural products (Hirsch 1972).

**Complex ecologies of cultural industries**

Explorations of the organisation of production within the cultural industries have highlighted a complex ecology, with dense networks of complementary skills and expertise. Cultural products are realized through the collaborative effort of different individuals, requiring various more or less specialized inputs and a complex division
of labour (Becker 1982; Negus 1996; Scott 2000; Leyshon 2001). Creativity thus exists in an ‘art world’ a social context characterised by a web of inter-related agents (Becker 1982; Hesmondhalgh 2007). Inputs to production range from artistic or more creative to the more mundane, revealing a range of complementary skills from creative to technical, and an interdependency of art for art’s sake and profit-oriented or humdrum motivations (Becker 1982; Caves 2000). These can be combined in the creative worker or decoupled as the case may be, as in the case of the writer and the publisher, the visual artist and the art gallery.

Recent work on the music economy provides a useful typology of the product cycle ecology in cultural industries. Leyshon (2001; Leyshon, Webb et al. 2005) defines four distinctive yet overlapping networks of the production process within the music industry, which roughly correspond to stages in the life of a musical product, from its conception to its access by consumers. These are defined as creativity (or original production), reproduction (or manufacturing production processes), distribution (including marketing and promotion) and consumption (from retail outlets to the consumer). These networks represent stages through which cultural material flows and becomes commodified, highlighting the varying geometry of actors, institutions and places intervening in the translation of music from creative impulse to products exchanged in markets. The collaborative nature of production of cultural production allows a potential for contestation and negotiation to transpire, as input from actors with potentially differing aims or following different conventions are brought together (Becker 1982). Rather than a linear production chain, we understand this as a incremental, value-adding process, whereby all elements are inextricably linked in a networked manner, as well as embeddedness in a wider ‘creative field’ (Scott 1999; 2006b). The shift in approach from culture as output to cultural production as a process has indeed been a critical one (Pratt 1997). This has enabled emphasis to be placed on the fact that cultural artefacts are most often generated through the interaction of multiple inputs, institutional set-ups, actors and geographies (Scott 1999; Power and Hallencreutz 2002).

Uncertainty and intermediation in the cultural industries

The flexible nature of production in the cultural industries is in part related to the merciless state of uncertainty - itself the result of endemic oversupply of cultural products - which faces cultural producers, known as the ‘nobody knows’ property or the inability of said producers to predict the consumers appraisal of the quality of a product (Caves 2000). This ‘symmetrical ignorance’ is highly instrumental in definitions and allocations of rights and the spreading of risk (Caves 2000). Information becomes a crucial element in the decision-making process, and finding it is often delegated to intermediaries, who wade through the pile of aspiring candidates and rank creative work according to an A list/B list (Caves 2000). The wider field of cultural production is characterised by the struggle for recognition, as products are positioned in relation to one another, and temporally, in relation to consecrated art (Bourdieu 2000).

Achieving this recognition in the cultural industries, as well as gaining status in the relative ranking in aesthetic and commercial systems of vertical differentiation by no
means occurs in a vacuum. As products in the cultural industries tend to be taste-and performance-driven (Currid 2007), their differentiation and selection calls into question the aesthetic qualities of the product and the standards against which judgement is passed on it, part of the wider ‘regime of value’ discussed earlier (Appadurai 1986). Creating an explicit aesthetic may precede, follow, or be simultaneous with developing the techniques, forms, and works which make up the art world’s output. The creation of aesthetic systems can be an ‘industry in its own right’ though, developed and maintained by specialised professionals such as critics (Becker 1982: 131-2).

Processes of intermediation intervene to provide an intelligible ordering of the wide variety of products available, creating hierarchies based on tastes and consumption practices (Bourdieu 2000). In Bourdieu’s initial definition, the intermediaries are the critics, journalists, advertisers, agents in a position to bestow symbolic capital in the form of prestige and reputation (Bourdieu 2000), however the scope of the term has been broadened in subsequent applications, to include artist and repertoire managers (Negus 2002; Hesmondhalgh 2006 for a discussion). In this broader sense, intermediaries form “skilled network[s] that pick winners” (Currid 2007: 134) and they decide on what is accepted or rejected as a cultural product (Hirsch 1972; Becker 1982; Eikhof and Haunschild 2007). While we do not attempt here to offer the ultimate intermediary typology here, suffice to say that we speak of these “certifiers”, “tastemakers” or “aestheticians” (Currid 2007: 133) we refer to those individuals or organizations who, as ‘surrogate consumers’, serve ‘as fashion experts and opinion leaders for their respective constituencies’ (Hirsch 1972: 649; Solomon 1986). Rather than forming a buffer zone between production and consumption, the intermediaries offer points of articulation and connection, modulating the relationship between the two extremes of the product cycle. Through this articulation, they regulate access and exclusion to industries involved in the production of symbolic goods and services, often through small networks of connections, shared values and common life experiences (Negus 2002).

In our framework, intermediaries play a crucial role in determining the regimes of value that structure the commodification of objects in the realm of culture, and that this, in turn, plays a defining role of the status, life and trajectory of the resulting commodities. Yet it can also be linked to the wider social context in which production and consumption are situated. With respect to this, Zukin and Maguire (2004: 175) envisage an ‘institutional field’, centred around the production of commodities for individual demand and structured around ‘interconnected economic and cultural institutions’, highlighting the reciprocity of consumption with its social context. Consumers participate in a particular cultural field through a process “habitation”: they acquire the attitudes, views, practices, dress codes and vocabulary that enable them to share conventions and function properly (Bourdieu 1979; Eikhof and Haunschild 2007).

Dismissing a conception of intermediaries which would reduce consumers to mere ‘dupes’ of ‘commercial blandishments’ (Jackson 2002: 5), we recognise their agency. Consumers participating in transnational social space, with their knowledge and expertise, also play a part in processes of commodifying difference (Jackson, Thomas
et al. 2007). Arguably, this can be disputed by advancing the ‘long tail’ argument (Anderson 2008), whereby markets are increasingly carved up into smaller niche markets, reflecting the diversification of consumers’ tastes and preferences and a streamlining and decentralising of distribution and access to cultural products.

Along these lines, a broader conception of intermediaries is useful to portray a less deterministic, more contextual and dynamic process. Intermediaries, with their position in social networks, their selection criteria, their views on consumer markets together make up the “filtering device”. These filtering devices are anything but uniform, but they are connected specifically to the fields of cultural production. In a Bourdieuian sense, production is structured in large-scale and restricted fields (Bourdieu 1992; Hesmondhalgh 2006), though a more nuanced approach highlighting the relevance of sub-fields and the boundary-crossing production is particularly helpful for our analysis (Hesmondhalgh 1996). Commodification thus differs between sectors, between places, and within one sector in a particular city between submarkets or niches. Intermediaries within one local field can be few or numerous, dispersed or concentrated, open to innovation or conservative, influential or not, accessible or distant. Such differences should be at the heart of any research on exploring diversity in cultural industries.

We therefore posit that various actors and institutions (artists, producers, gatekeepers, consumers, loci of production and consumption) interact to produce a complex but also dynamic multi-dimensional and multi-inhabited space (Jackson, Thomas et al. 2007) or ecological system (Becker 1982) within which the commodification of world music and the economic incorporation of world musicians may occur. The potential for commodification is therefore highly context-dependent, and activated or deactivated, as the case may be, in a highly dense and interactive set of relationships and economic, social and cultural conditions. Following the lives of objects as they become commodities thus entails an understanding of the variegated dynamics which affect this process. We offer a conceptual framework of analysis in the following section.

Scaling the commodification gradient in the cultural industries

Commodification in the cultural industries reflects the transition of cultural creativity from its in posse nature to its commodity status. We further define Appadurai’s (1988) conceptualisation of the candidacy of things to commodification as a ‘commodification gradient’, which expresses the increase or decrease of the commodity dimension of objects. We borrow the definition of gradient from physics, meaning by it the observation in time or space of a graded increase or decrease in the magnitude of a property (in physics, the term is applied to temperature, pressure or concentration). For our purposes, the gradient expresses a change in magnitude of the commodity property as observed in passing from one point to another. The gradient can also describe the pace of this change, hence it can be applied to express the variety of speed of commodification within different cultural industry sectors (e.g. we would observe a faster pace in high street fashion than in the publishing of novels).

Introducing the notion of gradient allows us to understand better the commodification of objects in motion, exploring how certain objects follow certain
trajectories and the extent to which certain objects become commodified in certain situations and not others. The application of this notion to the cultural industries allows us to see commodification as a negotiated passage, albeit not an irreversible one, between creativity and the cultural industry production chain, modulated by trade-offs between cultural and economic considerations over the anticipated outcomes of a product in a market exchange environment. Rather than simply considering the potential for commodification, the gradient allows us to look at the value adding processes which enhance or reduce the prospects of commodification of a certain object, and placing this in a cultural industry production and consumption perspective.

In generic terms, we argue that objects in the cultural industries seem to be faced with different sets of opportunity structures, entailing diverse requirements and also with divergent trajectories in terms of production cycles and consumer base scope. As a result, the gradient does not simply define the positioning of the threshold between commodity and non-commodity status, but also reflects a wider process of (expected and actual) insertion of creative inputs in posse, the access to and mobilisation of resources supporting this insertion, and the positioning of objects in markets. We argue here that the mobilisation of a different cultural repertoire calls for an understanding of commodification as a gradient, whereby different products are matched with a different set of opportunities at particular points in time and space, thus increasing or decreasing their commodification potential as it were. Moreover, the idea of a gradient allows us to reflect not just upon the potential for commodification, but also upon its magnitude.

The commodification gradient does not only determine access to and progression of a production cycle, but also the wider trajectories or ‘lives’ of commodities in the cultural industries. These trajectories are spatial as well as temporal and can also be defined by the extent of markets in which products circulate. We argue that in the cultural industries, the boundaries between these market typologies are particularly porous and that creative workers can experience dynamic trajectories crossing boundaries. Hence the candidacy of products to commodification should be understood as highly embedded in creative fields that are highly contextualised.

4.3 COMMODIFYING WORLD MUSIC IN PARIS: THE COMMODIFICATION GRADIENT AT WORK

World music appears to align itself with a key logic of cultural industry production: that of a quest for constant product innovation in order to respond to the changing tastes of consumers. It has been defined as being transnational (entailing a border-crossing) and translational (requiring a translation to access it, a mediation) (Guilbault 1993). The role of mediators in world music has been that of taking consumers across the boundaries of their personal tastes (Haynes 2005: 368). These mediators display expertise either as ethnomusicologists or through connections to ethnic or national groups, practices (Frith 2000). Foreign products, appealing to a sense for the exotic, acquire a strong symbolic dimension, for their faculty to respond to the demand ‘distinguishing’ products (Kassabian 2004; Haynes 2005). This quest follows a
logic of consumer taste development, vying for ever more unique and distinguishing experiences, as an expression of status and habitus (Bourdieu 1979). From a normative perspective, world music should be ‘inclusive’, meaning that its loose classification should allow the most diverse musical influences to be hosted under its banner (Haynes 2005: 371). Exploring the world music titles available through digital distributors or record shops is a varying degree of authenticity and hybridity, ranging from a collection of ‘Music from the Old Jewish World’ to Putumayo’s ‘Latin Lounge’ offering.

Yet the focus on the origins and content of the music diverts the attention to the way it is produced and consumed (Connell and Gibson 2004), as well as the related processes of production and reproduction of aesthetic categories which word music draws upon. Critically, world music became known as such when Western musicians began forays into exotic sounds, as in the case of Paul Simon’s Graceland (Connell and Gibson 2004: 347). Moreover, while place has been central to the marketing of world music, its reification has become more problematic as complex relations between local sounds, global production, distribution and marketing channels come to coexist. The fetishisation of a locality ‘disguises the globally dispersed forces that actually drive the production process’ (Appadurai 1990: 16). Here an ‘essentialised idea of music’ is tied to the expression of difference of specific ethnic groups or nations (Haynes 2005: 372). The result is a situation in which the success of non-Western musicians in the world music genre has been reliant upon a form of ‘strategic inauthenticity’, whereby performers are required to reproduce a ‘pre-modern’ aesthetic, in order to fulfil the expectations and demands for authenticity (Taylor 1997: 126). The paradox that emerges is that Third World performers can effectively gain better access to audiences in the West when they conform to Euro-American based intonation and rhythms (Guilbault 1993; Guilbault, Benoit et al. 1993; Connell and Gibson 2003: 155).

4.4 DEFINING OPPORTUNITIES FOR COMMODIFICATION

On the basis of these considerations, we explore the commodification of world music from the perspective of the Parisian cluster. Paris, alongside London and New York, is the main centre of production, marketing and distribution of world music globally, with a particular specialisation in music from the African continent. The cluster combines a dense web of actors, working in more or less formalised relationships. Our interest is in how world music, which in principle could originate from anywhere in the world (Connell and Gibson 2003; 2004), comes to be commodified and in what way.

We start by defining an opportunity structure, by sketching a market typology which identifies at the two ends of the spectrum, composite markets characterised by hybrid products, and homogeneous markets characterised by little or no diversity. We argue that the commodification of world music and its structuring of production and consumption in markets will be governed by the mobilisation of ‘ethnic capital’, corresponding to the actual or discursive ‘essentialised idea of music’ referred to earlier (Haynes 2005). As a result, we can see the delineation of three distinct, yet porous and cross-fertilising, market typologies of world music production in Paris.
Figure 4.1 exemplifies such a typology, on the basis of the interaction between the products offered and their consumer base, as well as exploring the type of markets this interplay generates. We do not suggest that these market categories are not suggested as fixed, immutable, rather we suggest a porous distinction, which would indicate an encounter of products and consumers in 'market clouts', with a wide spectrum of definitions.

The loose categorizations emerging may cover a scope of music production from community based (i.e. linked to the ethnic communities based in Paris), to traditional music (reflecting production of a more ethno-musicological nature) and to world music (more contemporary, hybrid sounds, occasionally borne out of cross-fertilisation of musical traditions occurring in large metropolitan areas). These three 'spheres' are reflected in distinct subdivisions of production and consumption in the world music cluster. The commodification gradient differs depending on the type of symbolic and aesthetic content mobilised and the circumstances and context of the mobilisation. While theoretically all forms of world music can become commodified through the Paris cluster, they will face different opportunity structures, leading to a variety of commodification trajectories.

To further contextualise these markets in the world music cluster, we posit that these three markets have distinct production dynamics and chains: creativity, production, distribution and consumption occur in mostly parallel, occasionally cross-fertilising networks of actors and milieus (see Table 4.1).
Table 4.1: Phases and processes of commodification of world music in Paris

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CREATIVITY</th>
<th>PRODUCTION</th>
<th>DISTRIBUTION</th>
<th>CONSUMPTION</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>TRADITIONAL WORLD MUSIC</strong></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Origin: Global origin of musical masters</td>
<td>Actors: Strong public sector institutional presence (labels, editors, venues, festivals, associations)</td>
<td>Actors: Paris-based networks, connected globally to institutions in the same field</td>
<td>Venues: Via public institutions (museums, cultural institutions, theatres...) and publicly sponsored festivals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>CONTEMPORARY WORLD MUSIC</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Content: Traditional to hybrid sounds, quest for the exotic. 'Strategic inauthenticity'</td>
<td>Process: 'Discovery' of musicians, often already established in their countries of origin by Paris-based actors. Paris as a turning point in careers.</td>
<td>Process: Increasingly centralised distribution. Promotion and marketing via printed and digital media, and profile of key individuals (e.g. Music critics).</td>
<td>Intended audience: Global audiences.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>COMMUNITY-BASED MUSIC</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Origin: Artists of migrant background based in Paris or musicians from countries with strong migrant communities in Paris.</td>
<td>Actors: Paris or country of origin-based private companies and venues, often owned by co-nationals of the musicians and connected to the production and/or sale of other products from the same country of origin.</td>
<td>Actors: Private-sector entrepreneurs.</td>
<td>Venues: Private parties and public events in local authority venues, bars and restaurants. Occasional access to larger venues in the world music sphere.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Content: Inspiration from the country of origin (le pays), often mixing local popular music with Western pop.</td>
<td>Process: From amateur to professional musicians with migrant background.</td>
<td>Process: Community (record) shops/occasional access to mainstream venues – but generally large venues an issue</td>
<td>Intended audience: Locally based communities/transnational diasporas/country of origin.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
As we shall see in the next section, the opportunity structures vary widely, shaped by different logics of production, distribution and consumption, and ranging in their relation to economic and cultural motivations. We now turn our attention to the three market typologies, sketching this interplay and exploring the spatial implications of each pattern of musical commodification.

Traditional music

We identify the presence of an intermediary market in Paris, based on the production and circulation of traditional music. Here, the direct link between the ethnic capital and music is fundamental: as we will see, this is where the symbolic capital of the product in a Bourdieuan sense lies. These intermediaries, these expert ethnomusicologists, appropriate products with a strong ethnic component and transfer/translate them to a wider audience, outside the community originally connected to these sounds. The target audience then responds to the logic of the ‘quest of exoticism’ mentioned earlier: there is even talk of making music primarily for a ‘white’ audience (interview n°17).

Traditional music is considered here as resting in an ethnomusicologist tradition, where musical expressions are considered as emerging from unique social landscapes rather than from the interaction with external flows. It is focused on the traditional as
opposed to the modern, the contemporary, in a binary opposition. Ethnomusicologists opened up an avenue between ‘indigenous production and distant consumption’, emphasizing a sense of ‘endogeny’ of music from tradition (Connell and Gibson 2003: 20). As a result, in the ears of some critical listeners, “music does not travel well... The further away from its place of origin, the less value it has” (interview n°7, 17, 32). Here we find ‘an underlying process of fetishisation whereby cultures that are perceived as untouched by commodification are sought out and brought to the fore – where eulogies are commonplace’ (Connell and Gibson 2003: 157). Migrant music is in this context often deemed as ‘second rate’ traditional music (Aubert 2005: 12).

The networks of creativity for traditional music are therefore generally speaking to be found in the imaginary of an ‘exotic elsewhere’. The moment of ‘discovery of creativity’ in commodification of traditional music passes through a network of expert ethnomusicologists. A record label director stated that ‘in the early years, I developed a network of friends more knowledgeable than myself on this or that culture, they alerted me to certain things’ (interview n° 17). In the same vein, the Théâtre de la Ville employs a series of expert consultants who scour the world in search of ‘new traditions’ to populate the venues prestigious world music weekly programme. In an interview with Quai Branly’s music programming advisor Alain Weber, the role of ethnomusicologists and of the voyage as a musical discovery was also highlighted:

Cherif Khaznadar, former director of the Maison des Cultures du Monde
traditional music is and should remain connected to its original social function and reality, while any adaptation or transition to ‘art for arts sake’ is considered a form of denaturation (Minimum 2006).

The networks of production of traditional music rest generally speaking within the public sphere. Here a series of key actors have played a crucial role in preserving and cataloguing the world’s traditional musical heritage: this is the case of the Musée de l’Homme (Winders 2006), La Maison des Cultures du Monde, with its labels Inédit and Collections Terrains/Fieldwork, Radio France and its Ocora label, by way of an example. Private label engaged in the production of traditional music are rare. Here the separation between culture and the economy appears to reach a peak: “We don’t work in show business […] we don’t make money with cultural heritage […] culture is not a commercial product’ (author interview nº 7).

While we find in Paris a cluster of public institutions devoted to traditional music, the networks of distribution and consumption vary considerably in their geographies. The nature itself of traditional music makes it ‘pre-globalised’, likely that is to raise an interest anywhere, the basis being a customer base interested in exploring other cultures (interview nº17). Traditional music is seen as offering a window on a culture, on a people, and its target audience as being interested not just in the sound, but also the pedagogic experience proposed.

Contemporary world music

We note the presence of a third market sphere, that of contemporary world music, answering to the logics of a more dominant market. Here, we fall into a different register: that of more mainstream music and audiences. Music production here does not answer the tastes of a specific community, be it based on ethnicity and/or expert listeners. This sphere includes ethnic and non-ethnic elements. There is talk here of ‘recuperating’ community music (interview nº28), transforming it to match the tastes of a wider audience; of adapting traditional sounds to more modern tunes; of assimilating sounds from elsewhere; of hybrid music, musical mixes… Here the boundaries between de facto or taste-based communities become negligible.

Paris has emerged in recent years as one of the main centres of contemporary world music production. Here a plethora of actors, from the creativity to the production and consumption networks, populate the capital. For many musicians, Paris is a necessary starting point and/or stepping point in their careers. Mory Kanté from Guinea arrived in Paris in 1984, the first true griot to become a genuine superstar in Paris, with his hit single Yéké Yéké, a mix of traditional kora, a West African harp-lute, and amplified accompaniment (Winders 2006).

Creativity in contemporary world music sparks from various sources: musicians from across the world have had their fortunes shaped in Paris. Journalists pointed to the fact that many of the musicians that rose to prominence in the 1980s were in a way having their ‘second career’ in Paris, having already established themselves in their countries of origin (Winders 2006: 72). Here, academic distinction between heritage/tradition and urban/contemporary music is surpassed: we are witnessing a
representative mosaic of living culture (Lecomte 2005). Contemporary world music can therefore be defined as a spectrum of sounds, from modern adaptations of traditional pieces to hybrid forms combining diverse musical traditions. Here “there is no boundary between more popular and more cultured things, especially since there is a real artistic process, a search, with strong human encounters between high level musicians, more traditional musicians, and others who come from the streets but who work hard and all” (interview nº13).

Here the opinions vary as to where the authenticity boundary lies. 'Hybridity is not a fashion trend. It’s at the heart of past and present musical evolutions. It is a constituent of tradition. It is even its most loyal associate, because without it, tradition would disappear, it would become sterile and withdrawn into itself’ (Thiebergien 2005: 181). On the artists’ side, there are calls for integrity in hybridity... 'We are not fake mixes. Being from one tradition does not preclude encountering other traditions' (author interview n°23). For some artists being an ambassador of a musical culture is both an opportunity and a challenge: some refuse to adopt a ‘traditional costume’ when playing to appear more authentic in the eyes of a Western audience (interview n°23). Others produce different versions of the same album, one for their country of origin, one for Western ears (see for example Youssou n’Dour). For some musicians, being in Paris opens up unthinkable opportunities to play with some of the biggest names in the

Gilles Fruchaux, Director of the record label Buda Musique
business. Diego Pelaez, a musician from Venezuela who settled in Paris in the 1980s, recalls: “it was the beginning of the 80s, the big names in Latin music were arriving here […] there was a core of good musicians based in Paris and the stars were coming from the States or Latin America. They knew that there were Paris-based teams and that they didn’t need to come with a full orchestra. This gave me the opportunity to work with stars such as Patato Valdez, Chocolate Armenteros, Tata Guines, people who meant a lot to me in my youth and all of a sudden, I had the opportunity of working with them” (interview n°15).

The networks of distribution and consumption are essentially Parisian. Artists have to go via Paris in their careers. (interview n°20). On the audience side, some talk about a ‘yuppie directed exotica’ (Goodwin and Gore 1990: 62; cited in Connell and Gibson 2004: 352). Generally the audience is seen as being white middle class in search of cosmopolitan flavour (Haynes 2005). A well-respected world music critic stated that: “We are asked to look out for more mainstream things and not to fall into ethnomusicology. We have to talk about things that are more accessible, not too specialised, nor too technical” (interview n°5).

As one of the main stars of world music production in Paris, Manu Dibango, a famous Cameroonian saxophonist and vibraphone player, stated, the city is seen as “becoming mixed-race […] The vibraphone goes to school with the balafon and
enriches it. The tam-tam reinforces the drum-kit’ (quoted in Bohlman 2002: 139). As such, it becomes a place of discovery, not just for audiences but for artists themselves, who bathe in the physical proximity with other cultures and influences, playing a key role “of intermingling, getting musicians, artists, out and making them nourish themselves with the influences of their neighbours” (interview nº5).

Community production

‘There are many things happening at the level of (ethnic) communities in Paris’ proclaimed one record label director ‘which do not appear on the radar of the average Parisian’ (interview nº 17). The community niche offers a spectrum of products, more or less anchored in the ethnic repertoire of the specific community in question. Here we find a range from contemporary music inspired by Western rhythms, to more tradition-inspired sounds, thus placing the niche in between ethnic and non-ethnic products. The ethnic component becomes of secondary importance here: what matters are the tastes and preferences of the Paris-based community and the country of origin, stimulating creativity. The customer base is strongly linked to their own community and its cultural capital, although the geographical scale shows wider networks of connection across the transnational diaspora.

A stroll around one of Paris’s most diverse neighbourhoods, the Goutte d’Or, reveals a vibrant world of community-based music production, rarely featured in the world music reviews of mainstream newspapers and magazines. The first community music shops began to appear in Paris in the mid-1970s (Winders 2006). Their emergence can be seen as connected to the importance of music in the experience of migrants in Paris: as a sacred ritual, leisure, entertainment element of their everyday life. The choice of neighbourhood is far from accidental: « The decision to locate here was taken because we had a diaspora market, with easy access to our customers. They come; they discover things, Château-Rouge, the market, the community» (interview nº10). Some observers note that in the early days of the world music cluster in Paris, most productions were indeed community based, often with varying degrees of professionalisation, quality of sound, image and presentation, bordering on the ‘DIY’ (interview nº5).

The musical creativity on which community productions rest comes in fact from ‘le pays’, the place of origin. This reflects a loose geography in more than one way: the country of origin is at once the source from which to draw inspiration and a reference point when thinking about potential consumers. From the viewpoint of creativity, the sounds created by early generations of migrant musicians were innovative, insofar as they merged traditional performances with advanced studio technology. However, in most cases, the resulting musical styles had been emerging in the country of origin for many years (see Winders 2006 for a recount of the early phases of Western and Central African music in Paris). In some cases, music that has been totally forgotten locally in its place of origin, experiences a resurgence once it is known in Europe (interview nº5). Often there is felt to be a separation between countries’ musical traditions or sounds: « if you go to the community record shops in the neighbourhood, there is one specialising in zouk, the other in mbalax… it is very compartmentalized, there is one for Zaire, the other for Arab music…» (interview nº13; see also Winders 2006).
The struggle for musicians engaging in this form of music production is often one of positioning in relation to notions of “authenticity” and the idea of a pure, immutable sound lodged in a traditional musical style. In some cases however, community music gains an authenticity status in its own right: most notably in cases where the migrant heritage is rediscovered and drawn from by artists who are able to reach a wider audience. It is the case of the album Diwan by Rachid Taha, in which he covered a song from migrant musician Mohamed Mazouni, as well as artists who were famous in Algeria during the 50s-60s. This album was inspired by a desire to “sing the songs that influence me and pay homage to my culture.” (Denselow 2006).

At the level of production, Paris came to occupy a central position in African music production in particular, as good production centres have only recently started to emerge (Winders 2006). This position however has somewhat waned in recent years, as a result of rising production costs in the capital combined with an improvement in the technological capacity of cities in the South. In addition, the increasing accessibility of home sound recording and editing systems in the South has made it easier for Paris-based producers to record albums locally, with no requirement for artists to go to France (interview nº10).

Distribution and consumption appear to occur in compartmentalised markets. In some cases, musicians are able to ‘break out’ of community markets. 'Some artists

Mr Kébé, record producer, inside his Lampe Fall Record shop in La Goutte d’Or, Paris.
are able to make the transition to mainstream and reach a wider audience […] there are some bridges. Small concert venues play a big role in this' (interview nº5). One community record shop-owner suggested that a musician had more chances of achieving this by presenting a stereotypical image of his/her country (author interview). In another case, a Cap-Verde music producer and record store owner based in Paris proudly stated that there were no Cesaria Evora albums in his record store, since he strove to promote the ‘other music’ from Cap Verde (interview nº33). The promotion of music also highlights the separation of community networks from mainstream: when asked which media are used to promote music, mainstream Paris-based press and radio are either not cited or deemed inaccessible. In distribution, the existence of parallel networks was cited ‘meaning that there are artists who fail to sell a single album in the official networks, but then fill the Zénith once a year’ (interview nº1). At the level of audiences, a separation is also perceived: interestingly, when non-white audiences attend community performances for instance they are perceived as ‘following their own music’ (Haynes 2005). The struggle of community producers and record shop owners to survive was only too apparent in the interviews. During one interview with an Algerian music producer, a delivery of suitcases arrived. ‘If music was profitable, we would not have to sell suitcases’ (interview nº 11). Far from the mainstream distribution channels and hardly hit by music digitalization, it is becoming increasingly harder for community producers to sustain their activities and contribute to the discovery of new artists and their growth (interviews nº 10, 11, 19).

4.5 IMPLICATIONS FOR RESEARCH OF THE COMMODIFICATION GRADIENT

Cultural industries, at first glance, seem to offer ample opportunities for cultural boundary crossing and the commodification of diverse cultural expressions, as they thrive on constant aesthetic innovation. The more or less continuous oversupply of inputs (and outputs) relative to market size in the cultural industries however creates a selection problem. As products in the cultural industries tend to be taste-driven and performance-driven (Currid 2007), selection has to focus on the aesthetic qualities of the product.

Migrants can indeed tap into their more unique cultural or “ethnic” resources to come up with products, in our case (world) music, which can appeal to a broader audience and allow them to carve out a living in the country of settlement. Getting their creations commodified and actually sold is, however, anything but a straightforward process. A complex field of tastemakers negotiate between supply and demand and determine to a large extent if and when a creation is transformed into an actual product. Such a field of networks of (nascent) artists, tastemakers, and consumers is anything but footloose. Instead, it is anchored in concrete places as the field of world music production in Paris has shown. Paris functions as a place where Appadurai’s different regimes of value evaluation come together. There, objects can come to meet the commodity requirements as they move to a new context (Appadurai 1986: 86).
Looking at the life of commodities and what and why certain things become commodities thus highlights complex moral geographies of use (Jackson 1999). We refer here not to whether objects become commodified at all, but whether they have access to different value chains and the effect of weighing of ‘contrasting evaluations of commodities by different constituencies that are proximate to them’ (Castree 2004, p.30). The degree of value coherence against which commodities are set may differ in situations and contexts, meaning that the same framework will not apply to all transactions, but rather that we have ‘regimes of value’ (Appadurai 1986: 83).

Intermediaries, certifiers or aestheticians play a key role in deciding whose products get through and become commodified. They, in other words, regulate the commodification gradient. Exploiting the opportunities in the cultural industries is, accordingly, dependent on, first, access to these intermediaries and, secondly, on the capacity to be able to come up with aesthetic products that can appeal to niche or mainstream markets. The intermediaries, themselves part of the wider field of the cultural industry, constitute the centre of the matching process and they have to be studied accordingly if one wants to investigate the potential of cultural industries for migrants. Given the potential importance of cultural industries for local (urban) economies, the local configuration of gatekeepers should be at the heart of the research. The analysis of their networks, institutional embeddedness, and mental make-up (in particular their views on consumer markets and their own internal motivation) should shed light on who gets commodified in the mainstream, who in “ethnic” niche markets, and who stays out altogether. Doing this will make the commodification gradient more concrete and tangible. Clearly the question of captive markets is not exclusive to the cultural industries, but in these sectors the crucial resource in the cultural product may be the ethnic identity itself. Hence, understanding the dynamics of commodification of difference requires the unpacking of the dialectical relationship between ethnic identity and ethnic social and cultural capital on the one hand, and socio-economic insertion on the other.

Further research on the relationship between the opportunities arising in the cultural industries and migrants from less-developed countries should, then, depart from the pivotal role played by gatekeepers in controlling the commodification gradient. More in particular, further research should focus on the extent to which the filtering devices are related to place or how local the commodification gradient actually is. This is particular relevant when exploring the locational decisions of start-ups in the cultural industries sector. We would expect these decisions to be based on an evaluation of the critical mass of consumption among other considerations. Here also we might see the emergence of niche markets predominantly in places where there is a pre-existing ‘captive audience’, a settled community for instance. In zooming out, further research could explore the role of collective actors, both public and private, in shaping the commodification gradient. How do formal and informal ‘regimes of value’ impact on this filtering device? Finally, thinking about the geographical nature of world music, how should we evaluate the dissonant effects of its commodification on the place of origin and the place of exploitation of intellectual property rights (see Power and Hallencreutz 2002)?
## 4.6 ANNEX: LIST OF INTERVIEWEES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Position</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Abaji</td>
<td>Musician</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anemiche Morhand</td>
<td>Director of Creativ Productions (Kabyle music)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assadi Saïd</td>
<td>Director of record label Accords Croisés</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Azaïche Méziane</td>
<td>Director of the venue Cabaret Sauvage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Azoulay Eliane</td>
<td>World music reviewer for magazine Télérama</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Benaïche Marc</td>
<td>Director of Mondomix</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bizot Laurent</td>
<td>Director of the record label No Format</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bordier Hervé</td>
<td>Coordinator of the Fête de la Musique in Paris</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Breuil Hervé</td>
<td>Manager of the Olympic Café and Lavoir Moderne Parisien</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conrath Philippe</td>
<td>Director of the record label Cobalt/Accent aigu and festival Africolor</td>
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<tr>
<td>de Jesus Charlotte</td>
<td>Former programmer at Olympic Café</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dehmous Morhand</td>
<td>Former music producer, Kabyle music</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dessantos Emile</td>
<td>Record shop owner and producer at Glenn Music (Congolese music)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dhelin Maïté</td>
<td>Tour agent and director of LMC Production (touring agency)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Essindi François</td>
<td>Musician</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fruchaux Gilles</td>
<td>Director of record label Buda Musique</td>
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<tr>
<td>Guénebaut Sophie</td>
<td>Director of the association Zone Franche</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gueugnon Philippe</td>
<td>Programmer at the venue Satellit Café</td>
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<tr>
<td>Guilchier Mône</td>
<td>Artistic advisor at ARIAM France</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Harbonnier Clélia</td>
<td>Promotion at Frochot Music</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>James Benoît</td>
<td>Curator music collection, Musée du Quai Branly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kajler Olivier</td>
<td>DJ at Radio Fréquence Paris Plurielle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kébé M.</td>
<td>Record shop owner and music producer at Lampe Fall (Senegalese music)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Khaznadar Cherif</td>
<td>Director, Maison des Cultures du Monde and Festival de l’Imaginaire</td>
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<tr>
<td>Kolpa Kopoul Rémy</td>
<td>DJ at Radio Nova</td>
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<tr>
<td>Laot Hubert</td>
<td>Programmer at the Musée Guimet’s Auditorium</td>
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<tr>
<td>Laulanne Pierre-Olivier</td>
<td>Director of the FAMDT federation</td>
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<tr>
<td>Matsumiya Nobuko</td>
<td>Musician with the Ensemble Sakura</td>
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<tr>
<td>Merlin Blaise</td>
<td>Festival director, Jardins et Musique</td>
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<tr>
<td>Minimum Benjamin</td>
<td>Chief editor, Mondomix magazine and website</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Msaidie Chébli</td>
<td>Artistic director at Cantos Publishing; musician</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pelaez Diego</td>
<td>Musician</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Sanchez Réné  Record shop owner and music producer at Tropica Music (Cap Verdian music)
Seck Nago  Musicologist and journalist, editor of the website Afrisson, on African and Indian Ocean music
Soufflet Sylvain  Director of the Association Loin des Machines
Veyssière Simon  Press agent at Accent
Violette Gérard  Director of the Théâtre de la Ville
Zhoulekh Mme  Record shop owner and music producer

REFERENCES


1 The low response rate can be explained by the fact that for the majority of the musicians, personal emails were not available; hence contact was made via the general contact emails of their agents, managers or promotion companies, mostly to no avail.
2 This has often been linked to discussions about the threat of cultural homogenisation or even ‘imperialism, as the circulation of cultural products and symbols mainly originating from the West is perceived to lead to a levelling of cultural consumption across the globe (Throsby 2001). We would argue that we are witnessing parallel processes of homogenisation and differentiation, as global and local forces interact.
3 It should be noted that world music can also originate in an intra-national context, as in the case of regional musical traditions such as the Corsican polyphonic choral tradition (Massoni 2006) or the Southern Italian traditions studied by Lomax (1956).