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Cultural Diversity in Europe: a story of mutual benefit

Ulrike Hanna Meinhof

European University Institute
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Abstract

The paper highlights the considerable positive impact of cultural diversity and the mutual benefit accrued for migrants and non-migrants alike. Against the background of growing hostility against, and increasing politicisation of the presence of migrants in European societies it sets a different vision of mutual respect, collaboration and benefit. So as to show the way in which contemporary migration is not a 'one-way' street of movements from poorer to richer countries where the rich offer all and receive nothing in return, the paper develops a four-tiered 'hub' structure that highlights complex multidirectional connections and mutual support of people in transnational networks. Central to the argument is the understanding that migrants do not come empty-handed but possess substantial 'transcultural capital' that forms the basis for enriching reciprocal encounters between the global North and the global South. The paper offers much-needed empirical data from these encounters based on the author's field work in Madagascar and across different European countries.

Keywords

Cultural diversity, migrant artists, transnational networks, transcultural capital.

The arts and artists in many ways offer the most optimistic outlook on cultural diversity. Rather than being targeted by the more wide-spread negative perception of migrants as threats to social services, employment, and security, particular sub-groups of migrants associated with food, sports, leisure in general, and most of all the arts themselves are more readily acceptable to main-stream society since their impact is more easily translatable into quality of life factors. But pleasures associated with eating out in an Asian restaurant, watching a black football player – home-grown or imported- or listening to a brilliant jazz or world music singer do not disguise the fact that such acceptances are often superficial. Black jazz singers though widely applauded by white society as well, were forced even in the UK to use the tradesman's entrances to performance venues for decades well into the 20th century ¹ and although things have hugely improved since then, black football players in many football teams such as (London) Chelsea have several times been subject to racial abuse by their fans or even inside their own team.

Taking migrant musicians as a paradigm case for arguing that migration and cultural diversity offers mutual benefits to migrants and non-migrants alike therefore needs to go deeper than simplistic socio-economic cost-benefit models and show the processes and experiences of such encounters from the point of view of those involved: a 'bottom-up version' of transnational networking in action.

The paper organises the discussion in 2 sections drawing on my own collaborative research in the last decade. In the first introductory section I will set the background by showing the ways in which diversity has been problematised in public and private discourses about migration, and why this is a restrictive way of dealing with these issues. In the second main section, I will introduce an alternative discourse about migration by showing the ways in which migrants – in this particular case migrant musicians- bring and strategically use 'transcultural capital' in their host societies, creating a win-win situation not only for their own survival in the new society, but also reaping substantive benefits in the interactions between themselves and their new contacts in and for members of their host societies.

Problematising cultural diversity

In the latter decades of the 20th but especially in the 21st century mass migration into Europe, be it legal or illegal, politically or economically motivated has moved centre stage in the political debate onto the platforms on which elections are fought. Whilst the initial focus was mainly on the perceived threat from too many non- European migrants from Asia or Africa, it has spread also to include the influx of Eastern European citizens who have used the opportunity of free labour mobility since the expansion of the European Union. Anti-immigration rhetoric has also largely lost its power to shock so that even mainstream parties act slowly or not at all against racist excesses. Whereas for example in Britain, the infamous 'Rivers of Blood' speech by the conservative MP Enoch Powell (1912-98) in 1968 directed against Commonwealth immigration into the UK caused such an outcry that the then Conservative Party Leader Edward Heath dismissed him from his shadow cabinet, parties with a single issue anti-EU platform like the UK Independence Party UKIP have managed in the local elections of 2013 to mobilise a surprisingly large section of voters by their strong Euro-scepticism and associated anxieties about immigration from Eastern Europe. Their success in turn affected the more mainstream parties not only in declaring their support for a yes-no referendum about the UK wanting to remain within the European Union, should the Conservatives win the next general election, but it also caused ripples in the anti-immigration policies. In July 2013, for example, the Home Office launched a scheme whereby mobile vans are being driven through areas densely populated by immigrants, with an inscription which -whilst officially declaring help to illegal immigrants who want to leave the UK legally- used the slogan '*Go home* or face arrest' - a phrase widely associated with the

¹ A recent BBCs television drama by Stephen Poliakoff about a black jazz band, set in 1930s London and shown on BBC2 to wide acclaim between February and March 2013, *Dancing on the Edge*, gives a moving account of this double-standard way into the 20th century.

racist graffiti of the 1970s (see www.Guardian.com/uk-news/2013/Jul/29/go-home-campaign-illegal-immigrants, accessed 31 July 2013). In Germany, the anti-multiculturalism debate seemingly laid at rest by the changes to citizenship laws and a more general acceptance of the fact that Germany, too, is a country of immigration (Einwanderungsland) was rekindled in 2010 through SPD politician, former Berlin senator and German Federal bank Board member Thilo Sarrazin's controversial book 'Deutschland schafft sich ab' (Germany abolishes itself), with a highly polemical attack on the presence of Muslims and their supposed existence in 'parallel societies'. Although the ensuing protest cost Sarrazin his position in the Federal Bank, the initial reaction by the SPD to exclude him from the Party was never followed through, whilst right-leaning media with plenty of public support established his 'right to express his opinion' as a form of freedom of speech, arguing that a necessary debate was finally brought out in the open. Merkel's own declaration – similarly to Cameron's stance on multiculturalism – that 'Multikulturalismus ist tot' (multiculturalism is dead) followed shortly after, echoing an older attack on multiculturalism by conservative government politicians and an expectation that immigrants should assimilate to German core values (the so-called Leitkultur – debate' between 1998 and 2000). In the current climate, the all-pervasive formula of 'integration' is offering instead a vague compromise between positions on the right (Leitkultur/ 'leading culture') and those on the left (multiculturalism).² It is against this background, where the presence of migrants is problematised even by those who support their rights to live in and become citizens of their new home societies, that our work on migrant artists and their 'transcultural capital' wants to intervene. A fresh look at individuals living in transnational spaces and their transnational networks offers much needed empirical evidence from the everyday lives of migrants for mutual benefits, including their own views of the nature of coexistence and collaboration.

Researching migrant networks

This article builds on substantive fieldwork we conducted between 2002-5 and again 2006-2010 with migrant musicians, initially in the EU funded *Changing City Spaces* project in European capital cities (Meinhof and Triandafyllidou 2006), and subsequently in a UK AHRC-funded project *TNMundi* across Africa and Europe and in a further EU funded project *Sefone* (Armbruster and Meinhof 2011, Meinhof 2009, Kiwan and Meinhof 2011a and b, and Glick-Schiller and Meinhof 2011). Our main foci in the first two of these were networks of Malagasy-origin or North-African-origin musicians, whereas in *Sefone* the attention was not on music alone but more generally on 'good neighbouring activities' in multi-cultural cross-border and provincial regions across Europe.³ My own field work mainly focused on Malagasy-origin musicians who had either migrated to Europe, were to-ing and fro-ing between Madagascar and Europe, or who had never left Madagascar but were moving between rural and urban spaces in Madagascar.

Hubs in networks

From participant observation and interviews taking place during the *City Spaces* project we realized both the advantages but also the limitations of the original CCS research design. Whereas individual cities such as Paris, London, Rome, Berlin, Vienna, Belgrade and Ljubljana proved highly fertile ground for researching the significant impact which migrant artists - musicians, film makers and other cultural agents from Africa, Turkey, and the Balkan states of former Yugoslavia - had on the cultural

² For an extended discussion of this and an analysis of the ways in which 'integration' is taken up and modified by migrants themselves in their everyday discourses see Holly and Meinhof (in press 2011).

³ Further information about all of these, including some clips and photos from some cultural events can be gleaned from our three project websites www.citynexus.soton.ac.uk

<http://www.southampton.ac.uk/tnmundi/>

<http://www.sefone.soton.ac.uk/>

production and creativity which make these cities into exciting cosmopolitan places, there was also a tension between theoretical assumptions of postmodern flows and some of the results of our observations on the ground. There was indeed a great deal of mixing and interaction between its many diverse people which supported our assumption that cities rather than nations would offer a better conceptual frame for imagining a new Europe (see also Sassen 2007). The foregrounding of ethnic background and ethnic identities typical for a great deal of research on migration⁴ and critiqued by Wimmer and Glick Schiller 2002,, Glick Schiller 2010, and Glick Schiller and Meinhof 2011 as 'methodological nationalism' could in our view be circumvented by a focus on people's *multiple* identities and a different vantage point where ethnicity appeared only as one of many aspects of allegiance. Rather than entertaining any a-prior presumption of ethnic otherness as the key identifiers of migrant groups⁵ we saw multiple similarities as well as differences cutting right across all individuals and groups in society - migrant or otherwise. From that perspective we could see how even well-meaning multi-cultural events such as in Germany, the Karneval der Kulturen in Berlin (Carneval of cultures, Berlin) or the Interkulturellen Woche(n) in Chemnitz or Bayreuth (Intercultural week/s) foregrounded the exotic displays of otherness (see also Kiwan and Kosnick 2006, Dorsch 2011 and Carsten-Eguam 2011).

However, any assumption of cosmopolitan flows across capital cities and of post-modern identities superseding national affiliations (e.g. Beck 2007) also proved a partial truth at most. Some of the key results from our work with musicians showed that the movements across nations and between capital cities were restricted to only the tiniest number of world music stars, such as Yousou 'n' Dour, Salif Keita, or Baaba Maal, who were being flown in and sent on European tour from outside Europe, whereas the vast majority of migrant artists resident in the cities were restricted to marginal and indeed very often ethnically defined settings. Kiwan and Kosnick (2006) in researching contrasting institutions and funding schemes for artists in Berlin and also Paris (e.g. Haus der Kulturen / La Maison des Cultures du Monde and Werkstatt der Kulturen/ Fasild⁶) argued that whereas the first of each pair highlighted artistic merit (high culture of universal value) with appropriate quite substantial funding from the cultural ministries, the second pair focused on socio-culture often supporting precisely the display of exotic difference such as in the Carneval of Cultures just referred to. Some of the most successful artists managed to cross-over from one type of setting to another: in the Parisian Malagasy context Erick Manana (Bordeaux), the Mahaleo (Antananarivo) or Justin Vali (Lille and later Paris) have been performing at both, the internationally famous Olympia and Malagasy community centres such as the Nanterre community centre Tana Orly.

But for most of the resident migrant artists in the capital cities as well as for those brought in for concert tours from Madagascar, playing for their ethnic community provides the main support for them. These 'flows' and movements were very different from the cosmopolitan flows we had postulated, since they did not move across metropolitan cities but instead in complex multi-directional ways between different sites in Madagascar, Antananarivo, Paris and from there to the provinces in France and Europe. Hence whilst offering interesting insights, the cosmopolitan lense needed to be complemented by a more bottom-up empirical observation of the actual movements and networks of individual artists. These insights informed the subsequent AHRC-funded TNMundi project, with Nadia Kiwan, my post-doc researcher at Southampton on City Spaces between 2002-2005, now as my co-applicant from her new position in Aberdeen. Based on the insights gleaned from CCS we developed a different analytical frame which in capturing the movements, networking and personal

⁴ A case in point are the many journal titles that echo this in their titles, e.g. the Routledge titles *African Identities*, *Asian Ethnicity* to name but a few

⁵ See also Agawu's (2003) and Fuhr (2011a, b and in press)'s critique of this 'presumption of difference' in the academic discussion of African music, with Agawu arguing instead for a 'presumption of sameness' (Agawu 2003: 171, also quoted in Fuhr 2011:59)

⁶ House of Cultures/ House of World Cultures Fonds d'action et de soutien pour l'integration et la lutte contre les discriminations

life trajectories of individual artists allowed us to understand the multiple ways in which contemporary migration is not a one-way street from home to host, or a flow between one capital city to the next, but a continuing cycle of interconnections between villages, towns and capital cities in countries of origin and capital cities and provincial regions in new countries of settlement.

One of our **key insights** was the significance for the migration process of what we defined as human, spatial, institutional, and accidental ‘hubs’, and the ways in which these ‘hubs’ are the focal points through which artists can develop and strategically use their transcultural capital, with substantive benefits to themselves but in equal measure impacting on their host societies’ cultural creativity. I will now sketch these in principle with some concrete examples from our work:

- *Human* hubs are those all-important individuals who are multiply connected, take up mediating roles between people in the provinces and the cities in both the global North and the global South, and link new aspiring artists with established ones. They are the vital nodes in the network since they are known by everyone and have considerable cultural and social capital at their disposal. Since many of these are practicing artists or other key figures in the music industry or in important institutions, based in or closely connected to the infrastructures of the respective capital cities, they are the ones who can give access to the vital networks which make capital cities into ‘spatial hubs’. Amongst the artists from Madagascar the most significant of these are probably the members of the group Mahaleo, and especially their eponymous founding member Dama (Zafimahaleo Rasolofondraosolo), who since their first rise to fame in 1972 have launched the career of many other musicians, influenced the Malagasy musical scene and continue to fill huge stadium arenas all over Madagascar as well as concert halls in Europe.⁷ Their influence extends to the European music scene as well where they regularly perform as a group or as individuals in other formations. One of Dama’s many transnational projects, for example, is a group of a further five individually successful singer song-writers who first performed together in 2004 and who in 2006 released their first album under the name of Madagascar All Stars. Since then the Madagascar All Stars have been performing in many countries of Europe as well as in Madagascar itself. With Dama and Ricky Olombelo being residents of Antananarivo, Justin Vali, Regis Gizavo, Marius Fenoamby of Paris and Erick Manana of Bordeaux, theirs is a truly transnational band (see also the entries on the group on Justin Vali’s home page <http://www.justinvali.fr/all-stars/>). Each of them, but especially Justin Vali (cf.: Malagasy Orchestra), Erick Manana (with the Feo-gasy, as well as more recently with German violinist, flutist and singer Jenny Fuhr) and Ricky Olombelo (with his Centre Rarihasina in Antananarivo) can be described in similar ways as ‘human hubs’ in this multi-layered transnational field.
- *Spatial* hubs then are the metropolitan cities with vital infrastructures and networking potential. These are not restricted to the obvious and more often discussed post-imperial cities in the global North (e.g. Winders 2006) but are equally present in the global South. Hence just as Paris or London, so Antananarivo, Casablanca, Dakar or Capetown are the ‘passage obligé’ for most artists from their respective countries and focal points for artists’ country-internal and transnational mobility. Antananarivo even has 4 districts – named collectively after their actual size in square kilometres as district 67 *Ha-* which is invariably the first point of call for most ‘translocal’⁸ migrants from the provinces. Amongst my interviewees, there were a large number of artists who have made exactly this passage to launch their national and/ or international careers. Regis Gizavo for example, coming from the South-Western town of Toliara, found in Antananarivo his first recording studio which enabled him to enter the ‘Decouvertes’

⁷ See www.mahaleo.com for further information about some of their DVDs and CDs and especially about the film Mahaleo released in 2006 by Paris-based film makers Laterit, and for my own writing on the group see Kiwan and Meinhof 2011:52-62, Meinhof 2005, Meinhof and Rasolofondraosolo (2005) and further references in that book’s bibliography.

⁸ I am using the term translocal to describe the movements within a country and transnational to describe the links from one country to another. For an explanation see Kiwan and Meinhof 2011: 26-27

competition of Radio France International (RFI), and launched his European career with the support of a French musician he encountered at the prizewinning ceremony in Guinea-Bissau. He's been living and performing in Europe ever since. Similarly Theo Rakotovao who like Regis originates from the Tulear region won the same prize in 2008 (as did Justin Vali in 1990 and Erick Manana in 1994) that launched his international career with his band Mikéa. Théo has since started a recording studio in Antananarivo, where co-incidentally Dama recorded his most recent double album which includes a delightful re-recording of an old Mahaleo song Nahoana Kay, with Dama singing each stanza in standard Malagasy and Mikea repeating it in his local dialect (for one of several amateur live recordings on youtube see <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bQtbHfTkKFI>.) Justin Vali – a valiha builder and player from a small village on the Highlands encountered a tour operator in Antananarivo who selected him for a tour in France where he stayed on and for several years was mainly supported by the Malagasy diaspora. When he eventually came to the attention of Paddy Bush, brother of British star Kate Bush and eventually Peter Gabriel and the WOMAD festival his international career blossomed. Justin now lives in Paris and has recently been awarded the prestigious Grand Prix Palmares SACEM. Like most other Malagasy artists resident in France Justin is regularly returning to Madagascar where he selected a group of rural musicians for the Malagasy Orchestra (for an amateur clip from a performance in 2009 see http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Lgxb_-S4OMA.) There are many more examples of successful careers being launched as a result of artists making good use of the possibilities offered up in these capital city centres, hence the ones just mentioned are representative of others. However, for every success story there are many many more of failure, with artists either switching to pursuing other work as well or instead of their music. Many also return to their original villages or towns in the provinces.

- Spatial and human hubs combined link up with a third vital feature that determines success, namely the institutional hubs. *Institutional* hubs, often but not exclusively located in the *spatial hubs* and directly interfacing with *human hubs* are formal, official organisations such as for example Cultural Institutes and Embassies from countries in the North mainly located in the South, and the less formal or informal organisations and associations of civil society, mainly in the North. Amongst the former - and hugely significant for Madagascar - is an institution linked to the German Goethe Institut- the Goethe Cultural Centre (CGM) with its long-standing , music-loving director Eckehart Olszowski, and the French equivalents The Alliance Francaise, and the Centre Albert Camus. Less formal but also significant for artists are NGOs, that are often not primarily linked to music or the arts in general. Often originating from educational or environmental pressure groups in the North (such as the Freunde Madagascars in Munich, or the Welthaus organisation in Austria) they become involved with equally committed artists as spokespersons for their concern. We have analysed these mutual support structures between civil society and artists by drawing on French anthropologist Marcel Mauss' influential notion of 'gift exchange' in an article entitled 'Inspiration triangulaire: musique, tourisme et développement a Madagascar' (Gibert and Meinhof 2009). And finally there is a plethora of informal associations, often organised by the relevant 'diaspora' in the global North.

Human, spatial and institutional hubs are directly interfacing with one another and to highlight this I want to present three longer extracts from interview data that exemplify these perspectives from the different entry points of first a musician from the deep South of Madagascar who today lives in France (Mbaso of the group Salala), secondly one of the seven members of Mahaleo who has lived all his life in Madagascar (Raoul, who sadly passed away in September 2010), and from the viewpoint of civil society, Erich Raab from the German association Freunde Madagascars. Each of these offers a different entry point for researching the multiple layering of artists network.

Example 1: Human, spatial and institutional hubs in interaction: Mbasa's story

I went up to Tana, and my dream, my really hopeful dream, was to see Mahaleo in flesh and blood on stage. And I got even more than I had expected. Mahaleo [at that time Dama was still called by his first name Mahaleo] had his room in the same corridor as me at the university. And every time we passed each other in the corridor I didn't know what to say, no didn't know what to say. I wanted to talk but didn't know whether that was OK to talk to him. And that went on for a little while, but then since Mahaleo is an unpretentious kind of guy he spots that this is going on. So every time he sees me he says, 'hello little brother', and that has taken away my inhibitions, and after that we did quite a number of things together. For example, for our debut concert as Salala we were at the Goethe-Institut, the CGM, with Olszowski, and we were on the same ticket as Dama and D'Gary, Samy and Ricky. Practically with the whole set that always appeared at the CGM. (Meinhof's interview, April 2009, Nantes)...Well, I could go so far as to say that Salala owes a great deal, 50 per cent or more, of its artistic style to Olszowski. Because I mixed, I did a cappella but I also did music with instrumental accompaniment, but it was Olszowski who told me 'You choose, you choose, because you underestimate that your group has a certain groove, but you need to opt for one direction, because that's how you gain much more attention in relation to the other groups.' At the time I was not at all convinced. Because at the time we thought that perhaps one day we would make some kind of career out of music, and so we thought to keep all the options open. But Olszowski told me, 'Voilà, you stop doing rose-tinted songs, stop doing things with a guitar, and all that, stop using women, women in the centre of your group. Work together just the three of you.' And so I tried. I wasn't convinced, but he was. He was convinced. And he took me to see others who were of the same opinion. So I thought to myself, well if it's some- one of Olszowski's calibre who says that. If the Goethe itself tells me that this is what is interesting then I'd be stupid to contradict them. That's how it was in the beginning. And after that he organized a concert for us with Ricky. And the people became enthusiastic, but at the time we couldn't even fill the little hall of the CGM. So yeah, it took some effort to make it relatively professional. And the CGM at that time was by far superior to the Ministry of Culture as far as the promotion of the culture and especially the music of Madagascar was concerned. I think there are quite a number of groups just as Salala who would have long since disappeared if the CGM had not offered some proper structures.

French original

Je suis monté à Tana, le rêve mais vraiment le rêve inespéré pour moi, c'est de voir en chair et en os sur scène les Mahaleos. Et j'ai eu plus que ça. Donc Mahaleo (he still calls Dama by his first name Mahaleo here) habitait dans le même couloir que moi à l'université. Et chaque fois que l'on se rencontre dans le couloir, je savais pas quoi dire, oui oui, je savais pas quoi dire. Je voulais parler mais je savais pas qu'est ce qu'il faut que je dise. Et ben voilà pendant un certain temps je suis comme ça, et puis plus tard, comme Mahaleo est l'homme simple qu'il est, donc certainement il est conscient de ça quoi. Et donc chaque fois qu'il me voit, il me dit 'ah bonjour, petit frère', et donc ça m'a débloqué, et puis voilà on a fait pas mal de fois des choses ensemble. Par exemple la première sortie de Salala par exemple, c'était avec le Goethe Institut, au CGM, Olszowski, et on était dans la même équipe que Dama et d'Gary, Samy et Ricky. Donc toute l'équipe qui tourne autour du CGM quoi... Moi je peux même dire que Olszowski était pour beaucoup, je peux même dire un peu plus que 50%, dans l'orientation finale du parcours de Salala. Parce que lui dans le temps, il m'a dit, parce que moi, j'ai mélangé, je faisais des choses a capela, je faisais des choses avec accompagnement instrumental mais Olszowski m'a dit tu choisis, tu choisis parce là tu te sous estimes mais tu as une certaine carrure, ton groupe, mais il faut que tu optes pour une voie, et c'est pour ça que tu donnes plus de visibilité aux gens par rapport à ton groupe. Dans le temps, j'étais pas du tout convaincu. Mais je, parce que en fait on se dit dans le temps, on ne pensait pas encore que un jour on fera en quelque sorte carrière dans la musique, donc on se dit, on tentait tous les voies possibles. Mais Olszowski m'a dit, voilà tu arrêtes les chansons à l'eau de rose, t'arrêtes les trucs avec guitare et tout ça, arrête d'introduire comme ça des femmes, des cœurs de femmes dans ton groupe. Travaillez à vous trois. Et donc, j'ai essayé. J'étais pas convaincu mais lui. Il était convaincu. Et donc il m'a emmené voir des gens qui étaient du même avis que lui. Donc je me suis dit, donc de toute façon donc l'issue c'est quelqu'un du gendre d'Olszowski. Si la voix,

si Le Goethe me dit que c'est ça qui l'intéresse, ce serait idiot de le contrarier. Au départ, donc c'était ça. Et puis ben voilà, il nous a organisé ce concert avec Ricky. Et puis les gens sont enthousiasmés mais dans le temps, dans le temps on pouvait même pas remplir la petite salle du CGM. Mais bon c'était un travail mais dans le temps qui était relativement professionnel dans le temps. Et le CGM dans le temps, surpassait le ministère de la culture de très très loin, en matière de promotion, de la culture surtout de la musique malgache. Moi je pense qu'il y a pas mal de groupes, dont Salala qui auraient, cela ferait déjà longtemps que ce groupe aurait disparu si il n'y avait pas des structures comme CGM.

Interview with Mbasia in Nantes, April 2010

Example 2: North –South relations and mutual benefits: the perspective from the South. Raoul's story:

You know, we musicians, we are idealists. And I am very attached to the earth ... So I would like to put into practice in the country- side what I'm singing, what I'm composing. And fortunately, we found partners to help us realize our dreams. The idea is that there is a lot to do in the South and a lot of money in the North. How to make the link? So I think, well, if the South can find serious partners in the North, and the North can find serious partners in the South, then you can talk about development ... This is not help to make us dependent but to give a little push in the right direction.

Tu sais nous les musiciens nous sommes des idéalistes[...]. Et moi je me suis très attaché à la terre[...]. Et bon je voudrais que, les trucs que je chante, que j'ai composés, que je les mette en pratique sur le terrain. Mais heureusement on a trouvé des partenaires. [...] C'est-à-dire pour pouvoir réaliser les rêves et la réalité, voilà. [...] L'idée c'est ça, c'est-à-dire que y a beaucoup de trucs à faire dans le sud. Y a beaucoup d'argent dans le nord. Comment associer les deux ? Donc je crois que bon, si le sud trouve des partenaires sérieux, le nord trouve des partenaires sérieux dans le sud, je crois que c'est à travers ça que l'on peut parler de développement[...]. C'est pas une aide pour être dépendant mais ce sont des coups de pouce.

Interview with members of the Mahaleo group, June 2007, Paris

Example 3: North –South relations and mutual benefits: the perspective from the North. Erich Raab's story:

Once apropos of an independence day celebration in Berlin we met a Malagasy musician who was playing there ... and through him we established contact with his brother Ricky in Tana, and ... when Ricky performed for the first time the project Voajanahari with Dama and Hajazz – I think it was in Bergisch Gladbach – we went to listen, and made friends with them, drank some glasses of wine together, and that connection developed, and now we have brought Voajanahari twice to Munich, once at the BUGA [National Gardening exhibition], once at the One-World-House in Munich, once to a community centre in Eching, and last year a second time to Munich at the Moffat Hall... And then we asked Dama and Ricky if they would be interested in accompanying us to Belo and give a concert there as well, and they agreed and organized a wonderful concert in Belo, and it was so difficult to organize: since there is no amplification there we had to fetch it all ourselves – first Dama drove it in his pick-up truck from Tana to Morondava, and there our Adolpho [teacher from the project school in Belo] collected it and brought it to Belo. And the biggest problem for Adolpho's organization was that he had to persuade the representative of Gerama, the energy supplier, not to switch off the electricity during the evening of the concert, because normally electricity gets cut off in the evening, and that worked out fine ... well with such a VIP event, people told us this was the biggest cultural event in the whole history of the town, when such famous musicians as Dama and Ricky come to give a concert, then he's got to guarantee the electricity supply ... And the public were all dressed up in their best clothes, with all the VIPs of the town present as well, and in the end there were 500 people or so.

German original

Einmal hatten wir anlässlich eines Nationalfeiertags in Berlin Kontakt mit einem madagassischen Musiker, der da aufgetreten ist, .. und über den, über diesen Kontakt sind wir dann mit seinem Bruder Ricky in Tana in Kontakt gekommen, das hat sich dann so ergeben, und Ricky trat dann einmal in, ich glaub das erste Mal wars in Bergisch Gladbach auf mit dem Projekt Voajanahari zusammen mit Dama und Hajazz, da sind wir hingefahren, haben nach dem Konzert uns angefreundet, ein bisschen Wein getrunken, ja und so hat sich das so entwickelt und nun hatten wir zweimal schon das Projekt Voajanahari in München einmal auf der Buga, einmal im Eine Welt Haus in München einmal im Bürgerhaus in Eching und letztes Jahr ein zweites Mal ein zweites Mal in München am Ampere in der Moffathalle.. und dann haben wir Dama und Ricky gefragt, ob sie nicht auch mal Lust hätten nach Belo mitzukommen und dort ein Konzert zu geben und sie haben eingewilligt und haben dann ein wunderbares Konzert in Belo organisiert was ganz schwierig zu organisieren war weil es da keine Anlage gibt, das mussten wir alles aus Tana mitschleppen.. und das grösste Problem was Adolph dann bei diesem Konzert in Belo hatte, war an diesem Abend wenn das Konzert stattfindet darf der Vertreter von Gerama von der Energiebehörde den Strom nicht abschalten.. Weil sonst immer abends der Strom abgeschaltet wurde.. Und das hat dann geklappt . Na wenn so grosse Prominenz.. wie die Leute gesagt haben, das war das grösste Kulturereignis in der Geschichte der Stadt, dass so jemand Prominenter wie Dama und Ricky da ein KONZERT GEBEN, dann muss der schon für den Strom sorgen.. Das Publikum war im Sonntagsgewand, das war richtig ein Konzertpublikum, die Prominenz der Stadt war da und am Ende waren 500 Leute drin.

Interview with Raab in Munich, July 2007

These three extracts clearly show the interplay between the ‘human, spatial and institutional hubs’ in Europe and in Madagascar for the mutual benefit of all involved.

Furthermore, we identified a fourth hub which functions at a different level from the other three in being directly connected with the research process. We called these ‘accidental hubs’

- *Accidental* hubs are enabling links created by the mutual exposure of researchers and those researched to their respective networks and working environments. To some extent these pose a dilemma for ethnographers who fear a contamination of their research environment by too close a connection between researcher and those researched. Clearly in our research design - whereby we followed individual artists in their networking across transnational spaces, and in our own role in not just observing but also producing cultural events with the artists in Madagascar and in Europe - we became mutually supportive for each others’ aims. Our solution to this ‘observer paradox’ dilemma was not just the obviously required ‘self-reflexivity’ (see especially Fisher and Marcus 1986, Marcus 1998 a.o), but a much more positive acceptance of a collaborative model of ethnographic research where everything created through these interactions between ourselves and the artists became in turn part of the next research cycle. The group Madagascar All Stars whose formation and subsequent recording and touring was influenced by our own research for which Dama was acting as artistic advisor offers a case in point. Dama’s pivotal role in the Malagasy music scene allowed us first access to a wide networks of artists which we then expanded by snowballing to other artists and – less obviously- to the many different organisations of civil society we then added to our research design. In turn, our own academic dissemination activities for the EU and AHRC projects which included a whole series of cultural events⁹ supplemented by additional funding from the Arts Council and other institutions led to joint projects with arts festivals like the Brighton Festival in 2005, the London Africa Festival in 2006, the Rudolstadt Folk and Roots festival in 2008, the Weinheim Malagasy weekend in 2013 a.o, as well as connections with influential media like the Songlines and the Songlines Encounter

⁹ Examples of these are those with the Turner Sims Concert Hall at the University of Southampton in 2009, with the African cultural centre Iwalewa House at the University of Bayreuth in 2008 and again in 2009, with the British Council in Rabat in 2008 a.m.o

Festival in 2011. In that sense ‘accidental hubs’ and their effects can be seen as one typical instance of the kind of mutual benefit accruing for migrants and non-migrants alike.

I would now like to add some voices of the participants themselves in this exchange. How is the nature of collaboration perceived by the practicing musicians and by members of their public? To illustrate these the following quotes can speak for themselves. In the final period of the TNMundi project researchers, musicians and the director of Turner Sims concert Hall together organised a cultural event consisting of an academic conference on Music and Migration (see Kiwan and Meinhof 2011b), workshops in local schools, a master class, and two concerts. Here are some quotes from the participants: first from some students, pupils and teachers who took part in the workshops and concerts organised with the Madagascar All Stars,¹⁰ secondly from the editor of a leading world music magazine in the UK, Songlines; and finally a long comment from Dama who participated not only in all the TNMundi concerts in Madagascar, Rabat and Southampton but who also curated the Sefone final concert which concluded a week of artists residency in Bayreuth with musicians originating from different countries (Germany, Cuba, Cote d’Ivoire, Madagascar) and residences (Berlin, Bayreuth, Paris, Antananarivo).

In the first quote from a first year music student and saxophonist from Southampton University who took part in the master class workshop and concert given by the Madagascar All Stars in October 2009 in the Turner Sims Concert Hall, we can see the inspirational force of the encounter between musicians from very different musical and cultural traditions.

Thank goodness I had run home before the concert to grab my saxophone; I went over to thank the band after the master class; they saw my sax and asked me to jam! I don’t think I will ever forget it; for that brief moment I felt I had dipped into their culture and world; it was very special.

After hearing them at the lunchtime concert, I had to have more! In the evening concert I felt myself mouthing the familiar sounding words from before and even singing out!

I had an interest in World music prior to experiencing the music from the Madagascar AllStars; but these guys made me hungry to seek out more.

I could really relate to them, their music was so expressive and meaningful. When I play my saxophone, I feel as though I am trying to send out similar vibes; I loved them!

(If you haven’t gathered, I REALLY enjoyed having these guys visit!)

The second quote comes from a teacher at one of the Southampton schools where the musicians did workshops with the school children. It expresses some of the beneficial impact that such encounters can have on the very young- surely an excellent emotional lesson about the benefits of multiculturalism without any need for words- doing by showing.

All the children really enjoyed the session so a big **thank you** for organising this event for us..

I think the pupils were a little shy at first. The children particularly enjoyed handling the instruments as some were familiar and others totally new to us.

Singing in rounds was fun .. yet challenging, with the different rhythms, words and sounds. The multi-cultural aspect was an eye opener for our children who have little opportunity to meet enthusiastic people / musicians from different countries and cultures
We would love to participate in any further similar activities.

¹⁰ For a selection of videoclips of their music see for example <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0YABcaQ5Z5k>

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=S_duue1C0Bo

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=34WXVpfNSyk>

For some further information (albeit somewhat outdated since it excludes the participation of Ricky Olombelo) http://www.rfimusique.com/musiqueen/articles/113/article_8204.asp.

Also an, article by Paddy Bush in Songlines, issue 83, April May 2012, pp. 54-57

The children responded in their own words:

"I particularly liked the music they played. It was exciting. I want to play like that." (Year 5 child)

"They were amazing." (Year 3 child)

Another teacher commenting on the workshop with the North African musicians expressed a further enabling aspect of the encounter: the fact that a migrant boy, invariably in a difficult position when entering a new classroom in the UK, can show off his Middle East background as an asset to the rest of the pupils, gaining respect and arousing interest by having his own skills thus endorsed

One boy who had freshly arrived from the Middle East enjoyed meeting the artists and talking with them in his mother tongue, and then during the show, was proud to read aloud some lyrics written in Arabic in front of all his schoolmates

The impact of their performance on the editor of the leading UK world music magazine *Songlines* who moderated a roundtable discussion during the conference sessions of the cultural event stressed the impact of the musicians' own collaboration with one another:

I've seen a lot of performers from Madagascar, but I've enjoyed none as much as the Madagascar All stars who basically came together thanks to this project. Great artists, from inside and outside the country, making totally compelling music together. The collaboration with the Moroccans was put together in a few days and had more rough edges - which everybody admitted and that was the point. What was interesting was the areas in which they met - often conceptual rather than musical - the experience of being an émigré and of missing your homeland. In the Round Table both Moroccan and Malagasy artists spoke of how they became more Moroccan or Malagasy as a result of being outside the country. One of the most moving songs in the concert was when this was expressed musically in a haunting Moroccan song of nostalgia. Having been at the collaborative concert and chairing the discussion I could see how beneficial the shared experience was for the musicians, but also for us as the audience of a one-off concert.

And finally I would like to give the voice of Dama himself commenting on the artist residency and collaboration during the final event of the Searching for Neighbours project Sefone in Bayreuth. His account of the work of a group of musicians as they practiced a song by the participating Cuban-origin singer-songwriter Mirta is not only a testimony to the extraordinary relation between artists from widely different musical traditions who had never encountered each other before. It should also be seen as a paradigm for the ways in which cultural diversity benefits all those people in our societies who embrace it with an open mind.

It's that mutual interest that is really important, how to awaken a mutual interest in each others' differences, consider these differences, recognize them, and valorize these differences. And that's it, if one knows how to valorize the difference, that which makes us different, but not as a barrier between us but as a contribution of something the other one has not got, then we are beginning to see good neighbourhoods; and music facilitates this interest, how to make grow a mutual interest between people.... And this workshop allowed us to let emerge this mutual interest, because this was really the key point. So we said to Mirta, let us hear your music and Mirta made us listen to her music. And then we started to talk, what could we do with that and we developed ideas, how we could play with her. So Mirta played her piece and each one of us – little by little added something and we arrived at a different arrangement

Because Mirta had recorded this in a studio with other musicians, so this was really a different type of music. So as we were playing with her, little by little, one of us added the guitar, she sang, and she said oh yes, that's good that, and we added some more, we added a harmonica, percussions, and we kept on asking, how do you like this when we add these elements, and we kept on listening and listening and exchanging.

So there we began with the music of Mirta to see our capacities and also to see the propositions of each musician, to see if what we were proposing had any value, and also that one can in fact propose something, that there's no barrier against that, that we don't need to develop a complex, yes we lifted the inhibitions, the boundaries between ourselves. Because amongst us there was Mellow Mark for example who is already a well-known musician, but Mellow Mark did not

behave like a famous musician, like a star, but he listened he proposed, because what is very important is that one listens to the other. But one never arrives at listening to the other if one does not recognize that the other has value, the value of the music of the others, something which I don't have. Mellow Mark does not have the value of the music of Madagascar, and Mirta does not have the value of the music of Mellow Mark, and that's how it was possible to get to this point of saying- ah how do you do this, this is really good, this is something else. And this exchange to create a new song with this song that was already standardised on a CD, with that we constructed a new song, we arranged the song with Mirta and Mirta was pleased, because we became her new group, and that's where good neighbouring lies, because we felt that we brought something of value to this music. And Mirta was pleased because even if this music was not the same as the one she had on her CD this had become a new song with a new group, and we were adopted by Mirta; and what is so important, but we also felt every one of us that we were useful, we felt appreciated, and that is where the good neighbourhood begins.

These quotes were meant to demonstrate the key argument of this article, namely that cultural diversity benefits all of those who engage with it with an open mind by using one example from our collaborative work between artists and researchers, thus further elucidating the nature of 'accidental hubs'. Kiwan and Meinhof (2011a) have extensively discussed the ways in which all four 'hubs' are key features for capturing the interlinking and mutually supporting layers of artists' networks. But how can we describe and analyse what motivates artists and what underpins the success of those who survive in this complex transnational field, in spite of their relative marginalisation and categorisation as non-European foreigners in their host societies?

Transcultural capital

Taking a bottom-up approach from observations of and interviews with artists we developed a new theoretical concept which we defined as 'transcultural capital' and which clearly emerges from an active use of the 'hub' structure of the network design. As a critical re-phrasing of Bourdieu's notions of cultural and social capital (e.g. Bourdieu's and Wacquant's 1992), 'transcultural capital' theorises the interplay between artists' talents, skills, knowledges and social connections with people in the country of origin, gate-keepers in the old and new societies, and the resulting economic benefits. Whereas in Bourdieu and Wacquant cultural and social capital are analytical categories to describe the ways in which possession of (usually 'high') cultural knowledge and expertise, and social connections are successful strategies for the aspirational dominant classes in their respective societies, transcultural capital by contrast captures the considerable impact associated with the strategic activation of social and cultural capital by *non-dominant*, even *marginal* individuals and enables them to accrue economic capital for their survival (see also Meinhof and Triandafyllidou 2006, Meinhof 2009, Kiwan and Meinhof 2011a and b, Glick-Schiller and Meinhof 2011). To keep the discussion focused I will again mainly use examples from the six musicians of the Madagascar All Stars

Cultural capital

This captures the significance of skills and talents associated with migrants' origin - their 'cultural capital' - which forms the basis from which new creativity emerges and which is continuously enhanced by coming and going between former home and host, and by multiple mutually enhancing cultural contacts within Europe. Examples include musical roots such as the distinctive rhythms based on local and national traditions and practices such as the 6/8 structure, the salegy of the North and the Tsapiky and the Beko of the South are already combining the influences of mixed local and global features (see Mallet 2009 and Fuhr 2011a,b, and in press). Traditional instruments, adapted for amplification on concert stages such as Justin's Valiha, Dama and Marius Fenoamby's kabosy, are played alongside Western imports such as the accordeon, the guitar, the harmonica but in the free tuning prevalent in all Malagasy music. Themes of songs often reflect the social concerns of a country suffering from exploitation, political unrest, poverty but also celebrate the beauty of the country-side,

the unique nature and especially also diversity of the Malagasy people, or express rituals of customs or nostalgic longing for returning home. And finally the Malagasy language itself, sometimes described as the 'Italian of Africa' because of its melodic vowels which create patterns without the need for rhyming, is almost exclusively used by all singer songwriters instead of French. This is in spite of the excellent French (and English) of many song-writers who often acknowledge their indebtedness to the great French chanson traditions of Georges Brassens and Jacques Brel, or the likes of Bob Dylan and Neil Young to name just some of the Western artists who exerted considerable influence. In some instances singers such as the French born Rachel Ratsizafy originally sang in either English and French and relearned Malagasy later in their careers, and former lawyer turned musician Edgar Ravahatra often mixes both French and Malagasy in the same song (see Kiwan and Meinhof 2011a for detailed portraits of these artists). These features – and there are many more aspects to the extraordinary diversity of Madagascar from which Malagasy singer songwriters draw their inspiration – form a substantial cultural capital. They also allow bridge-building between the local and the global, enabling the most successful artists to move between the local diasporic scenes and more cosmopolitan settings.

Social capital

This captures the significance of migrants' social networks comprising connections made in their country of origin, new connections within their own ethnic and other migrant groups living in Europe and many other new contacts made through their activities with members of the majority population, including socially and environmentally engaged associations in the North and the South (see also the discussion above of hubs). Some examples of these are links within the home country, and between 'home' country and 'diaspora' that often enable the first difficult steps into migration, links between artists in transnational fields that create synergies and opportunities to professionalize, make available new musical influences through the engagement with artists who would not normally meet and draw on local, translocal and transnational networks of support.

Since migration is no longer a one-way street but reciprocal, cyclical, or comprises artists that to-and fro in these networks they can use the advantages that each country brings- for example the cheap recording studios in the South and the excellent mastering and editing suites in the North. Without the social capital offered up by these transnational networks most artists would not survive. Hence the third interrelated aspect of transcultural capital is the transformation of *cultural* and *social capital* into ***economic capital***, enabling migrants to pursue careers in their new country of settlement with the obvious beneficial impact on their own lives and those with whom they interact. Economic benefits are being gleaned by both, the emergence of community and network-based music industry 'below' the surface', usually completely unnoticed by mainstream, as well as the cross-over to the main-stream through festivals, music competitions, and the joining up with other groups and artists within the main-stream. Connection to Madagascar is retained through old and new contacts within the Malagasy music scene that feeds an on-going reinventing of their art. According to interviews with many artists who play both the diasporic and the cosmopolitan scenes, the influences of diasporic audiences tend to exert a conservative influence since most migrants to Europe from Madagascar are still first generation who like to be reminded of 'songs from home', whereas the more cosmopolitan settings allow artists to be more inventive and collaborate and experiment more readily with other international artists. There is thus an important synergy created by the interplay of the transnational activation of cultural and social capital which directly translates into mutual benefit for all concerned.

Conclusion

Using migrant and transnational musicians as my sample group I began this article with the call for a new and more subtle understanding of the ways in which migration not only benefits migrants, but also enriches the cultures of receiving countries by the mutual benefits that these encounters entail.

Against the background of growing hostility against migrants and the continuing and still extending politicisation of their presence in European countries I have set a very different vision of mutual respect, collaboration, and benefit. So as to show the way in which contemporary migration is not a 'one-way' street of movements from the poorer to the richer countries where the rich offer all the benefit and receive nothing in return, I have developed a four-tiered 'hub structure' that highlights complex multidirectional interconnections and mutual support. Central to this argument is the understanding that migrants do not come empty-handed but possess substantial 'transcultural capital' that forms the basis for mutually enriching encounters between the global North and the global South. With examples taken from my own research in migration and cultural diversity I hope to have shown that the theoretical concepts I described can be fleshed out and made to come to life in the everyday encounters between those willing to engage across cultural borders and divisions.

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Author contacts:

Ulrike Hanna Meinhof

Centre for Transnational Studies, Modern Languages

University of Southampton

Southampton SO17 1BJ

UK

Email: hum@soton.ac.uk