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**Reconsidering Cultural Entrepreneurship:
Hip Hop Music Economy and Social Change in
Senegal, Francophone West Africa**

Jenny Fatou MBAYE

Thesis submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy (PhD)

London, July 2011

LONDON SCHOOL OF ECONOMICS AND POLITICAL SCIENCE

Declaration of Originality

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Abstract

The increasing interest in the cultural economy is part of an attempt to invent new industrial development strategies that comprises a capacity to transform locations. In policy-making, the cultural economy is commonly framed from an economic perspective that salutes the role of the cultural economy and the dynamics of entrepreneurship in processes of urban and regional developments. Moreover, explorations of cultural economy and entrepreneurship are mainly represented by studies of Europe and North America. This thesis departs from such a normative perspective, and critically examines the links between a situated music economy, its cultural entrepreneurs and social change in West Africa.

The empirical investigation of West African hip hop musical practitioners is framed by the notion of “community of practice”. The situated practices of these cultural workers and their music production ecology are investigated – methodologically – from a grounded perspective in order to grasp the originality of their materiality and aesthetics. The empirical focus of this thesis research is Dakar, one Francophone West African urban locale, which is contrasted with the ‘test case’ site of Ouagadougou. The case study locations are ‘experientially situated’, and over seventy semi-structured interviews were conducted with a range of participants both directly and indirectly involved in the hip hop music economy.

Underpinning this research is the starting point that using “community of practice” as a conceptual framework offers a theoretically informed empirical basis for situating cultural entrepreneurship in the context of the West African music economy. In response, this thesis introduces the transcultural dimension of Hip Hop to frame its

radical culturalisation of the West African music economy. This is done by singling out the political, social and theoretical significance of how hip hop entrepreneurship has become a force to be reckoned within social change in Francophone West Africa: this is a significant contribution of the thesis.

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Last but not least, a sincerest big up to my biographical family, my ‘emotional site’!

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PART ONE

FRAMING THE ISSUE

CHAPTER 1

FRAMING THE RESEARCH

1.1. INTRODUCTION

“[...] our cultures need infrastructures. For a culture without material nor logistical basis is just passing wind¹.” (Ki-Zerbo, 2004 p.11)

This thesis investigates the entrepreneurial practices displayed in West African hip hop music as a distinctive cultural economy, and the reasons why hip hop entrepreneurs can originally contribute to social change in their locales. As the introductory quote suggests, there is a growing fluidity and entanglement between cultural production and capital accumulation, between culture and its “infrastructures” (i.e. its political and economic articulations) that can be translated by the “need” to ‘produce culture in a structured way and to structure culture in a productive way’. Indeed, such a phrase recalls recent interests in the role of culture and creativity in economic development that has sparked a host of conceptual and empirical studies seeking to document the rise of a cultural/creative economy and its socioeconomic and spatial articulations (O'Connor, 1998; Power, 2002; Pratt, 2004; Gibson and Kong, 2005; Scott and Leriche, 2005; Rantisi et al., 2006; DeFillippi et al., 2007; Pratt, 2009). In this regard, my thesis participates in the effort to illuminate cultural processes in places currently deemed ‘off-the-map’ within the ‘creative economy’ scholarship, while addressing the political and economic implications of the specific form of entrepreneurship such processes imply for Francophone West African societies.

¹ This is my translation of the original text: “[...] il faut infrastructurer nos cultures. Une culture sans base matérielle et logistique n’est que vent qui passe.” J. Ki-Zerbo. *À Quand l’Afrique? Entretien avec René Holenstein p.11*

In times when geography as a discipline has been accused of being “parochial”, “technical” and, in a word, “unwordly” (Bonnett, 2003), this thesis participates in the affirmation of a field “significantly interested in, informed by, and practiced through the ‘voices’ of people [...] and economies of the Global South” (Murphy, 2008 p.867). Indeed, “few studies have given consideration to the prospects [...] for contexts in the Global South in the new creative economy” (Rantisi et al., 2006 p.1795-96). As such, economic geography, as a leading discipline in this literature, faces a ‘geographical’ challenge with respect to scholarship “as most leading-edge theories and theoretical directions in the field [...] have been developed through or driven primarily by empirical work in advanced industrial economies” (Murphy, 2008 p.852).

The production and management of culture highlights a blurring of the cultural and the economic, two spheres that are increasingly viewed as mutually constitutive in a cultural economy which is subject to both commercial and aesthetic imperatives, and appears to be the new source of competitive advantage for post-Fordist productive societies (Rantisi et al., 2006 p.1790). As such, researchers have illuminated a version of the cultural economy that is about cultural producers and the productive articulation of culture through particular forms of socioeconomic organisation, such as their networked chains of related practices that promote innovation (O'Connor, 1998; Christopherson, 2002; Pratt, 2004; Rae, 2004; Cunningham, 2005; DeFillippi et al., 2007; Pratt et al., 2007; Pratt, 2008; Frith et al., 2009; Van Heur, 2009).

Certainly culture is something that cultural workers as well as those who research on their practices see some value in, as do policy circles, although perhaps not the same value. For many policy-makers (especially in the Global North), there is no doubt that

culture and its production deserves to be treated ‘exceptionally²’, especially nowadays that it has achieved such an economic importance in developed countries. There is thus another version of this economy and its industries, one that is mostly about cultural consumption and that has been especially favoured by policy-makers in their focus on development strategies. Indeed, policy-makers soon adopted such a cultural economy while connecting it with “a rhetoric about place-based competition and endogenous development (Rantisi et al., 2006 p.1794). Structuring culture and its production has thus increasingly become a recurrent imperative in the agenda of policy-makers. Such a trend in policy discourses rests on the double argument that, on the one hand, cultural symbols play an ever-increasing role in the conception of capitalist products and, on the other, that culture has become a merchandise on which policy-makers can increasingly capitalise.

On the surface, West African music stands as a very good case of such a structuring of culture, with its production that is given great importance in the contemporary market of ‘world music³’. Indeed, West African musical styles that emerged as ‘world music’ are all born from the success of such or such forms of music already popular in the region, in certain urban neighbourhoods (Arnaud, 2007). Whether the ‘juju’ in Lagos, the ‘mbalax’ in Dakar, or the ‘zouglou’ in Abidjan, these various musical genres confirmed that musical production (and by extension cultural production) stands as the field in which West Africa can be recognised and praised on the global scene.

² I am here making reference to the recognition of the ‘exceptional’ status of cultural products that has led in 2005 to the adoption of the UNESCO’s “Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions” (<http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0014/001429/142919e.pdf>).

³ Despite its conflicting definitions, the term ‘world music’ refers to the marketing/classificatory device in the media and the music industry that became current in the 1980s and that was generally used to classify any kind of non-Western music. The broad category of ‘world music’ now usually includes isolated forms of ethnic music from diverse geographical regions and that were categorised together by virtue of their indigenous roots. For detailed information, see http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/World_music

However, all indicators also point towards the major expatriation of this music economy in European urban centres⁴ and have encouraged the belief that no real structuring of the music economy in West Africa has been identified yet. Studies of ‘world music’ production processes are based in and focused on urban centres from the Global North (Feld, 1995; Erlmann, 1996; Taylor, 1997; Mallet, 2002; Connell and Gibson, 2004; Brandellero and Calenge, 2008; Boyd, 2009); and yet, studies of African popular music have mainly focused on the musical phenomenon as a cultural ‘experience’, whether from an ethnomusicological perspective (Nketia, 1974; Charry, 2000; Stone, 2005; Kubik, 2010) or from a socio-historical contextualisation (Coplan, 1982; Collins, 1989; Waterman, 1990; Collins, 1992; Agawu, 2003). Put differently, African music is either 1) portrayed as powerless in the global music production system – with its geography even invisible in the relatively recent scholarship focusing on the economic perspectives of cultural production, or 2) treated as a cultural experience of anthropological, social and historical significance – with little, if any, focus on its productive and economic dimensions. The blind spots in the two relevant bodies of work that one would expect to cover this issue (‘African Studies’ and ‘cultural economy’ researchers) have certainly encouraged the belief that a West African music economy could hardly be explored and researched. Indeed, with the best will of the world, the traditional conceptions of these two strands of scholarly literature render the relevant unit of analysis of the structures and processes of this music economy invisible.

⁴ The musicologist Manda Tchebwa stresses that 70% of the stars of African music live in Paris – a locality that is considered as the place for legitimating the careers at the international level – and 20% go back and forth from the country of origin and the French capital G. Arnaud. *L'économie des musiques africaines: un terrible paradoxe*. Indeed, even when they live in their country of origin, most of these artists prefer to be registered to the French copyright collecting agency, SACEM than the one of their homeland (another virtual economic expatriation) V. Andriamirado. *Rencontres "Maintenant l'Afrique!" Synthèse de la 3e table ronde: "Les enjeux d'une coopération concertée"*; G. Arnaud. *L'économie des musiques africaines: un terrible paradoxe*.

My inquiry into the dynamics involved in a West African music economy thus stands at the intersection of these research circles that are not engaging with one another: my objective is to create a dialogue between them. Certainly, such an aim might require me to relocate to a new analytical space than the ones respectively offered by these two spheres. I experienced great difficulties in positioning my research, in making it understood by these circles and in creating a legitimate position which I could speak from. Especially while disseminating my initial work, I constantly struggled in moving from an interesting topic that a discursive circle could not really comprehend to a relevant issue, which this circle could understand and relate to. Indeed, this stood as a continuous challenge of carving out my own space while my inquiry systematically found itself at odds within a scholarly context where “Africanists” privileged historical and anthropological approaches and creative economy researchers displayed clear Northern geographical biases in their focus. This thesis thus investigates the reasons behind such a repetitive invisibility and intends to carve a space for the inquiry of a West African music economy.

When looking at culture and its production, research as well as policy interest usually revolves around general issues of cultural/creative economy and growth. Indeed, ‘how’ such a ‘productive structuring of culture’ or ‘structured production of culture’ happens, often stands as secondary to this agenda, which is only beginning to move, for some, to ‘cultural entrepreneurship’. In this process, policies have generally imported what may be regarded as crude generic notions of work organisations and simplistic conceptions of entrepreneurship applying them to cultural fields. From the perspective that I adopt in this thesis, ‘cultural entrepreneurship’ is a central concept in understanding the processes of music economies. I question how this route is and has been explored; hence, the contribution of my work. As an offspring of the cultural

economy, the concept of cultural entrepreneurship has contributed in pushing forward traditional discourses on entrepreneurship while helping to consider a particular economic rationale whereby supply is not rationally articulated by demand. Such a consideration goes towards explaining the condition of precarious and immaterial labour (see Chapter 6 for detailed discussion). However, it remains focused on a normative definition of the individual entrepreneur who instrumentally uses a network. As such, this research explores the recent understandings of the complex term that is ‘cultural entrepreneurship’ while framing it in the context of a specific “community of practice” (“CoP”) (Wenger, 1998; Wenger and Snyder, 2000). As we will see in this thesis, my approach should be seen as a major extension of Wenger’s work, while I use it in a particular way to stress the embedding and emergent forms entrepreneurship in cultural fields.

Critiquing the concept of cultural entrepreneurship in a subtle way, i.e. at an empirical rather than at a conceptual level, has implied a step-by-step inquiry that involves first a critical situating of entrepreneurship in the cultural economy, then another situating in the music economy, and yet another one in Hip Hop and another still in West African Hip Hop. In fact, these have been the steps I followed to provide a useful and productive understanding of entrepreneurship in the West African hip hop community. Such an approach then calls for a reconsideration of cultural entrepreneurship from an individual perspective to a community perspective in order to grasp the originality of its materiality and aesthetics. The research questions that emerge are:

How hip hop musical practitioners emerge in the West African cultural economy? What their entrepreneurial practices are? And,

how hip hop entrepreneurs have been able to contribute in original ways to social change in West African societies?

More particularly, the situation in Francophone West Africa led me to investigate the practices which characterise this cultural economy and its dynamics of musical entrepreneurship, while inquiring into the impacts of hip hop practitioners' political discourse and economic organisation. In investigating these issues within this thesis, my intent is neither to discredit nor to promote cultural entrepreneurship, but rather to understand how it has emerged, and how it is expressed in the context of the West African hip hop music economy. This thesis thus attempts to demonstrate how the assumptions behind current understandings of cultural entrepreneurship belies the specificities of the contextual conditions operating in the West African music economy and the recursive relationships these have with the practices of entrepreneurs operating therein. Through the example of this hip hop community, I will argue that it is the contextualised practices of these entrepreneurs that constitute, and not just affect, the emergence of cultural entrepreneurship in the West African music economy. Fuzzy definitions both in academia and in policy frameworks have been attached to this concept of 'cultural entrepreneurship'. This concept can only be comprehended while illuminating the complexities and contradictions inherent in cultural economies and more specifically, as far as this thesis is concerned, in situated music economies. Rather than an overview then, this chapter is more an account of why I did this research in the way I did, and specifies the terms within which I want it to be judged as well as the spheres I hope it will contribute to. In part, it also alerts the reader to the problems and difficulties of such an inquiry: one that is difficult enough and still poorly done in the Global North, making what I have undertaken doubly, if not triply challenging. The remainder of this chapter thus outlines the rationales for this research

and the motivations behind the investigation of the relationship between a situated form of cultural entrepreneurship and the recognition of a music economy in the West African context.

1.2. CONTRADICTIONS OF THE MUSIC ECONOMY IN WEST AFRICA

In the popular imaginary, one of the rare positive dimensions of the African continent is its music revealed mainly through the ‘world music’ phenomenon. Indeed, in a system of global competition, cultural production such as music appears to be the comparative advantage for least industrialised economies. Both the considerable inscription of West African musical production in the trend of ‘world music’, and the significant increase in world cultural trade products (since 2000) support the argument that music may be the door for West African economies to an effective participation in the world market (UNESCO, 2005). However, the relatively marginal contribution of Africa (less than 1%) to world exportation of cultural goods reminds us that talent alone is insufficient to build a competitive music economy, and institutional as well as political intervention have become primordial in cultural fields. As has been recently stressed in advanced economies, such an intervention would require knowledge of the sector and the development of new models of sectorial support that are only now beginning to emerge in Western countries. There is, in other words, a “need to locate these networks, to understand how they operate and try to find ways of adding value to their existing operations. [...] [Such a work demands] attention to detail and sensitivity to the creative process itself as well as the different needs and character of different cultural sub-sectors” (Brown et al., 2000 p.449).

In developed countries, there is a general call for local and regional policy-makers to take action toward encouraging the cultural economy, and at its core, cultural and creative industries (Pratt, 2011). However, many early studies on these were stymied by poor definitions, and concomitantly, poor information. Indeed, policy-makers, having encouraged the cultural economy in general and the music economy in particular, did so with very little actual knowledge, and without proper insight into the processes of cultural production. More precisely, in advanced economies, policy-makers' "uses of art and culture [were] manifold, but the lay notion of 'culture as ornament' [was] dominant, albeit justified by its potential instrumental value" (Pratt, 2011 p.327). Because every discourse has material impacts (Pratt, 1991), so too has such a policy approach towards culture and its productions. First, such a discursive approach translates a complex reality into simplistic norms; second, it focuses solely on consumption and disregards the whole production chain involved in this economy; and third, it rests on structural mappings and predictions (in relation to its normative and consumption-oriented dimension) rather than on actual processes and practices.

1.2.1. On the complexity of the cultural economy

The argument I develop in this thesis rests on a question that can legitimately be raised, i.e. whether 'general' theories of the 'cultural economy' are tenable. Indeed, "geographies of knowledge on cultural economy are highly skewed towards Europe and North America. Much of the research has been on major metropolitan areas in those two areas" (Gibson and Kong, 2005 p.550). Such uneven geographies of academic work on the cultural economy should thus be taken as a significant warning: beyond an American, European or more generally a Global North focus, there may be polyvalent cultural economies, and myriad conceptions of these can emerge in the

future literature once the complexity of its multiple processes is recognised. Following an anthropological turn and Latour's footsteps, this implies seeing how economic life is done rather than how it should be done (Pratt, 2009 p.407). Indeed, drawing on the economic anthropology of Tardes, Latour considers that nothing in the economy is objective but rather everything is subjective and even inter-subjective (Latour and Lépinay, 2008 p.17). Applied to the complexity of cultural economies, such a recognition stresses the non-tenability of general theories regarding the cultural economy, that usually fall into some form of normative overstatements on the one hand. On the other, it invites us to think beyond how the cultural economy should be and to explore how it is actually 'done'.

In the 1990s and early 2000s, a normative approach to the cultural economy proved attractive in several cities of the Global North. From these discussions on the cultural economy and its capacity to transform urban locations, the notions of 'culture and development' emerged with "much evidence of an instrumental usage of culture, but little awareness or exploration of primary investment in the cultural industries or culture, per se" (Pratt, 2008 p.97). In this framework, and in "its most popularised form, the cultural economy has become a 'brand' representing a particular perspective of the 'innovative' in the contemporary economy, and is itself an 'innovative' product" (Gibson and Kong, 2005 p.551). This policy orientation was mainly justified in economic terms and its analyses derived from a traditional economic frame of reference while it focused on the secondary impacts of culture. Indeed, founded upon the assumption that one cannot value arts or culture, the cultural economy was evaluated through proxies, i.e. the activities generated around it. Although such an approach does give culture value, and does not equate cultural value with economic

value directly, the notion that the cultural economy has an intrinsic value (both economic and cultural) was overlooked (Pratt, 2011).

As has been acknowledged, to approach the complex and situated nature of cultural economies, “it is necessary to go beyond the practices of mapping and explore processes” (Pratt, 2011 p.331). Such a reflexive approach of cultural production participates in a debate that challenges the unproductive dualism of economic/cultural-social, while confronting neo-classical economics on its own ground. As such, it sees social and cultural dimensions of the economy not as allocated to the context, but integrative of proper economic action (Pratt, 2009 p.407). Indeed, one cannot assume “that ‘the cultural economy’ has some existence outside the social, political and cultural contexts within which individuals and groups of people work” (Gibson and Kong, 2005 p.553). The complexity and diversity of cultural economies require more than a “mode of analysis that reduces everything to simple economic measures [and that is, as such,] necessarily partial” (Pratt, 2011 p.331). As such, the jargon of policy-makers regarding the cultural economy rarely pays attention to what is actually occurring on the ground. This is especially alarming considering that the extension of certain observations from empirical data has produced normative generalisations, “where meanings for cultural economy coalesce around singular, definitive interpretations” (Gibson and Kong, 2005 p.549).

These findings illuminate the fact that recent prophetic depictions of the cultural economy are “plagued by overstatements, generality, and problems of downplaying what are clearly important external influences, local variations, and more substantial social relations” (Gibson and Kong, 2005 p.552). Therefore, rather than inquiring into the culturalisation of economy or the economisation of cultural life (see section 1.3. for

details), it is more significant to investigate the specificities of cultural production and to highlight that “as well as culture being used in an instrumental manner, there was also a relatively unexplored role of culture playing a role in its own right” (Pratt, 2008 p.95). As far as the cultural economy is concerned, and the music economy in particular, there is indeed a need to recognise the “diversity of interests and scale of activities in the different areas of music production” (Williamson and Cloonan, 2007 p.319) and “to move beyond the impasse of culture versus economy debates. [...] [Again, this] is an exciting moment to be reengaging with economic geographies not as they ‘ought to be’, but as they are actually practiced” (Pratt, 2008 p.101). Besides, only such an approach permits the lived experiences of the majority of musicians and operators to be highlighted, in the various but always situated music economies (Williamson and Cloonan, 2007 p.320). As such, “the productive task ahead is not to sink into endless efforts at defining cultural economies, but acknowledge the polyvalence and address specific research agenda from there” (Gibson and Kong, 2005 p.546). My inquiry into the West African music economy, as a situated cultural economy, proposes to take up and expand upon such a challenge regarding the multiplicity of cultural economies.

1.2.2. On the consumption and production continuum

One of the main challenges towards a more adequate consideration of the cultural economy in its own right, has been an exclusive concern with its end product, or artists, rather than the process of its creation, i.e. the processes that are necessary to transform an idea into a cultural product (Pratt, 2011). As previously mentioned, the normative policy discourse about the cultural economy defines it as a ‘brand’ and conceives it as an instrumental add-on, a spin that participates in transforming urban

locations. This policy approach thus focuses on cultural consumption, and not production (Pratt, 2009 p.408). The fact that the cultural economy and, at its core, cultural industries, do not appear in traditional industrial taxonomies, means that they are actually invisible to data collection. As a result, “conceptually, they have been associated with consumption and thus researchers have not been inclined to look for them in the sphere of production” (Pratt, 2011 p.323). The limits of such an approach is that it disregards the whole process cycle involved in cultural economies and by the same token, it dismisses the importance of cultural intermediaries involved in this process. It does not recognise that cultural economies are context-dependent, and practiced.

In West Africa, the cooperation services and agencies (such as *CulturesFrance*⁵ or *Africalia*⁶) as well as the international institutions (such as OIF⁷, UNESCO or European Commission) have traditionally favoured cultural consumption in their intervention. Following the current policy interest in instrumentally ‘using’ the cultural economy, they have integrated the dimension of culture into their policy intervention. However, their support has been usually framed in terms of cultural consumption and therefore addressed to festivals organisers (diffusion/dissemination of cultural production) or to the artists themselves (creation). Such an approach reflects and

⁵ *CulturesFrance* is a project of the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Ministry of Culture and Communication charged with promoting French culture around the world. *CulturesFrance* was created in 2006 from the AFAA (French Association for Artistic Action) and changed again in 2010 to become a non-governmental organisation (rather than an association) called the French Institute. The French Institute is now in responsible for international cultural exchange. For more detailed information, consult www.institutfrancais.com.

⁶ *Africalia* is an association, largely supported by the Belgium Development Cooperation, which aims at supporting “professional organisations and networks in Africa that contribute to the flourishing of artists”. For more detailed information, consult www.africalia.be.

⁷ OIF or the International Organisation of La Francophonie is an organisation based on the French language and its humanistic values whose actions respect cultural and linguistic diversity and serve to promote the French language, peace and sustainable development. It believes that the valorisation of artistic creation goes hand in hand with the economic viability and, as such, it intervenes in supporting audiovisual productions and the circulation of live performances. For more detailed information, consult www.francophonie.org.

restricts an understanding of the cultural production chain, in which the consumption perspective is favoured to the detriment of a comprehensive focus on the productive process. Indeed, as the director of *CulturesFrance* once noted, the financial resources from cooperation services and agencies intervening in the West African cultural economy are all concentrated on artists' circulation and creative support, through specific strategies of co-productions, prioritising the assignment of aesthetic objectives (Andriamirado, 2007). Clearly, such strategies of intervention neglect other participants in the music production chain who produce, realise, and duplicate artworks (after their creation and before dissemination), maintaining market dynamics through their intermediation.

Therefore, in order to highlight how cultural economies play a role in their own right, one needs to switch from the traditional focus on consumption towards a simultaneous exploration of production and consumption. Indeed, "the production/consumption dualisms are unhelpful; rather it would be more useful to explore the constitution of products situated in and across places and networks. [...] [as] there is much to be gained from a finer-grained anthropological sense of the making and shaping of things through a long 'life cycle' that necessarily incorporates both production and consumption" (Pratt, 2004 p.124). In this respect, contrary to the notion of commodity chain that focuses on the final product and the notion of value chain that focuses on the chain where profitability is maximised, the notion of production chain can be used to "develop an organisational analysis of any production activity and to stress the linkage between production and consumption" (Pratt, 2008 p.98). Production chain analyses are thus especially significant when considering cultural and creative production processes. Indeed, an organisationally focused production chain analysis responds positively to the concern with "the "whole production chain", its articulation in places,

as well as the situated nature of labour, and consumption in relation to cultural industries” (Pratt, 2008 p.100). Likewise, the current focus of management scholars on creativity as consumption has been seriously questioned; researchers from this core discipline, as far as cultural (and creative) entrepreneurship is concerned, are now encouraged “to attend more to the process – personnel, work and management practices – that are needed to reap the benefits of creativity as a source of competitive advantage” (DeFillippi et al., 2007 p.516). Put differently, “creativity requires a context and organisation. [...] [As] creativity, [and by extension, musical creativity] is a process (requiring actants, knowledge, networks and technologies) that interconnects novel ideas and context” (Pratt, 2004 p. 120).

A critical consequence of such an organisational form is that co-ordination, or intermediation, is important: indeed, the argument is that “production and consumption are a unified process involving mediation” (Pratt, 2011 p.333). More importantly, these “intermediaries have considerable potential to configure and re-configure relations within and across industries” (Pratt, 2011 p.333). It thus becomes clear that the interplay of cultural and organisational forms that constitute cultural economies in general and music economies in particular, requires a subtle eye dually reading its production and consumption dimensions. As such, recent works on the music economy have looked at the production and consumption of music within the wider sphere of cultural and creative industries, generally moving towards a plural definition of music industries (Williamson and Cloonan, 2007 p.313). Such a move recalls that “there is a link, a relationship between production and consumption [...]; [and] this is a clear reference to the beneficial co-location of cultural producers and consumers where fashion ideas may be picked up and tested” (Pratt, 2004 p.123). As far as cultural and, especially, music economies are concerned, an approach to the material culture of

production that takes in the whole ‘cycle’ of making and shaping cultural production, has become of utter importance. As such, my research’s focus on the West African music economy through an investigation of its cultural entrepreneurs challenges the traditional emphasis on the consumption dimension of cultural economies by providing a situated perspective on musical producers.

1.2.3. Productive role of cultural mediation or peopling the cultural economy

As there is not such a thing as ‘a’ cultural economy, the singular denomination cannot hold for one of its core practices, i.e. cultural entrepreneurship. Simplistic notions must leave the way to systematic complexity as well as contextuality and, as such, akin to the cultural economy, cultural entrepreneurship cannot be defined in unitary terms. As a complex phenomenon, it thus requires a research approach that does not tend towards a unifying understanding and that necessarily recognises this complexity. However, to insist on the context-dependency of phenomena such as the cultural economy and cultural entrepreneurship is not to fall into relativist positions, as there are concrete material implications in holding one research discourse or the other (Pratt, 1991 p.262). Indeed, and as previously suggested, current cultural economy policy approaches demonstrate a lack of in-depth knowledge of the sector. More specifically, they fail to acknowledge the fact that the social and economic life is embedded in time and space, and embodied through practices (Pratt, 2011). As such, these approaches display a lack of appreciation of the essential part played by the ‘soft’ infrastructure – the people, the skills, the networking, the social context – of those involved in cultural economies in general, and music economies as far as this research is concerned (Brown et al., 2000 p.445). In other words, they generally lack the appropriate and necessarily flexible framing to recognise the fundamental role of ‘people’ participating

in this economy, i.e. “creative individuals in that cultural economy” (Hudson, 2006 p.632).

Contrary to policy-makers ‘by-the-book’ perspective on cultural economies, in Derrida’s words, I suggest to recognise in the practices of cultural entrepreneurship, the production of affect and intensities that indicate the “end of the book and the beginning of the writing” (Derrida, 1967 p.15). As such, I recognise a complexity beyond the dominant official discourse and the historically mediated boundaries of what cultural entrepreneurship ‘should be’. I thus consider cultural entrepreneurship as a pragmatic and cognitive space that is not only a social construction, but also a contested domain. Drawing on Deleuze and Guattari, Derrida and Barthes, some entrepreneurship researchers have already identified that such a ‘writing’⁸ is “problematized by a philosophy of becoming, by an interest in movement, by a desiring-creation that asks how we could set free a world and people to come, beyond the limits prescribed by the presently dominant official imagery (of the real, possible, valuable, and so on) of entrepreneurship” (Hjorth and Steyaert, 2009 p.2-3). Indeed, just like any other cultural identity, cultural entrepreneurship is “a product of contested processes, always in the process of becoming and unbecoming [...] [and] must be understood within the context of national and international political-economic dynamics and their local effects” (Hudson, 2006 p.629-30).

Therefore, the works of poststructuralists are significant when apprehending what cultural entrepreneurship means in the context of the West African music economy. Indeed, they provide a “very attractive conception of the production of meaning suggesting that there is no final source of meaning; instead meaning is constantly

⁸ ‘Writing’ is here to be understood in terms of ‘narrative’.

being changed and reproduced as it is reread or rewritten” (Pratt, 1991 p.260). As such, the insights offered by post-structuralism permit us on the one hand, to recognise the active production of meaning and, on the other, to call for a shift from ‘representation’ – what/who represents cultural entrepreneurship – to ‘signification’ – what cultural entrepreneurship signifies in such or such context. While the term ‘signification’ allows a focus on the processes of signification itself, which it is argued, gives shape to a reality it implicates, more generally “what is most important is the explanation of the ways in which discourses construct our experience of reality” (Pratt, 1991 p.261). From this perspective, the need for a “new political image” of cultural entrepreneurship emerges, one that distances itself from the traditional cultural entrepreneurialism favoured and supported by policy-makers (Hjorth and Steyaert, 2009 p.5). A new political image that, for instance, recognises that “aesthetical and political forces are at play in productions of entrepreneurial identities and processes” (Hjorth and Steyaert, 2009 p.3).

Starting from the premise that music “is produced, distributed and consumed in and through social and economic formation that are multiple, shifting and contested” (Gibson and Kong, 2005 p.554), I argue that the music economy has its own particular character and constitutive production processes in the context of Francophone West Africa. I can here refer to the philosophical concept of the “refrain” developed by Deleuze and Guattari. Basing their argument on the example of the bird that sings to mark its territory, the authors remind us that music and more particularly the refrain is “inseparable from a distribution of space, a distribution in space” (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987 p.312). It is a way to organise, when chaos threatens, one’s space and one’s own territory; it is a mean to express an existence critically distanced from another, to assert a being with a differentiated rhythm. The refrain draws a rhythmic

circle in order to protect and territorialise one individual from other beings of the same species. At the same time, it invites those who recognise themselves in it inside the circle. From this conception of the “refrain” as a spatial organiser, I understand the music economy as something that distances, expresses, territorialises and regroups in order to “form organised masses” (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987 p.348). As such, focusing on West African cultural entrepreneurs, i.e. the “organised masses” of a situated music economy, provides significant insights into the political as well as economic dynamics of this cultural economy in Francophone West Africa. Indeed, the politics and aesthetics of this situated cultural entrepreneurship permits us “to answer the question ‘how’ directed at the entrepreneurial process/event and bring it beyond the historically mediated boundaries for where it ‘should be’, where it is expected” (Hjorth and Steyaert, 2009 p.4).

1.3. ON CULTURAL ECONOMY AND ENTREPRENEURIAL DEVELOPMENT

Starting from the contradictions of the music economy in West Africa, this thesis has two aims. The first is to confront a persisting Northern bias as far as theory-building and policy-making regarding the cultural economy and its dynamics of entrepreneurship are concerned, and to demonstrate the contribution of qualitative research in the Global South in this process. The second is to provide an alternative conception of culture and development through the lens of specifically situated cultural workers, while highlighting how their identities and practices can inform social change.

1.3.1. Cultural economy and West African development: (yet) another missed boat?

The hypothesis that the developing world can use and benefit from its creative assets and cultural resources as a source of economic growth, is not new and has already been formulated by policy-makers (Barrowclough and Kozul-Wright, 2007; UNCTAD and UNDP, 2008 p.5-6). Indeed, the argument that least advanced economies such as those of Senegal and Burkina Faso for instance, “are conceivably better positioned to compete in cultural industries than in many traditional industries. This is because the basic raw material, such as the talent to create musical sounds, is readily available and entry costs, at least in the case of music are not as prohibitive as in many industries” (Kozul-Wright, 2001 p.11-2). My earlier reference to the West African inscription in the ‘world music’ trend can illustrate this argument. As such, and as far as West Africa is concerned, the music economy stands as an “important new trading opportunity that provides one of the fastest means of penetrating global markets” while developing an innovation-based competitiveness strategy (Kozul-Wright, 2001 p.20).

Moreover, music has always occupied a privileged position, being a locomotive of popular culture in West African societies and, its economy can be valued not only as a potentially lucrative commercial enterprise but also an elementary form of artistic expression (Throsby, 2002 p.2). In this respect, the inherent mixture of public and private dimensions in the music economy recalls the importance of cultural, social and political attributes in a development process that is not restricted to the simple economic performance (UNCTAD and UNDP, 2008 p.18). The argument about the West African music economy stresses not only the “danger of missing out on valuable export opportunities” but also of losing its “own distinctive ‘voice’ amidst the content

imported from the cultures and industries of other countries, especially from northern developed ones” (Barrowclough and Kozul-Wright, 2007 p.12). Indeed, the duality of this economy is to be analysed not only from an economic point of view but also from socio-cultural and ideologico-political perspectives. However, despite the well-known economic gains and the important social benefits of this economy, the music field has, “up to now, not been seen or supported as an export sector (nor has it enjoyed the benefits associated with traditional export sectors)” (Kozul-Wright, 2001 p.24).

While in the first decade of their countries’ independence (1960s-70s), West African cultural economies were marked by strong state involvement, the “following two decades saw a retrenchment of the state that included the disentangling of their supportive regulatory framework. This process has taken place largely under pressure from Bretton Woods’s institutions, as noted by UNESCO, in the case of several West African countries such as Burkina Faso [and] Senegal” (Barrowclough and Kozul-Wright, 2007 p.18). Since then, and however important the music economy and its dynamics of entrepreneurship may be for West Africa, it appears that the governments there “have not yet recognised the potential of cultural industries for growth in their development strategies” and these countries have neither any specialised nor general policies for the development of this field (Kozul-Wright, 2001 p.25). Indeed, although the music economy could become more valuable than the traditional low value-added, commodity-based industries of these countries, it is rare to find ones that have given the field the same level of attention in terms of supportive or promotional policies that exist in most developed countries (Barrowclough and Kozul-Wright, 2007 p.20).

Therefore, in West Africa, the cultural and especially, as far as this research is concerned, the musical field has been largely dominated by an informal economy that

operates without any regulation capable of helping the sector to raise finance, improve labour condition and upgrade generally its economy (Barrowclough and Kozul-Wright, 2007 p.19). This state of affairs has certainly encouraged the aforementioned expatriation of the West African music economy. Indeed, with some notable exceptions, the production of music in West Africa “remains small-scale, informal and essentially craft-based [...] and as a consequence, the recording business tends to be prematurely arrested at the earliest (artist and repertoire or initial recording) stages of the supply chain, with limited value added. Initial master recordings are subsequently licensed to foreign companies, which masters, markets and distributes the product in the high-income markets. Very quickly, successful artists from [these] countries follow their recordings abroad, becoming cut off from the business organisation of their own countries” (Kozul-Wright, 2001 p.12). As such, the expatriated dimension of this music economy has implied that little economic benefit and return to the countries of origin have been brought, despite the presence of ample musical assets and recognised talent, creativity and ubiquitous capabilities in these countries.

Such a reality can thus interestingly be paralleled with the fact that, although in Africa the role of the cultural economy and its industries in the continent’s development was acknowledged in 1992 in the Dakar Plan of Action⁹, such a recognition was never translated into practice. Indeed, while this document serves as reference point for current strategies in the area, few cultural statistics have been collected since then, despite increasing policy needs to assess the importance of revenue generated from cultural fields such as music, which thrive on the continent. “Data is generally lacking however, and this has been highlighted by UNCTAD and others, leading to the call for

⁹ This document was produced after a Meeting of Experts on Cultural Industries in Africa organised by the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO). For more details, see <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0011/001131/113126eo.pdf>

the collection of accurate and comparable trends data and analysis of policy information for developing countries” (Barrowclough and Kozul-Wright, 2007 p.9). Clearly, the lack of accurate data on the music economy (as well as the cultural economy more generally) is one of the main problems that have contributed to “its long-held lack of profile”. As has been stressed, few “governments or policy-makers have been fully aware of the current size and scale of the sector. This is now starting to change – in developed countries at least” (Barrowclough and Kozul-Wright, 2007 p.28). As a matter of fact, among the few researchers who have dedicated their work to cultural and creative economies in the least advanced economies, rare are those who have been able to provide a robust evidential base, i.e. a detailed analysis stemming from focused primary data.

Inquiring into the music economy and its dynamics of entrepreneurship in the West African context thus stands as considerable challenge, as researchers have tended not to productively focus on ‘these’ processes situated in ‘that’ location. Such a ‘missed spot’ points towards specific conceptual gaps both in the ‘cultural economy’ and ‘African Studies’ literatures (see section 1.4.1 for detailed discussion) but also stems from two major empirical gaps: the expatriated dimension of the music economy and its consequent practical invisibility in official policy accounts. Moreover, such a double empirical invisibility of the West African music economy has certainly encouraged a conceptual dismissal of this ‘field of research’ especially in disciplines such as economic geography, which has played a considerable role in ‘cultural/creative economy scholarship’ and which invariably depends upon data collected by others, notably national or international agencies (Dicken, 2004 p.17). In this respect, the West African music economy stands as one of their ‘significant silences’.

1.3.2. Cultural economy and development: which boat anyway?

Blurring the frontiers between service and industry, the cultural economy can be defined in general as the ensemble of diverse activities turned towards the exploitation of aesthetic and semiotic creation (Scott and Leriche, 2005 p.208). Indeed, “there is still a widespread consensus that for a subset of sectors in the economy, the symbolic dimension clearly outweighs other dimensions. [...] [As such,] the study of cultural economy in fact affords insights for how we understand the current economic transformation towards knowledge-based economies more broadly” (DeFillippi et al., 2007 p.513). From this perspective, it is considered that the cultural and creative symbolic plays an ever-increasing role in the conception of capitalist products (culturalisation), meanwhile, culture has become a merchandise on which cities have increasingly capitalised (economisation). As previously mentioned, such a policy approach rests on the argument that culture has become more and more a means of economic transaction, and that “culture, or cultural makers and symbols, are used as a means of product differentiation which may also add to its (exchange) value” (Pratt, 2011 p.335). Indeed, “while there are clearly some organisational fields in which creativity is configured as a premium, in others it is either discouraged or discounted. Accordingly, the conclusion must be that it is the organisational form that constitutes ‘creativity’ in a particular setting. In this light, creative industries are such a particularity” (Pratt, 2004 p.119).

The cultural and creative enterprise and its peculiarities display an increasing centrality to the shape of twenty-first century economy and society (Cunningham, 2005 p.298). “Empirically, the cultural industries are a ‘new’ industry that has achieved some economic importance in some developed countries; and has become an aspiration in

others” (Pratt, 2011 p.323). Indeed, as far as cultural and creative industries are concerned, “few industries can boast such a meteoric, and relatively unacknowledged growth. And, because of such a growth, the cultural industries are having an impact on the economy more generally” (Pratt, 2011 p.326). As such, and as suggested earlier, African music may be a door to the world for its continent: this cultural production may appear to be the way for this region of the world to inscribe itself onto the global market with considerable positive internal returns for its people and societies. It may be so, but only according to certain conditions. Indeed, in their Brussels Declaration of Artists, Professionals and Entrepreneurs of Culture from ACP¹⁰ countries (Africa, Caribbean, Pacific) and European Union, following a seminar held in the Belgium capital on the 1st to 3rd of April 2009, cultural entrepreneurs called for a rethinking of development approaches through the lens of culture. They made clear claims, asking for culture to be the object of structuring public policies and to be inscribed in a transversal approach of development. Similarly, the European Commission and its member states, which stand as the principal contributors to development aid in West Africa, have included cultural cooperation as one of the domains of intervention of the European Development Fund¹¹ since 1986.

¹⁰ The ACP countries as a group was created in 1975 with the will of 46 signatory countries of the Georgetown Agreement to unite in order to have their point of views better heard. In 2003, a first meeting of the Ministries of Culture of ACP countries took place in Dakar and ended up with the adoption of the “Dakar Declaration on the Promotion of ACP Culture and Cultural Industries”. Following this meeting a Plan of action was also adopted that included the organisation of a festival that would demonstrate the rich cultural diversity of ACP countries and encourage the creation of a market for cultural industries O. Barlet. *Quelle coopération culturelle entre les États ACP? Entretien avec Aya Kasasa*. What motivates this group and direct all its actions is the economic, social and cultural development of the member countries.

¹¹ At that time, however, the cultural field was considered as a negative priority, i.e. the most neglected aspect of cooperation. The signature of the Cotonou Agreements in 2000 has given to the question of culture an important place in the cooperation projects with the European Union who started to consider culture as a positive priority V. Andriamirado. *Rencontres "Maintenant l'Afrique!" Synthèse de la 3e table ronde: "Les enjeux d'une coopération concertée"* Ibid.. From this framework, culture was understood as a catalyst in the development processes F. D'Almeida. *Potentialités et enjeux de la création et de la culture pour le développement*. Besides, going beyond the Lomé Agreement, the Cotonou Agreement permitted that civil society –which 1990s emerging cultural operators are part of – has a direct access to the European Development Fund O. Barlet. *Quelle coopération culturelle entre les États ACP? Entretien avec Aya Kasasa*.

While music economies in most developing countries have suffered from weak institutional and political support, low value-added to and over-dependence on foreign manufacturing and distribution, as well as massive copyright infringement (Kozul-Wright, 2001), most policy-oriented researchers recognise the fact that talent alone is insufficient to build a strong and competitive cultural economy. As has been stressed regarding musical production in the Global North, “however local music scene and industries emerged in the past, it may well be the case that non-intervention is no longer an option. The existence of local networks and creative talents does not necessarily mean that a local industry is secure. [...] [As such,] non-intervention becomes retrograde” (Brown et al., 2000 p.449). Therefore, since the general ‘turn’ to cultural industries as an important element of urban and regional development policies (Hudson, 2006 p.631), the Global North has been registering a growing policy interest in culture and cultural production to attract investment and promote economic growth. Indeed, in most advanced economies, processes of local development through the cultural economy have been increasing, while regions and cities have sought to encompass music and culture as important strands of post-industrial development strategies. Such types of cultural policy have looked at how they could engender “urban regeneration”, through an image and facilities approach that is linked to the attraction of real estate investment in the central sections of the city (Brown et al., 2000 p.445). The usual arguments revolve around the capacity of culture to participate in entrepreneurial development (urban regeneration) but also, community-building and social cohesion – where culture is used directly and explicitly as a social tool to improve the life of the poorest members of cities – as well as the branding of a national identity and heritage for international tourist market.

Following a general appreciation of the importance of culture and cultural differentiation as a “way of making place-rooted uniqueness (inherent or created), “increasingly culture is being used in instrumental ways to promote cities” (Pratt, 2009 p.408). Indeed, more and more cities and regions in the Global North are investing in this field motivated by the “realisation that the cultural economy is becoming an important aspect of some developed economies, in terms of turnover, employment, exports, as well as meaning” (Pratt, 2009 p.410). As such, “new urban politics” and “cultural entrepreneurialism” or as I put it ‘entrepreneurial development’ have been treated as interchangeable equivalents to refer to the politics of place promotion, flagship events, downtown developments as well as a host of other projects to attract investment and promote economic growth (Ribera-Fumaz, 2009 p.449). In this respect, to inquire into the concept of cultural entrepreneurship as well as cultural economies in general, and music economies in particular, stands as a process that can be confronted by great difficulties with regards to constructing definitions. Indeed, the dominant policy discourse, relying on its economic perspective and emerging from its Northern geographical biases, has greatly influenced current appreciations of cultural economies and the dynamics of cultural entrepreneurship in development. Nevertheless, the contributions of these two concepts (‘cultural economy’ and ‘cultural entrepreneurship’) in understanding the dynamics and processes of any music economy cannot be denied. As such, and as far as my inquiry into the West African music economy is concerned, they need to be revisited.

1.4. RESEARCH DESIGN

One of the objectives of this thesis is to suggest paths for researching music economies based on the findings of a situated form of cultural entrepreneurship. This final section

presents underlying theories, research questions and central research materials and, also, details the structure of the thesis.

1.4.1. Taking West African musical entrepreneurship seriously

Research on cultural entrepreneurship (Peterson and Berger, 1971; Leadbeater and Oakley, 1999; Raffo et al., 2000; Basu and Werbner, 2001; Rae, 2005; Wilson and Stokes, 2005) and the productive processes involved in music economies (Peterson and Berger, 1975; Negus, 1993; Théberge, 1997; Scott, 1999; Anand and Peterson, 2000; Jones, 2002; Rodgers, 2003; Tschmuck, 2006; Frith et al., 2009) have emerged from the Global North and have mainly, if not exclusively, focused on the geographies of the most advanced economies. The most striking example stands in a recently published book on entrepreneurship in cultural economies that offers an international perspective, in which the whole African continent is completely invisible (Henry, 2007). Of course, there are a few studies from the Global South that have explored certain aspects of the music production chain, while attempting to reconcile the musical experience with its economic dynamics (Manuel, 1993; Meintjes, 2003). Besides this, Latin American researchers have multiplied initiatives to measure, map out and inquire into the cultural economy and its productive processes in their part of the Global South (Canclini and Feria, 2006; Reis, 2006; Quartesan et al., 2007; Feria, 2008; Reis, 2008; Solanas, 2008). However, as far as the West African music economy is concerned, only very few exceptions have initiated an incursive inquiry into processes involved in this situated cultural economy (Huchard, 2003; Ndour, 2008; Pratt, 2008).

As referenced in the introduction, there are excellent works on popular music in the West African context, however, while focusing on the musical event as an ‘experience’, such research has usually relied either on a socio-historical perspective or an ethnomusicological one. Ethnomusicological approaches have offered great insights into the musical traditions, the diversity, motifs and structures of the West African music as well as its complex rhythmic combinations. Socio-historical works on West African music have illuminated the power relations and issues of domination, as well as of oppression, that collude in the social productions of knowledge; such dimensions generally overlooked in ethnomusicological research. Despite their consequent contributions to the understanding of the West African music, these two strands of scholarly literature have not provided strong theoretical, conceptual nor empirical account on the situated nature of cultural entrepreneurship and the productive processes involved in this music economy. My thesis thus intends to fill this gap and to offer new insights on cultural entrepreneurship, while situating it in the context of the West African music economy.

The theories and approaches required in investigating the relationship between cultural entrepreneurship and this economy necessarily calls for an inquiry that explores cultural entrepreneurship not from a normative perspective, but from an empirically grounded perspective. As previously mentioned, this endeavour stands in response to the need for a new political image of cultural entrepreneurship, one that distances itself from the traditional cultural entrepreneurialism favoured and supported by policy-makers. In order to ground such an investigation, the challenge I set to myself is to explore cultural entrepreneurship through the concept of “community of practice” (“CoP”) (Wenger, 1998; Wenger and Snyder, 2000), while relying on the example of the translocal hip hop community (see Chapter 3 for detailed discussion) as situated

West African cultural entrepreneurs. As such, this research focuses on the transcultural dimension of Hip Hop in order to introduce its radical culturalisation of the West African music economy.

From this perspective, my research on West African musical entrepreneurs stresses and illustrates the great varieties of cultural entrepreneurship (see Chapter 2 for detailed discussion) that refer to the various social and political formations inscribed in different places, times, nations, markets, economic activities and so on. My approach recognises the duality of economic and cultural dimensions in these processes, and suggests the exploration of its identities and practices to direct the inquiry. In this respect, Wenger's work is critical in highlighting how cultural entrepreneurship is a multiple category, whose different forms need to be explored in a context-dependent approach in order to reflect the multiple intermediations, the complex and diverse political stories between the macro and micro perspectives. Furthermore, the use of the concept of "CoP" permits the expression of such a duality, in the research practice as well as in its theories. Iteration between empirical research and theoretical reflection thus stands in this framework as a best practice of inquiry into specific cultural producers, namely West African musical entrepreneurs. While inscribing itself in a critical (and politically relevant) cultural political economy, this research implies starting with a detailed acquaintance with the phenomenon that it tries to explain and change (Van Heur, 2010 p.456).

Moreover, the importation of 'cultural' perspectives, namely "those poststructuralist/feminist insights that have unsettled understandings of 'the economic' in economic geography more generally" (Gibson and Kong, 2005 p.555) appears to be strangely absent from most writing on cultural economy and entrepreneurship. This

research thus also calls for a strategic and alternate deployment of theories beyond the borders of disciplinary fields and established approaches (Ribera-Fumaz, 2009 p.460). This is illustrated by grounding the research design, methods and reflexive analysis in the field (Chapter 4), and by opening the normative theoretical framework to other discourses offered by post-structuralism (Chapter 3 and 7). As such, through the lens of the hip hop community, I reconnect my analysis of West African musical entrepreneurship to the larger theoretical discourse of cognitive capitalism, and show how the productive and constitutive dimensions of its cultural identities and practices can inform social change, while exemplifying an alternative development of its field. In doing so, I further an in-depth examination of the dynamics and processes identified via the framework of “CoP”, overcoming the limits of this concept in grasping the issues of power, as well as the political and aesthetic forces at play in any situated cultural entrepreneurship. Used independently, the theoretical sophistication of poststructuralist perspectives would have limited resonance in a field dominated by pragmatic predictions. However, and as this thesis demonstrates, in exploring cultural entrepreneurship through the concept of “CoP”, these ‘cultural’ insights productively support and complement such an inquiry. Based on the introductory discussions, the different chapters are now briefly presented as an overview of the development of the thesis’ argument.

1.4.2. Structure of the thesis

In order to develop a more careful, considered and inclusive conceptualisation of the phenomena we call cultural economy and cultural entrepreneurship, this thesis suggests a critical and productive dialogue between different branches within human geography, the discipline in which it inscribes itself. As such, while carving a space for

a West African music economy that reconciles and further inquires into the insights of 'African Studies' and 'cultural economy' researchers, this thesis also contributes to further debates both in (cultural) economic geography and development geography. By inquiring into particular economic geographies of the Global South, I thus challenge the implicit, though significantly persisting, 'divide' in human geography where "economic geographers generate and test theories on industrial change and regional development in core economies, and where development geographers analyse the opportunities for, and processes and practices constituting, modernisation and development in the Global South" (Murphy, 2008 p.856).

This thesis illustrates how economic geography might engage more productively with the Global South by stepping out of its 'traditional thinking box'. This is in response to the "the rise of spatial science with its emphasis on quantification and its dependency on (often) large-scale, uniform, and systematically constructed data sets [...] typically unavailable in newly independent economies of the Global South" (Murphy, 2008 p.856). Such a way of "thinking outside the box" resonates with the recent desire of development geographers to go beyond the two traditional instrumentalist uses of culture in ethno-development that conceived of it as either a "product"/"resource" or an "institution". As such, they have begun to examine and explore the potential implications of viewing culture as creativity, and envision it as "existing in nonstate groups whose deployment of culture challenges and reconfigures political and economic relations" (Radcliffe and Laurie, 2006 p.244).

In this respect, I suggest and situate a 'Southern' agency that recognises and understands the role it plays in shaping networks and trajectories in the music economy. I propose the Global South as a "a source of theoretical inspiration [and] as

an empirical centre from which scholars can ‘theorise back’ to the Anglo-European research community” (Murphy, 2008 p.866). Indeed, this thesis reveals another version of the cultural economy and cultural entrepreneurship that directly confronts the “implicit yet well-rooted logic or frame of reference that what happens in core economies will eventually happen in the periphery and that the most interesting, relevant, and useful models or theories are to be derived from the experiences of core-based [...] economies” (Murphy, 2008 p.857). In doing so, it responds to the call for further analysis of culture as creativity “in order to understand how culture acts as a toolbox for lateral thinking and empowering action” (Radcliffe and Laurie, 2006 p.245), while demonstrating how (cultural) economic geography research can contribute significantly to theory-building and policy-making in developing countries. Accordingly, this thesis provides a carefully-focused empirical investigation that unravels the complexities of networks involved in a music economy, and its participants situated in two “ordinary cities” (Robinson, 2006).

This research concerns one under-researched locale (Francophone West Africa), and develops from an area of study, for which satisfactory data does not exist. Indeed, and as previously mentioned, among the researchers who have dedicated their work to cultural and creative economies in the least advanced economies (Barrowclough and Kozul-Wright, 2007), rare are those who have provided a robust evidence base, i.e. a detailed analysis stemming from focused primary data. Consequently, and from a critical realist perspective, the aim of this thesis is to reconcile the ‘*intransitive object of science*’, i.e. world of *real* practice with ‘*transitive objects*’, i.e. world of *theoretical* knowledge. It deals with understanding how empirical evidence of a specifically situated cultural economy can inform theoretical propositions, and how knowledge development can make sense of the empirical world under investigation. In this

respect, an epistemological feature of this thesis takes part in the ‘knowledge transfer’ trend in humanities nowadays, between a (specifically situated) field of practice and its academic resonance, as well as ultimately its policy relevance, with the objective of not only productively contributing to understanding, but also to making things change.

To recap, the research questions that guide the investigation of this thesis are:

How hip hop musical practitioners emerge in the West African cultural economy? What their entrepreneurial practices are? And, how hip hop entrepreneurs have been able to contribute in original ways to social change in West African societies?

To respond to these questions, the thesis consists of four parts: Part One, Framing the issue; Part Two, Speaking from the field; Part Three, Situating musical practices in Francophone West Africa and Part Four, Spatialising hip hop entrepreneurship in Francophone West Africa. Rather than being based on the order of doing, the ordering of the chapters stands as a rhetoric order. Indeed, the iterative design of this thesis (see Chapter 4 for detailed discussion) called for a correspondingly elaborated structure and argumentation that responded to the duality of research practice and theoretical development. Accordingly, the order of the chapters reflects the iterative dynamic, which implied constantly moving back and forth between theoretical conceptualisation and empirical insights. Such an approach translates into a difficult and challenging equilibrium, sometimes unbalanced and always renegotiated, in which the Senegalese case stands as the main reference, but whose West African dimension could not have been illuminated without the contrasting insights mirrored in the Burkinabè case. In this sense, although the research actually focuses on one “ordinary city”, it does

concern an under-researched ‘ensemble’, while the Burkinabè ‘test-case’ highlights processes that would not have been perceivable by looking at the Senegalese case alone. As I should later argue, this approach implies a methodology, which contrasts, in a subtle comparative fashion, similarities and differences between two differential and singular case studies stemming from a common ensemble.

Part One (Framing the issue) includes Chapters 1, 2 and 3. While Chapter 1 stands as a general contextualisation and framing of the research, Chapter 2 operationalises the conceptual framework by illuminating the ‘varieties of cultural entrepreneurship’. As such, it situates the exploratory framework of the theoretical component of this research and illustrates the diversity and complexity of West African musical entrepreneurship by introducing an ideal-typology. Emphasising the different ‘thinking’ and ‘doing’ spaces of ‘local cultural entrepreneurs’, ‘cosmopolitan musical entrepreneurs’ and ‘hip hop entrepreneurs’, Chapter 2 thus highlights their specific and dynamic processes of entrepreneurial articulation. Chapter 3 provides a final conceptual ‘steppingstone’ required to frame the empirical components of my research, by introducing an alternative theoretical framework in response to the limits of Wenger’s “CoP”. In this respect, this chapter offers political and aesthetic insights into the hip hop community and its identities, while drawing on the work of ‘Cultural Studies’ and ‘Translation Studies’. Being the first emergence of Hip Hop in the Francophone West African ensemble, the Senegalese experience thus frames and illustrates the inquiry into the politics and aesthetics of this specifically situated hip hop community and its identities.

Part Two (Speaking from the field) is composed of Chapter 4. This chapter presents the iterative research design as well as the grounded approach that is here adopted. As

previously suggested, speaking from the field allows us to enhance and maintain the necessary duality between research practice and theory here invoked. Rather than a theoretical approach of a social world, the methodology I employ thus responds to the practical intervention in a precise field of theorisation, namely entrepreneurship, the thesis aims to achieve. In this sense, it embodies the epistemological feature of this thesis that participates in transferring knowledge from a situated practice to its corresponding field of theorisation. Chapter 4 also makes a case for the productive dialogue between the two case studies that engenders knowledge development and theory building, beyond an apparent imbalance of empirical insights. Indeed, stemming from the concern of this thesis with a grounded inquiry into an under-researched locale (Francophone West Africa), the developed methodology relies on contrasting case studies of this ensemble. Such a methodological approach thus recognises that there is some commonness between the Senegalese and the Burkinabè case studies, and which needs to be illuminated and argued for. In this sense, the fieldwork conducted in Ouagadougou provides both a ground for comparing the Dakar's experience, and a direction for inquiring into the latter fieldwork. In other words, it permits, on one hand, to highlight the systemic dynamics of cultural production in Francophone West Africa; and, on the other hand, to orient a specific focus on the various emergences of cultural entrepreneurship within a same ensemble. In this regard, the use of two contrasting case studies is primordial in grounding differential singularities of the phenomenon under study inside a common ensemble.

The current lack of academic and policy attention given to West African musical entrepreneurship begs for a situated study of processes and outcomes and the relations within and between. As such, the empirical contributions of this thesis contained in Chapters 5, 6, and 7 illustrate how cultural entrepreneurship rests on the interaction

between a situated identity and a located practice, and how the practices of West African musical entrepreneurs, reflect the productive environment, which they are inscribed in.

Part Three (Situating musical practices in Francophone West Africa) contains Chapters 5 and 6. These two chapters offer an analysis of the preliminary empirical component of my research. While Chapter 5 offers a contextual situating of this music economy in broader social, political and economic terms, drawing on the illustrative Senegalese experience, Chapter 6 situates its entrepreneurial practices by expressly focusing on their productive dimensions. As such, these two chapters demonstrate how the practices of these participants are interwoven with the cultural and economic frameworks they evolve in and which resonate throughout their productive ‘ensemble’.

Part Four (Spatialising hip hop entrepreneurship in Francophone West Africa) includes Chapters 7 and 8. Chapter 7 concludes the empirical focus of the thesis by effectively revisiting the conceptual framework of “CoP” developed in Chapter 2, while drawing on the insights offered by Chapter 3. This chapter emphasises the consequent productive and governing practices of the participants in this specifically situated community, and further illustrates the dimensions of cultural entrepreneurship requiring alternative theorisation. Finally, Chapter 8 draws on these empirical conclusions to attempt a generalisation regarding the significance of carving out a critical space between traditional theoretical frameworks and research practices as far as a West African cultural economy is concerned.

In summary, the thesis is an attempt to draw much needed critical attention to the taken-for-granted nature of the cultural economy, which socially and materially shapes

cultural entrepreneurship, and in doing so undermines the contextual, aesthetic and political dimensions impacting on its West African emergence.

1.5. CONCLUSION

In this thesis, I do not seek to ‘prescribe’ any policy directions or ‘solutions’ as such; however, the implications of the research on existing and formative policy frameworks are real. Indeed, I am highlighting processes and actions policy makers would need in order to address the reality of cultural practices (that I focus on) and to evaluate which ‘tools’ may be appropriate to achieve their stated ends. Given the highly uneven geography of cultural economies, there are diverse productive possibilities for research that can only emerge from a radical theoretical shift. West African cultural entrepreneurs respond to circumstances, mitigate risks and establish relationships with other participants in their fields while being situated in a specific music economy. My distancing and even deconstruction of the policy reliance on normative and formal approach to the cultural economy and cultural entrepreneurship thus calls for the crucial recognition of contextual dynamics and aesthetics of the phenomena. In this respect, my plea for policy relevance in a Global South that cries out for novel insights and ideas also illuminates the significance of reconsidering the ‘development’ perspective (often singular and biased) from the one of ‘social change’ (multiple and situated).

Moreover, the recursive nature of context and practice as far as the research process is concerned sends a strong message to the academic community, one that encourages reflexivity and active engagement with the inquiry’s objects and subjects. As such, the findings of the thesis will be interesting to ‘African Studies’ and ‘cultural economy’

researchers for they broaden their frame of reference in such a way to include an ‘in-between’ inquiry that is relevant to both of their respective sphere. Indeed, and in schematic terms, they will provide, beyond the ‘experience’, another insight relative to the economic ‘content’ of popular music in West African societies (‘African Studies’ researchers) as well as a situated ‘form’ of the music economy that remains ‘off-the-map’ of its traditional scholarship (‘creative economy’ scholars). Additionally, the findings of this thesis should be valuable to human geographers generally and (cultural) economic and development geographers especially, for they reinvigorate a research practice. In other words, knowledge is being developed and advanced through new ‘disciplinary bridges’, intensive debates and critical engagement with competing theories, philosophies and perspectives generated within and outside its subdisciplines.

While drawing on Wenger’s “community of practice” as the basis for the conceptual framework of this thesis, the research offers a theoretically informed empirical basis for situating cultural entrepreneurship and its production chain in the context of the West African music economy. In doing so, it brings to a largely economic perspective (the one of previous works on the cultural economy and cultural entrepreneurship) a culturally evaluative lens, as well as to a largely cultural perspective (the one of previous works on West African popular music), an economically evaluative lens. The following chapter (Chapter 2) outlines my rationale for employing “CoP” and highlights how I intend to empirically situate this conceptual tool as a useful basis for directing the trajectory of further theorisation on the ways in which hip hop entrepreneurship has become a force to be reckoned within social change in the West African music economy.

CHAPTER 2

OPERATIONALISING THE CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

2.1. INTRODUCTION

Although it has been widely acknowledged that entrepreneurship is a vital force in the economies of developed countries (OECD, 1998), there is little consensus about what entrepreneurship is, who the entrepreneurs are and what they actually do. Scholars from various disciplines have offered different definitions, stemming from their own ontology and methodology, regarding the features of the entrepreneur (who? what?) as well as the incentives for entrepreneurship (how? why?). However, one of the rare points of convergence among entrepreneurship researchers is that entrepreneurs effectively challenge the *status quo* and change the conditions of production, while taking individual risks that have larger social impacts for their environment (Schumpeter, 1942; McClelland, 1961; Hébert and Link, 1989; Amabile, 1996; Audretsch, 2003; Chell, 2008). Furthermore, much of this traditional literature also recognises that entrepreneurship stands as a multi-faceted and multi-dimensional phenomenon calling for multi-levels of analysis in order to grasp its relationship with economic growth and performance (Thornton, 1999; Audretsch, 2003; Hölzl, 2005; Chell, 2008). From this perspective, it has then been recognised that “the opportunity for individuals and firms to engage in entrepreneurial activity is not at all fixed, but rather varies considerably across regions and countries” (Audretsch, 2003 p.30). Indeed, most of entrepreneurship researchers agree on the fact that entrepreneurship can no longer be defined in simplistic terms mostly for three main reasons: (1) entrepreneurship is a complex phenomenon involving all types of organisational forms; (2) the concept of change associated with entrepreneurial practice is relative

and, therefore, entrepreneurship is always embedded in a local context; and (3) entrepreneurship crosses a number of key units of analysis that need to be considered in order to appreciate its complex dynamics (Audretsch, 2003 p.3). This triple recognition stands as the starting point for this theoretical chapter of the thesis.

This chapter offers a critical review pushing the boundaries of discourses on the political economy of entrepreneurship, while investigating the possibility of confronting normative forms of calculation and economic assessments of entrepreneurship with the practice of everyday lives and observations. Indeed, this chapter aims to bring in an alternative dynamic of entrepreneurship, framed in cultural and creative economy and its networked informality. As such, it stands as a core conceptual root for the thesis. As I will argue, the literature on cultural (and creative) entrepreneurship stands in clear contrast to the traditional image of entrepreneurship as an intentionally planned and dramatically staged activity based on rational calculation. Rather cultural entrepreneurship often lies beyond trivial instrumental motivation while acknowledging the existence of emotional rationalities, as well as the need for its participants to link their practice with their identity (Johannisson, 2011). Therefore, this chapter is dedicated to the consideration of cultural (and creative) entrepreneurship based on the emerging profiles of entrepreneurs who perform in the Francophone West African music field. It offers a contrasting story to entrepreneurship elsewhere: one that is situated and embedded in the context of the West African music economy. In the first section, I introduce the existing literature on creativity and entrepreneurship, and in the second, entrepreneurs evolved in creative sectors of activity. The questions raised here are whether entrepreneurship is the same in all industries/sectors of activity, whether there is a cultural exceptionalism, and if so, why? The concept of cultural entrepreneurs will then be further articulated with Wenger's understanding of

“community of practice” (Wenger, 1998) in order to introduce and investigate the specific music-related forms of entrepreneurship in Francophone West Africa. In the final part of the chapter, I approach these entrepreneurial dynamics using an ideal-typology of West African musical entrepreneurs framed by Wenger’s approach.

2.2. CONSIDERING TRADITIONAL ENTREPRENEURIAL LANDSCAPES

As an introduction, we may want to consider the definition of entrepreneurship proposed by OECD:

“Entrepreneurs are agents of change and growth in a market economy and they can act to accelerate the generation, dissemination and application of innovative ideas. [...] Entrepreneurs not only seek out and identify potentially profitable economic opportunities but are also willing to take risks to see if their hunches are right.” (OECD, 1998 p.11)

Formulated by the OECD, this definition reminds us that most of the conceptual framework engaging with the issues of entrepreneurship has evolved from Western historical economies, which poses questions regarding its relevance for non-Western economies. Indeed, entrepreneurship’s conceptual framework has been developed in the context of industrial capitalism and, as such, it usually concerns firms that are formally organised and structured. In this context, Hall (2001)’s “varieties of capitalism” approach offers insight into the variability of organisational forms in economic development. Elaborating a new framework to understand the institutional similarities and differences among developed economies, his account “captures important ways in which the institutions of the political economy affect economic behaviour” (Hall and Soskice, 2001 p.5). From this perspective, the institutions of a nation’s political economy, which condition (though not fully determine) the

behaviour of firms, i.e. their organisation and structuring strategy, are inextricably bound up with the nation's history, and hence remain nation-specific (Hall and Soskice, 2001 p.14-5). In other words, especially in the sphere of innovation, the way firms are formally organised and structured is not essentially similar across nations, even among the developed capitalist economies.

In Africa, entrepreneurship operates in an environment where governments are dominant in every sphere of activity. "Some have deliberately discouraged the emergence of private African capitalism. Some have nationalised large parts of a previously foreign-owned private sector and created parastatal organisations to run businesses" (Elkan, 1988 p.177). "As a result, they are permeated by a "production mentality" in which maximising output is the main objective, while considerations of costs and markets are ignored" (Elkan, 1988 p.179). As we shall see later in Chapter 5, this has some resonance with the political economy of cultural production. Furthermore, capitalist penetration in Africa was incomplete co-existing with other modes of production which are non-capitalist: "a legacy of the colonial institutions that used Africa as a source of raw material and new market but not as a place to invest" (Spring and McDade, 1998 p.8). Surely, within the West African ensemble, beyond the distinctive character of its capitalist institutions, there are some extra differentiations between different countries, colonial rules and periods. However, much of the entrepreneurial activities in Africa, as well as in other least advanced economies, take place in the informal and irregular sectors, through which economic production remains unmeasured and unrecorded – a singular dimension compared to Western historical economies (Spring and McDade, 1998 p.10-1). The firm-centred political economy of developed nations that regards formally organised and structured companies as crucial actors in a 'pure' capitalist economy has little resonance in the

African context. There, the key agents of adjustment in the face of technological change or international competition are to be found in unmeasured and unrecorded sectors of activity.

2.2.1 Entrepreneurial innovation and creativity

Entrepreneurs have been generally defined as “people who explore opportunities for the development of innovations, found businesses and do so from the recognition of a socio-economic problem, to which they endeavour to resolve through the identification of creative solutions” (Chell, 2008 p.1). This definition is aligned with the general agreement that entrepreneurship is centrally concerned with the way new ideas and ways of doing things emerge from a given environment to provoke change. In turn, such an agreement recalls the constant link made between innovation, creativity and entrepreneurship. In regard to entrepreneurship and innovation, Schumpeter’s contribution is significant in conceptualising the entrepreneur and his function as “the doing of new things or the doing of things that are already being done in a new way” (Schumpeter, 1947 p.151). For Schumpeter, innovation as an intrinsic characteristic of entrepreneurship is characterised by leadership in the setting up of new production functions. Schumpeter’s entrepreneur is a person of extraordinary will and energy who “gets new things done” in a process, which produces consequences that are essential in advancing the development of capitalist economies (Schumpeter, 1947 p.152). Such an understanding allows Schumpeter to introduce in his early work “The Theory of Economic Development” (1911/34), a clear distinction between an invention, i.e. a novelty that previously never existed in a specific form, and innovation, which is the successful introduction of the invention into the market.

Schumpeter's distinction between the inventor-creator and the innovator-entrepreneur is extensively used in fields of art to differentiate the artist as originator of the creative input from the cultural entrepreneur as the person capable of turning such a product into profit. From this perspective, creativity (the generation of new ideas) has often been understood as being essentially an individual act, whereas innovation (the successful exploitation of new ideas) is conceived as a "fundamentally social process built on collective knowledge and cooperative effort" (Sayer and Walker, 1992 p.115). As will be emphasised, a number of psychological and sociological researchers rehabilitated creativity as a collective action process (Amabile, 1983; Amabile, 1996; Csikszentmihalyi, 1996; Paulus and Yang, 2000; Paulus and Nijstad, 2003; Warr and O'Neill, 2005), stressing that rather than a simple individual intrinsic act, creativity requires a social system to emerge. However, this rehabilitation left general assumptions undisputed: that creativity was related to content origination while innovation strictly concerned the industrial production. Moreover, it did not challenge the notion that entrepreneurship is heavily linked to small firm research.

2.2.2 On the front of economics and business management studies

Although the main area of research on entrepreneurship nowadays is business and management studies¹², economics stands as one of the disciplines that have considerably advanced the understanding of entrepreneurship. Indeed, historically, entrepreneurship has been treated as an economic object of research, through which entrepreneurs were studied in relation to economic activity and progress. Although "the historical record on the nature and role of the entrepreneur in the economy is

¹² Among the most well known peer-reviewed journals in this discipline, we can cite the *Small Business Economics*, *Entrepreneurship: Theory & Practice*, *Journal of Small Business Management*, *Creativity and Innovation Management*, and *International Journal of Entrepreneurship and Innovation Management*.

ambiguous”, all theories of entrepreneurship emerging from the economic literature have regarded the primary motives for productive activity as individualistic rather than social, and all share a functional orientation (Hébert and Link, 1982 p.110). Indeed, such an understanding is made even more explicit when we consider “the inability or unwillingness of early writers to separate the role of entrepreneur from that of capitalist” (Hébert and Link, 1982 p.112). As such, Hébert and Link have identified in the economic literature three distinct intellectual traditions: the German tradition¹³, the Chicago tradition¹⁴ and the Austrian tradition¹⁵ (1982 p.41). Two themes shared by these traditions are that 1) they are developed in the context of economic dynamics and within the equilibrium model; and 2) each characterises the entrepreneur in functional terms. In other words, these economic traditions understand entrepreneurs as economic agents performing in a market economy, in which they occupy the specific function of dealing with economic change and disequilibria. As such, Hébert and Link offer a synthetic definition, which incorporates the main historical themes of entrepreneurship – risk, uncertainty, innovation, perception and change. Their definition accommodates a range of entrepreneurial activities within a market system, such as coordination, arbitrage, ownership, speculation, innovation and resource allocation.

“The entrepreneur is someone who specialises in taking responsibility for and making judgemental decisions that affect location, form and the use of goods, resources or institutions¹⁶”
(Hébert and Link, 1982 p.47).

¹³ The German Tradition is based on the contributions of von Thünen (1826) and Schumpeter (1911).

¹⁴ The Chicago Tradition is based on the contributions of Knight (1921, 1944) and Schultz (1980).

¹⁵ The Austrian Tradition is based on the contributions of von Mises (1949), Kirzner (1973) and Shackle (1982).

¹⁶ Italics in original text

Therefore, entrepreneurs are usually characterised by the performance of the business they own or manage, which is itself evaluated in terms of sales and profit (Chell, 2008 p.10). From this perspective, measures of entrepreneurship are usually (1) self-employment – based on the model of income choice developed by Knight (Chicago Tradition), which implies a choice made by entrepreneurs between an employed job and a self-employed activity; (2) business ownership – used not as a measure per se but as a proxy to define entrepreneurship; (3) innovative activity of an industry – where R&D and the number of patented invention are used as a proxy for quantifying technological change; and/or (4) the growth of the firm – with successful entrepreneurship considered as a high growth firm over a prolonged duration (Audretsch, 2003 p.4). This literature implies that entrepreneurship researchers use more quantitative methods, having an acute interest in predicting where entrepreneurial behaviour and entrepreneurship will emerge.

The deployment of a variety of proxies in order to operationalize the concept of entrepreneurship for empirical measurement however makes clear that while “entrepreneurship is a heterogeneous activity encompassing a broad spectrum of activities [...], many of the measures reflected entrepreneurship as a quite homogeneous activity” (Hölzl, 2005 p.13). In other words, at the empirical level, economics as well as business management studies literature are generally unsuccessful in investigating how entrepreneurship is shaped by many factors, spanning a spectrum of determinants, that range from economic to social, cultural and political ones. A further distinction is thus made between factors influencing the demand for entrepreneurship, that reflects the opportunities to engage in entrepreneurial activity, and those shaping the supply of entrepreneurship, i.e. the characteristics of the population of potential entrepreneurs, their human capital and

their attitudes towards entrepreneurship. The latter is the focus of the endeavours of sociology and psychology researchers interested in entrepreneurship.

2.2.3 From sociology and psychology perspectives

The supply-side perspective has been mainly developed by psychology researchers such as McClelland (1961) and focuses on the individual traits of entrepreneurs. Studies on the psychology of entrepreneurs have offered a micro-perspective of what can be considered as enduring factors, which lead to entrepreneurship, such as the persona of the entrepreneur and his/her singularities, social group and cultural affiliation, and personal motivation. Indeed, this perspective focuses on the psychological, social, cultural, and ethnic characteristics of individuals involved in entrepreneurship (Thornton, 1999 p.22). These approaches emphasise, among other attributes, the entrepreneur's need for achievement, locus of control, and risk-taking propensity. The processes of socialisation undergone by entrepreneurs are also objects of study of these approaches that pay particular attention to the 'social milieu' from which the entrepreneur emerges. Both push and pull factors are examined, such as the feeling of displacement, the disposition to act, the credibility and the availability of resources (Nijkamp, 2003).

Conversely, sociological works have denounced the supply-side perspective for its systematic disregarding of temporal and contextual events and processes, and have slowly started to rehabilitate the importance of a macro perspective focusing on social structures, which are space and time dependent (Thornton, 1999 p.24). These approaches are essentially based on ecological and institutional theories. This literature focuses on the organisational forms of the firm in which the entrepreneur

performs, but also on the embeddedness of economic environment in social and structural relationships (Granovetter, 1985). As such, Granovetter stresses that economic action is embedded in structures of social relations, distancing himself from both under-socialised and over-socialised approaches of economic actions. Criticising both an utilitarian tradition (classical and neoclassical economics), which assumes a rational and self-interest behaviour as well as an “over-socialised conception” of internal behavioural patterns, Granovetter argues against the atomisation of the economic actor (Granovetter, 1985 p.485). In other words, as a genuinely (economic) human activity, “entrepreneurship” (Steyaert, 2007), is unthinkable without (social) relating, the latter frequently absent in (economic) academic modelling, which often lends itself to overly functional, rationalistic reasoning (Johannisson, 2011 p.141).

Sociology and psychology stand as the two other disciplines that have considerably advanced research on entrepreneurship and analysis of the figure of the entrepreneur, both developing from the founding text of economic sociology offered by Max Weber, “The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism” (1905). From this perspective, the notion of the entrepreneur is still intermingled with the role of the capitalist, and stems from a cultural rationalisation of economic behaviour. Indeed, in this classical treaty, Weber emphasised the importance of religion, and thus the cultural traits of a specific social group, in fostering the founding of capitalist enterprises and businesses. As such, while considering historical, psychological, social, cultural and/or political determinants of entrepreneurship, in sociology as well as in psychology, the economic logic of entrepreneurship that underlies the notion of a capitalist market economy remains predominant.

2.3. CREATIVE, INNOVATIVE, CULTURAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP(S)?

2.3.1. Cultural and creative innovation

Recognising the continuous presence of ‘innovation’ and ‘creativity’ in the entrepreneurship literature across various disciplines can pose serious challenges to the actual contribution of the term ‘creative entrepreneurship’. However, with the growth of the knowledge-intensive industries in the global (post-industrial) economy, among which the cultural and creative industries occupy a privileged position, the ‘creative entrepreneur’ has become a notion with increasing appeal. Indeed, in U.K. and throughout Europe, graduate degrees specially dedicated to the study of ‘creative entrepreneurship’ are offered¹⁷, international conferences are being held on this topic¹⁸ and books as well as awards¹⁹ continue to emerge, celebrating this new idea. But what a ‘creative entrepreneur’ actually is, remains vague²⁰.

In general, most academic as well as non-academic worlds having developed an interest in this issue consider creative entrepreneurship as the specific practices of entrepreneurs performing in the spheres of cultural and creative industries. As such, attempts to define creative entrepreneurship have often illustrated this concept through

¹⁷ See for instance, the Institute for Creative and Cultural Entrepreneurship at Goldsmiths University of London that offers MA and PhD programmes in Creative and Cultural Entrepreneurship or the University of East Anglia that offers an MA in Creative Entrepreneurship.

¹⁸ I am here making reference, as examples, to the International conference: Creative Entrepreneurship and Education in Cultural Life that was held on 15 – 18 July 2009 in Chicago, USA and the Conference of Creative Entrepreneurs that will take place on 5-7 August 2011 in San Francisco. In Europe, mention can be made to the European Cultural Entrepreneurship Conference entitled ‘Ethics and Innovation’ that was held on June 3rd 2010 in Berlin.

¹⁹ References can be made to the International and UK Young Creative Entrepreneurs Awards, an international competition created by the British Council in order to promote the role entrepreneurs play in exploring the economic potential of creative industries.

²⁰ Dr Nick Wilson stands as one of the rare researchers who have been substantively interrogating the intersections between creativity, aesthetic experience, artistic performance, entrepreneurship and cultural production while calling for a critical realist reconceptualisation of (social) creativity, art and entrepreneurship.

the example of artists capable of sustaining their individual creative practice independently. Creative entrepreneurs are interchangeably interpreted as “cultural entrepreneurs”, “artists-entrepreneurs” or “art entrepreneurs”, i.e. creative actors capable of “carrying out of a novel combination that results in something new and appreciated in the cultural sphere” (Swedberg, 2006 p.260). These interchangeable definitions are usually based on the argument that the attraction to cultural and creative sectors is wider for those with specific “artistic skills” (Raffo et al., 2000 p.223). From this perspective paying particular attention to the necessary and complementary nature of similarities between the artist and the entrepreneur, cultural and creative entrepreneurship is understood as either self-promotion or the actual fact of commercialising one’s own creativity, i.e. getting a cultural product from the artist to the consumer (Brown, 2004 p.5-6).

Such an understanding defines cultural and creative entrepreneurship by output (industrial terminology) rather than a process (social approach). Indeed, it focuses on measuring the economic outcomes of creativity and pays little (if any) attention to the cycle of creative activity that involves “the interplay of four forms of capital – social, cultural, human and structural or institutional – as the determinants of the growth of creativity – the creative capital” (UNCTAD and UNDP, 2008 p.10). As such, approaches based on this understanding are in practice applying an economic conception of the entrepreneur to fields of artistic or cultural production. Similarly, the policy literature on creative industries is characterised by a constant back-and-forth between description and prescription, while understanding entrepreneurial activities as intimately linked to export-orientation and the internationalisation of capital (Van Heur, 2010). The policy literature thus reveals an “approach to structural analysis of the creative industries around occupations and sectors using standard occupational and

industrial classifications” (Granger and Hamilton, 2010 p.49). Beyond the serious constraints associated with the sufficiently detailed breakdown of the arts and cultural industries in classification and the necessary stringent data requirements (UNCTAD and UNDP, 2008 p.10), such an approach also has limitations in revealing anything about the process of mobilizing creativity.

While ‘creativity’ can be defined as the process by which ideas are generated, connected, and transformed into things that are valued – or in Schumpeter’s terms, the entrepreneurial capacity to “get new things done”, ‘originality’ means creating something from nothing, or reworking something that already exists (UNCTAD and UNDP, 2008 p.10). As such, a unifying feature of cultural and creative industries is that originality protected by copyright stands at their core. Intellectual property rights, i.e. copyright as well as trademarks, are the “appropriate protection mechanisms for creativity in these sectors, as the respective products are primarily artistic or literary expressions, not technical ideas as such” (Hölzl, 2005 p.7). Being typically service-oriented knowledge- and labour-intensive in its production, the innovation process involved in creative industries is mostly non-technical, encompassing mainly organisational and product innovation. Contrary to technological innovation, there is no obsolescence of the products of creative industries that involve artistic innovation. We are thus in presence of non-rival goods, for which the economic rationale is less clear. Indeed, and as suggested in Chapter 1, despite their diversity, cultural and creative industries share particular economic characteristics that distinguish them from other sectors of the economy, and which impact on the entrepreneurial practices emerging from these sectors. My objective is to open up a conceptual space, in which I can focus on *in situ* processes of musical entrepreneurship active in Francophone West

Africa, while highlighting the limits of economic analysis of cultural and creative entrepreneurial practices.

2.3.2. Spatialising cultural and creative entrepreneurship

The principal creative space through which cultural entrepreneurs take hold are “interlocking and flexible networks of production and service systems spanning the entire supply chain” (UNCTAD and UNDP, 2008 p.69). There is a significant relationship between cultural and creative entrepreneurs and the context of their entrepreneurial practices. Indeed, “the process of creating new products in the creative industries is often embedded in networks and clusters [...] [and] knowledge-sharing is an important feature, as is the cumulateness of the process of creativity” (Hölzl, 2005 p.12). Such a system of relations between workers and networks implies that entrepreneurs “operate within less formal frameworks, have less stringent norms of behaviour, operate under the principle of open access, and are not attributed to any one location. As such, they operate in multiple places or at multiple times” (Granger and Hamilton, 2010 p.54). One may thus argue that entrepreneurship is not alien to the practices and strategies of networked forms of aesthetic production, but constitutive of their very existence (Van Heur, 2010).

When theorising the ways in which cultural and creative entrepreneurs actively create and produce entrepreneurial spaces in their own image, through complex networks and relationships, it is useful to refer to a conceptualisation firmly grounded in the ‘relational turn’ in economic geography, namely “transnationalising entrepreneurship” (Yeung, 2009). This has been defined as “a particular form of entrepreneurship embodied in specific actors who transcend multiple spaces, territories, and scales”

(Yeung, 2009 p.211). “Transnationalising entrepreneurship” challenges the “conventional wisdom in most existing studies that entrepreneurship is a home-based and locally specific phenomenon”, “a natural product of local endowments and advantages” (Yeung, 2009 p.229). As such, it recognises that territoriality in entrepreneurial spaces is highly ‘stretchable’, that location plays itself out differently in an entrepreneurial space, and therefore entrepreneurs in one physical location may have divergent strategic objectives and heterogeneous resource repertoires (Yeung, 2009 p.214-5). Furthermore, rather than focusing on ‘faceless’ entrepreneurial firms, the conditions and the environments of their performances, “transnationalising entrepreneurship” provides great insights into “the origins and processes through which a transnational organisation of entrepreneurial activity comes about and, in turn, is transformed through these processes of producing new spaces of entrepreneurship” (Yeung, 2009 p.227). As such, it conceptualises “the entrepreneur as the driving force in the formation and transformation of the networks in which s/he is embedded” and entrepreneurship as a “complex sociospatial economic phenomenon” (Yeung, 2009 p.230). In other words, it permits “observing creative processes at the level of the individual as key actors in the creative economy [...] [something that] is more powerful and relevant than observing organisation and places, precisely because it gets to the essence of creative enterprise as a process” (Granger and Hamilton, 2010 p.51).

Considering that creative industries are actively dependent on networks, clusters and embedded knowledge, cultural entrepreneurship researchers analyse these specific entrepreneurial practices, while framing them in the knowledge society and its cultural economy (Leadbeater and Oakley, 1999; Raffo et al., 2000; Rae, 2004; Bathelt, 2005). Such researchers often emphasise the learning practices at play in the successful operation of entrepreneurs’ businesses, insisting on the “context-specific work and

real-time problem solving within and without a community of practice/practitioners” (Raffo et al., 2000 p.216). Building on the cultural implications of the new economy stressed in the ‘cultural turn’ of social sciences, these researchers insist on the situated nature of learning in cultural entrepreneurship and the importance of ‘doing’ as training. In this literature, the role of entrepreneurial knowledge and the transmission of technical skills are understood as being of primary importance; it grants “a relatively high level of individual autonomy and flexibility to actors that is incomparable to other industries (but typical for the cultural industries – see Hesmondhalgh, 2002; Ryan, 1992)” (Van Heur, 2009 p.112). Indeed, one of the most important differences between creative and manufacturing industries is found in the labour market for the creative industries, which values training on the job much more than formal education (Hölzl, 2005 p.26). Additionally, it confirms the findings that “entrepreneurs in knowledge-based firms, compared to those in traditional firms, invest more time in networking and also build more focused networks” (Steyaert and Landstrom, 2011 p.128). Put differently, one of the specificities of cultural entrepreneurs is that they learn their creative and business skills from experience and peers, which in turn justifies the importance they give to networks and mentors (see Chapter 6 for detailed discussion).

Recognising the importance of networks in the practice of cultural entrepreneurs challenges “the economic discourses particularly prevalent within creative industries policy circles by constantly highlighting the importance of [...] community effort and collaborative work” (Van Heur, 2009 p.113). There are social and aesthetic dimensions of cultural entrepreneurship that are irreducible to economic innovation and that often constitute the very reasons for participating in aesthetic production in the first place. As will be further developed in this thesis (Chapter 6), “not being paid

(enough), [...] also reflects a fundamental refusal on the part of actors to approach creative labour as a ‘normal’ job” (Van Heur, 2009 p.115). Indeed, while the model of income choice is the most important theoretical framework within the economics literature, this model has serious limitations, as the trade-off between pecuniary and non-pecuniary benefits results in the fact that cultural entrepreneurs do not generally maximise profits as they tend to shift the production of art from production for market sales toward production in pursuit of artistic satisfaction (Hölzl, 2005 p.16-7). In such cases, cultural entrepreneurs are perceived as not being primarily motivated by financial success and often forced to combine multiple roles to manage the successful commercialisation of their creative production (Brown, 2004 p.7-8). However, this perspective also reveals a dilemma about which there is still much confused thinking. Indeed, the notion of ‘free labour’ or self-exploitation is often posited in this field as the ‘psychic income’ related to artistic labour, and even sometimes used to explain why cultural workers are not money making, but they are nevertheless still entrepreneurs.

The recent focus on cultural and creative entrepreneurship does not always implicitly imply that a shift beyond an economic discourse is taken as far as entrepreneurial activities are concerned. An appropriate contextualisation of this form and practice of entrepreneurship is thus necessary in order to recognise the inclusion of non-economic rationale in the discourse of cultural entrepreneurs. In this way, cultural entrepreneurship can be paralleled with a recent literature on “mumpreneurs” that explores a “form of entrepreneurship driven largely by the desire to achieve ‘work-life harmony’ [...] [and that refers to] a business owner involved in a new *type* of business practice” (italics in original text)” (Ekinsmyth, 2011 p.104). Emphasising the situated nature of the entrepreneurial process, this literature recognises that entrepreneurship is

a social practice that needs to be contextualised, localised and situated by drawing upon and empirically grounding such concepts as networks and local communities (Steyaert and Landstrom, 2011 p.124). It is inspired by literature that approaches entrepreneurship as “a societal phenomenon rather than as a purely economic reality” with the objective of challenging its “close involvement with economics rendering entrepreneurship as an economic phenomenon to be explained by economic theory, eventually turning it into *economism* and *managerialism*” (italics in original text) (Steyaert and Katz, 2004 p.181). Inviting us to rethink the boundaries of entrepreneurial spaces, it considers the spatial production of entrepreneurship through socio-cultural processes and a geography of entrepreneurship that is always geopolitical (Steyaert and Katz, 2004 p.180). As such, this approach resonates with my inquiry into cultural and creative entrepreneurship, where innovative possibilities are not just economised but involve “a much more complex view, where the cultural, the economic, spatial, relational and institutional become understood in their integrative effect” (Steyaert and Katz, 2004 p.189). I now turn to the art of locating the spirit of entrepreneurship in the cultural and creative “community of practice” (Wenger, 1998), while usefully deconstructing it into its constituent spatialities.

2.4. ENTREPRENEURIAL COMMUNITIES OF PRACTICE

Wenger’s concept of “communities of practice” (“CoP”) (Wenger, 1998; Wenger and Snyder, 2000) has been often used to develop a social learning perspective on the particularities of cultural and creative entrepreneurship in a knowledge economy. From this perspective, learning is posited as a source of social structure, and thus gives rise to the specificities of cultural and creative entrepreneurs as “CoP” (Wenger, 1998 p.96). The argument generally revolves around highlighting the distinctive reliance of

cultural entrepreneurs on networking practices from other entrepreneurs involved in more 'traditional' industrial sectors of the economy (Rae, 2004; Poettschacher, 2005; Rae, 2005). The focus is placed on how, for cultural entrepreneurs, the "CoP" has become "a very tight node of interpersonal relationships" (Wenger, 1998 p.76) and is thought of as "shared histories of learning" (Wenger, 1998 p.86). Indeed, as has been argued, at "the heart of creative entrepreneurs are the actions or relations of networks, creative workers and creative practices, which operate as 'creative spaces'" (Granger and Hamilton, 2010 p.51).

Nevertheless, however useful Wenger's work has been for exploring the networking practices of cultural entrepreneurs, this thesis innovates by using the concept of "CoP" (Wenger, 1998) to question an economic approach to cultural entrepreneurship. In this respect, references to Wenger's work thus reflect my attempt to further a critical response to the often simplistic accounts of current economic analysis on entrepreneurial practices of cultural workers. Indeed, such sustained interpersonal engagements do generate their fair share of tensions and conflicts and as such, the shared practice in cultural and creative entrepreneurship connects participants to each other in ways that are diverse and complex (Wenger, 1998 p.76). Regarding cultural entrepreneurs, "networks unfold in a contextualised process" (Steyaert and Landstrom, 2011 p.125) and their individual situations and responses vary. Informed by a literature that considers entrepreneurship as a social process rather than a pure economic reality, the diversity and complexity of entrepreneurial participation in cultural fields are the focus of the following sections. Here, I contextualise entrepreneurship in the framework of this "CoP" (Wenger, 1998) and argue for the great tensions persisting between the collective and the individual in the cultural economy and in the new forms of entrepreneurial practices it implies.

2.4.1. On the complexity and diversity of cultural and creative entrepreneurship

My extension of Wenger's work starts from the premise that the author constitutes a "CoP" as participants forming close relationships and developing idiosyncratic ways of engaging with one another, which outsiders cannot easily enter. These participants have a detailed and complex understanding of their enterprise as they define it, which outsiders may not share, and they have developed a repertoire with shared references which outsiders miss (Wenger, 1998 p.113). At first sight, cultural entrepreneurs appear as a "CoP". Indeed, their entrepreneurial deeds develop from specific relations of networks (idiosyncratic ways of engaging with one another), in which the standing of the master in the community or the mentor, as usually referred to in cultural and creative literature, is crucial (Wenger, 1998 p.101). They also incorporate non-economic rationale as original understanding and referential repertoire for the particular enterprise of the community. Cultural entrepreneurs, in other words, produce a practice to deal with what they understand to be their enterprise (Wenger, 1998 p.80): as a community, they negotiate what cultural entrepreneurship means.

However, a community of practice is always engaged in the production of an "indigenous enterprise" (Wenger, 1998 p.79) in the sense that engagement in practice is characterised by its unfolding multidimensional complexity. Indeed, cultural entrepreneurs as a community of practice are not a self-contained entity. Rather, this community develops "in larger contexts – historical, social, cultural, institutional – with specific resources and constraints [...] [and] its day-to-day reality is produced by participants within the resources and constraints of their situations" (Wenger, 1998 p.79). Even though cultural entrepreneurship as a practice does not transcend nor transform institutional conditions, it nonetheless responds to the call of these changing

conditions for a constant reinvention of practice. As such, entrepreneurship scholars who have introduced a spatiality and geography of entrepreneurship point to such spaces as “communities” (Steyaert and Katz, 2004; Ekinsmyth, 2011; Johannisson, 2011; Steyaert and Landstrom, 2011) and recognise the importance of an “organising context”. In their attempts to contextualise entrepreneurial practices, the latter, deeply rooted in everyday local, becomes the focal arena for interaction, learning and control in “entrepreneuring” (Steyaert, 2007). While inquiring into the understanding of entrepreneurship as a social practice, a creative and collective organising process that materialises a venture, references are thus made to this “organising context” that acts “as a refuge for reproduced local values and behavioural patterns and also as a translator of external influences into refined local knowledge and practices. The outcome is a multiple and evolving collective identity and elaborate community of practice” (Johannisson, 2011 p.143). As such, cultural entrepreneurship stands as a fundamentally social process of shared learning, it is not a static subject but “the very process of being engaged in, and participating in developing, an ongoing practice” (Wenger, 1998 p.93) from its situated location.

Such a “relational” perspective of cultural practices has been adopted early on by researchers who demonstrate its heuristic efficacy in thinking of these fields as a form of *analysis situs* (Bourdieu, 1993 p.29-30). Indeed, such an approach recognises the pertinence of linking cultural products and practices with the social conditions of production of both the producers and consumers as productive community. As previously mentioned, studies on cultural and creative entrepreneurship have tended to focus on the ‘output’ of these practices, applying an economic conception of the entrepreneur to the fields of artistic and/or cultural production. However, by loosely framing cultural entrepreneurs as “those directly involved in the production of cultural

goods and services” (Banks et al., 2000 p.453), they have also pointed to some of their constitutive processes. Indeed, they acknowledge that “not only the material production but also the symbolic production of the work, i.e. the production of the value of work” needs to be taken in account as contributing to the production process (Bourdieu, 1993 p.37). Such an approach thus highlights how the ways in which these participants respond to problems are shaped by “grounded and situated, reflexive, hands-on learning experience” (Banks et al., 2000 p.456). Sustaining a relational perspective, it stresses how cultural practices and their related communities do not permit universalising a particular case, while resting on historical definitions that respond to a specific state of affairs of the field they are inscribed in. In this respect, recognising that cultural practices and their related communities vary in time, place but also in field, drawing on Hall (2001)’s “varieties of capitalism”, I suggest the consideration of ‘varieties of cultural entrepreneurship’. This term significantly captures the ways in which these forms of entrepreneurship are necessarily and inextricably bounded up with their ‘situated’ location.

Accordingly, cultural entrepreneurship appears as a configuration that is too far removed from the scope of engagement of participants, too broad, too diverse, and too diffuse to be usefully treated as a single community of practice (Wenger, 1998 p.126). Indeed, there are both spatial and temporal discontinuities that are integral to cultural entrepreneurship, and so configuration can profitably be viewed as a constellation of interconnected practices rather than a “CoP” *per se* (Wenger, 1998 p.127). Cultural entrepreneurship thus constitutes a complex social landscape of shared practices, boundaries, peripheries, overlaps, connections and encounters, as its communities of practice differentiate themselves and also interlock with each other from their localised situations (Wenger, 1998 p.118). As seen with “transnationalising entrepreneurship”

(Yeung, 2009) where entrepreneurial spaces are highly stretchable, the “local is never just local, but always intersected through flows of other levels” (Steyaert and Katz, 2004 p.192). When inquiring into a “CoP” of cultural entrepreneurs, one needs to acknowledge the fact that “the local and the global are related levels of participation that always coexist and shape each other” (Wenger, 1998 p.131) and that their everyday reality should rather be studied as a “transnational localism” (Smith, 2003). Indeed, and as Wenger reminds us, “focusing on the level of communities of practice is not to glorify the local but to see these processes – negotiation of meaning, learning, the development of practices and the formation of identities and social configurations – as involving complex interactions between the local and the global” (Wenger, 1998 p.133).

Concerning cultural entrepreneurship, communities of practice define themselves in part by the way they negotiate their position within the constellation they are involved in, with different participants contributing and benefiting differently. In other words, although interconnections can be drawn between the different “CoP” involved in this constellation, the understanding of cultural entrepreneurship and its effects on the lives of its participants appears as a collective product that is not uniform. From this perspective, I inquire into West African musical entrepreneurs as a “CoP” within the constellation of the cultural entrepreneurship. Such an approach highlights the fact that “whereas certain members can be in marginal or peripheral positions with respect to a community of practice, the community of practice itself can be in a peripheral or marginal position with respect to broader constellations” (Wenger, 1998 p.168). Indeed, I argue that West African musical entrepreneurs as a “CoP” are marginally

positioned within the broader constellation of cultural entrepreneurship²¹ in the sense that some form of non-participation prevents them from full participation (see Chapter 6 for detailed discussion). Such an understanding and usage of Wenger's work is the framework that I propose to utilise in order to look at, for the first time, West African cultural entrepreneurship.

2.4.2. On the cognitive and pragmatic spaces of West African musical entrepreneurship

Inquiring into the identity of these entrepreneurs (who they are) and their practice (how they work) informs us of the broader social context in which they inscribe themselves, offering a more comprehensive way in which to enhance and support their practices. As Wenger stressed, "an important aspect of the work of any community of practice is to create a picture of the broader context in which its practice is located. In this process, much local energy is directed at global issues and relationships" (Wenger, 1998 p.161). So it allows us to learn about West African musical entrepreneurs' identities and practices and consider them as a response to their contextualisation. This is significant, as it informs us of the individual position of these entrepreneurs and the one of their community, as well as the broader social context in which they inscribe themselves, i.e. the cultural economy in Francophone West Africa.

Indeed, while 'varieties of cultural entrepreneurship' highlights how this form of entrepreneurship is necessarily and inextricably bound up with its 'situated' location, it also stresses how identity issues are important to shape its participants. In this respect,

²¹ It is significant to stress as well that West African musical entrepreneurs are also marginally positioned in the broader constellation of local entrepreneurship situated in other 'traditional' fields of activity.

it has been argued that cultural fields stand as “spaces of positions” and “spaces of position-takings” (Bourdieu, 1993). As such, they imply a “network of objective relations between positions [that] subtends and orients the strategies which the occupants of the different positions implement in their struggles to defend or improve their positions (i.e. their position-takings), strategies which depend for their force and form on the position each agent occupies in the power relations” (Bourdieu, 1993 p.30). In other words, “our identities, even in the context of a specific practice, are not just a matter internal to that practice but also a matter of our position and the position of our communities within broader social structures” (Wenger, 1998 p.148).

Considering cultural entrepreneurship in the West African music economy, the emergences of identity and practice display a complex job of “brokering” that “involves processes of translation, coordination, and alignment between perspectives” (Wenger, 1998 p.109). Indeed, I argue that West African musical entrepreneurs stand as “intermediaries” (UNCTAD and UNDP, 2008), ‘mediators’ or as Wenger calls them, “brokers” who use their multimembership to transfer some elements of one practice into another. In doing so, they “are able to make new connections across communities of practice, enable coordination and [...] open new possibilities of meaning” (Wenger, 1998 p.109). My argument is that cultural products such as musical products are in Wenger’s lexicon “boundary objects” that connect the practices of West African cultural entrepreneurs with the rest of the world. However, such “boundary objects” both connect and disconnect as they enable coordination but they do so without actually creating a bridge between the perspectives and the meanings of various constituencies (Wenger, 1998 p.106-8). For West African musical entrepreneurs, the learning of their practice involves an intimate interaction of order and chaos, with room both for spontaneous and calculated interaction and reactive and

proactive strategies, thus offering an image of the entrepreneur as an organiser who deals with interdependencies (Steyaert and Landstrom, 2011 p.127). While developing their practice and negotiating its meaning, entrepreneurs create ways of participating, which contribute to the very process of making that practice what it is (Wenger, 1998 p.96). Adaptability rather than stability is a key notion here.

Such an argument is coherent with previous studies that consider cultural entrepreneurs as “intermediaries”, i.e. cultural specialists and insiders who mediate the emergence of cultural products as objects of consumption (Bourdieu, 1993; O'Connor, 1998). As both producers and consumers, “cultural intermediaries” “are able to interpret, package, transmit and manipulate symbols and knowledge in a way that produces new value” (O'Connor, 1998 p.231). Drawing on a close knowledge and expertise of the inner dynamics of cultural fields, such a cultural intermediation reflects a crucial negotiation with its local context of emergence. As such, its participants negotiate and connect a local place-based cultural milieu with global circuits of ‘signs and flows’ and display an “ability to nurture this sector and link its creativity (of business and milieu) to wider economic innovation and development” (O'Connor, 1998 p.238). Furthermore, cultural intermediation as a process is played out differently in specific fields of practice. Indeed, the “different kinds of cultural enterprise vary, from an economic standpoint, in terms of the unit price of the product [...] and the cumulative number of purchasers; but they also vary according to the length of the production cycle, particularly as regards the speed with which profits are obtained [...], they radically differ in terms of the mode of profit acquisition and [...] in terms of the objective and subjective relationship between the producer and the market” (Bourdieu, 1993 p.48). In this respect, “cultural intermediaries” may, in extreme cases, have nothing in common except the fact of taking part in a struggle to

impose the legitimate definition of cultural intermediation as a productive practice, adapted to and translated from their specific field.

Accordingly, the competence required for West African musical entrepreneurs to adaptively inscribe their translation of cultural entrepreneurship is “neither merely individual nor abstractly communal [...]”; this competence is experienced and manifested by members through their own engagement in practice” (Wenger, 1998 p.136). I thus observed some significant discontinuities in this “CoP”, leading me to consider West African musical entrepreneurship as a constellation of interconnected practices. These entrepreneurs share historical roots, have related enterprises, and face similar conditions (though with different respective resources to respond to them). They have members in common, share artefacts, and geographical relations of proximity and interaction. They do have overlapping styles and discourses, however they contribute with their own practice and specific focus to the constitution of the overall constellation. Indeed, and as I will emphasise later, West African musical entrepreneurs have common ways of behaving, styles and discourses, which are however integrated into a different enterprise and given different meaning.

Entrepreneurs present different modes of belonging to their communities of practice (engagement; imagination; alignment in a non-mutually exclusive way) that provide an appropriate framework for identifying (rather than classifying) and understanding how “CoP” are constituted. These modes of belonging are characterised by distinctive ‘thinking’ and ‘doing’ practices, or what I refer to as their cognitive and pragmatic spaces. In this sense, “space is examined in two ways. First, in a metaphorical sense, the space that is required to conceive, launch and undertake new business ventures; and second, the real and virtual spaces in which this activity takes place” (Ekinsmyth,

2011 p.107). As such, “communities of practice should not be reduced to purely instrumental purposes. They are about knowing, but also about being together, living meaningfully, developing a satisfying identity, and altogether being human” (Wenger, 1998 p.134). In other words, “CoP” support entrepreneurs in fulfilling their materialistic as well as existential concerns as they develop their enterprise (Steyaert and Landstrom, 2011 p.128). Again, such an approach liberates “entrepreneurship” (Steyaert, 2007) from a narrow-minded association with economic activity alone, while inquiring into this practice as a means of creating a new way of life, an “existential venturing aiming at crafting one’s own identity” (Johannisson, 2011 p.139).

Furthermore, thinking about West African musical entrepreneurs in terms of interactions among their practices and notably in terms of boundary practices, overlaps and peripheries permits us to avoid a mistaken dichotomy between the community or the person as unit of analysis of their identity (and thus practice). This identity ‘stands’ as a constant becoming; it is something always in flux and constantly renegotiated. Wenger suggests the notion of “trajectory” that is a “continuous motion, which has a momentum of its own in addition to a field of influences” (Wenger, 1998 p.154). Focusing on the process of their mutual constitution, i.e. the duality of community and individual as “it is the interplay that matters most, not the ability to classify” (Wenger, 1998 p.146), I thus identified among these entrepreneurs three communities of practice. Although it is not always the case, in my research, the interactions among these different “CoP” affect the practices of West African musical entrepreneurs with an explicit sense of participation in a constellation. The following ideal-typology is one situated way of reading these communities, whose boundaries of practice are constantly renegotiated.

2.5. IDEAL-TYOLOGY OF WEST AFRICAN MUSICAL ENTREPRENEURS

Contrary to traditional approaches of entrepreneurship, my objective is not to predict the course of events that have yet to happen, but rather to understand the foundations of a situated musical entrepreneurship, which involves both the relations between people, as well as the relations of people to material things (Hébert and Link, 1989 p.48). No essential definition of cultural entrepreneurship can be suggested, because as previously demonstrated, cultural entrepreneurship is always contextually embedded. Put differently, as this form of “entrepreneuring” (Steyaert, 2007) “appears in different shapes according to the concrete situation, no universal law can be produced by scientific inquiry” (Johannisson, 2011 p.139). I thus develop an alternative approach in order to explore the specificity of cultural entrepreneurship in the Francophone West African music economy, its emergences and articulations. Indeed, Wenger’s work contrasts with normative perspectives on entrepreneurship, and inspired by the preceding critical review of existing approaches, it allows me to develop a model designed following data collection and reinforced by the information collected. The questions raised here are: What does it mean to be a cultural entrepreneur in the Francophone West African music economy? What are the ‘thinking’ and ‘doing’ processes of cultural entrepreneurs in this specific embedded environment? And how, the cognitive and pragmatic spaces of West African musical entrepreneurs develop and inscribe themselves in an emergent theory of cultural entrepreneurship?

Looking at musical entrepreneurship which is a sub category of ‘varieties of cultural entrepreneurship’ cross cutting historical and political forms, permits to specifically situate and address West African cultural entrepreneurship in the music economy. As

such, and contrary to most of the literature on cultural and creative entrepreneurship that usually considers participants as entrepreneurial artists, the West African profiling has revealed participants who do not practice any artistic occupation. They are not, in other words, in the ‘traditional cultural and creative logic’ of self-promotion and sustaining of an artistic/creative activity; however, they still participate and contribute in an entrepreneurial way to their local music economy. For instance, they may have goals beyond the economic that are inscribed in the real-life dimensions of their practice, but their rational desires to reach a work-life harmony emerge distinctly from those of artist-entrepreneurs involved in this economy. Such a distinction illustrates the persistent link drawn by Wenger between identity and practice, and calls for the elaboration of particular terms discerning different approaches among West African musical entrepreneurs. A comparable distinction was made between “music making, something done for all sorts of reasons, in all sorts of circumstances, and music exploiting, the ways in which money can be made out of music’s cultural and social significance” (Frith et al., 2009 p.74). However, “music exploiter” does hold a connotation of profit, as it could be understood as a type of musical entrepreneur who solely promotes and satisfies his/her own ends. I thus prefer the more neutral and mechanic connotation of the term ‘music worker’, that reflects a productive and operative practice developed by musical entrepreneurs. Throughout the suggested ideal-typology, as well as the thesis, reference will be made to ‘music makers’ and ‘music workers’ to attest to the diversity and complexity of West African musical entrepreneurship.

The ideal-typology I suggest does not aim at reaching a general definition and categorisation of musical entrepreneurs in Francophone West Africa. Rather, the objective of this typology is to make sense of a witnessed reality, to clarify a

perception that should not be interpreted as a pretention of an objective truth, but as a coherent and relevant attempt to transcribe and translate the phenomenon studied. As such, it offers a raw identification that is not closed-off and that aims at accentuating the diversity and complexity of West African musical entrepreneurship while stressing the different ‘thinking’ and ‘doing’ processes of its participants. Three types of musical entrepreneurs are thus presented although only one, hip hop entrepreneurs, will be addressed in depth in this thesis (Chapter 3 and 7). Common traits exist among entrepreneurs involved in this music economy and will be explored in practice based on my findings (Chapter 5 and 6). However, and in order to highlight the existence of different “CoP”, this section briefly sketches out the various distinctions that exist in the community. The forthcoming profiles are thus described through the specificity of their ‘thinking’ and ‘doing’ spaces, supported by a schema of the dynamic process of their entrepreneurial articulation.

2.5.1. Local cultural entrepreneurs

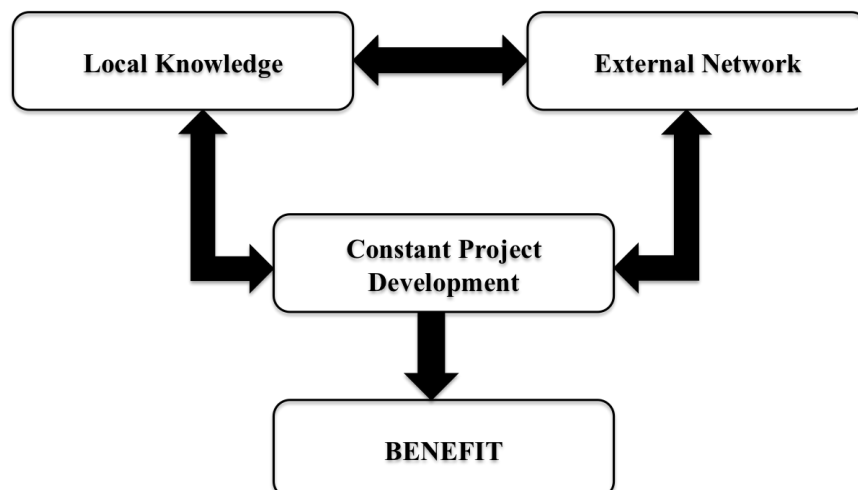


Diagram 2.1: On local cultural entrepreneurship

A first ideal-type of musical entrepreneur to be identified is the ‘local cultural entrepreneur’ who is animated by a logic of benefit and whose practice is sustained by an ‘informed local knowledge’, a ‘desired or developed external network’ and a strategy of ‘constant project development’. The denomination of this profile is justified by the predominant place that local knowledge occupies in their cognitive as well as pragmatic space. The choice of the adjective ‘cultural’ rather than ‘musical’ entrepreneur is explained by the fact that this specific type of entrepreneur starts in the music economy by chance or out of opportunity. Indeed, although a clear motivation exists to practice in their cultural economy, local cultural entrepreneurs could be performing in any other cultural field (media, tourism, etc.). As such, the ‘local cultural entrepreneur’ stands as a profile that is recurrent in other fields of the local cultural economy, and can be identified as being neither specific nor restricted to the music economy. This may be explained by the fact that, although they are, as any cultural entrepreneur, expressly attracted to cultural fields of practice in the first place, they generally do not tend to practice any artistic occupation. As far as their cognitive or ‘thinking’ space is concerned, local cultural entrepreneurs are motivated by a desire to seize opportunities in order to benefit from their cultural practices.

“At the beginning, I did not have the project of creating a festival. In 1997, I worked with Basic Soul who was the first Burkinabè rapper to release an album. I worked on the promotion of his album, organising shows [...] with young local artists programmed in the first part of the show. After having talked with these rappers who explained their need to perform as there was no stage they had access to, I had the idea to create the festival.” (Interview #1; Music worker, Ouagadougou)

These ‘opportunistic’ entrepreneurs emerge from the locale where they practice. They are not formally trained but learnt their respective professions on the job. Getting inspiration from what they perceive from their sector, they keep on developing new

initiatives, innovating in accordance with their critical observations²². Indeed, deeply inscribed in the locale from which they emerge and in which they perform, local cultural entrepreneurs are constantly alert to the dynamics occurring inside their sector of activity. Based on their various experiences, they also demonstrate desired or (sometimes already) developed external networking strategies, which allow them to gain recognition of their professional practice from other “CoP” abroad. It also allows them to extend their capacity to seize business opportunities. In this sense, their networks stand as ‘resources’ and ways of both accessing ideas and differentiating the potential of these ideas.

“At the beginning, it was not meant to be a festival but just an evening ceremony rewarding the hip hop actors. I transformed it into a festival for the 3rd edition when I understood [...] that in order to get funding a cultural event has to be an international one.”
(Interview #26; Music worker, Dakar)

As far as their pragmatic space is concerned, this type of entrepreneur largely consists of music workers who expect to make a living out of their participation and, as such, invest personally time and money implying a high-risk strategy. Therefore, contrary to the common argument that cultural and creative workers acquire a taste for the experience goods they produce through consumption (Hölzl, 2005 p.7), local cultural entrepreneurs affirm themselves as active musical workers less inclined towards musical consumption. Besides, they are mostly characterised by an individualistic approach: they intervene or want to intervene in the structuring of the sector in order to increase their business opportunities. In other words, these musical entrepreneurs are

²² Such local knowledge is sometimes used against other actors involved in the local music economy. For instance, knowing the precarity of the local artists-musicians and the limited opportunities for them to perform locally, some local cultural entrepreneurs solicit these musicians at a very late stage in a given project, with little opportunity for fees negotiation and the total absence of formal recognition (see Chapters 4 and 6).

distinctively characterised by a market/business logic that is close to the one encountered in traditional entrepreneurship literature, while their collaborative strategies are motivated by and activated for individual benefit.

This profile is the most important one identified on the Burkinabè scene comprising 50% of interviewed musical entrepreneurs (see Appendix C). It is the second most important in Senegal, with less than a third. Being active in the music economy for a certain number of years, this profile can be considered as the first generation of ‘local’ cultural entrepreneurs, which has emerged following the boom of ‘world music’ artists and the global unveiling of the cultural economy’s potential. In Wenger’s terms, local cultural entrepreneurs offer a “paradigmatic trajectory” to the “CoP” of West African musical entrepreneurs by their early participation in the cultural economy. As such, these entrepreneurs have played an important role as cultural intermediaries in the local as well as in the external (regional and global) music economies, having initiated the oldest enterprises that are still active locally.

“Each year, we try to get as partners the cultural services of embassies. [...] And for seven years, Nestcafe, OIF, CultureFrance and Africalia have been contributing.” (Interview #26; Music worker, Dakar)

“Most of these operators travel a lot and are member of other networks. Also, we try to meet up during formations organised by funders, and to which we participate.” (Interview #1; Music worker, Ouagadougou)

For these entrepreneurs based in Ouagadougou, the most recurrent juridical structure is the association, while in Dakar it is the individual enterprise. However, one striking characteristic of this profile is that its emergence is heavily, and even sometimes solely, supported by local or foreign institutions of cultural cooperation and

development. Indeed, these entrepreneurs generally constitute their initial enterprise with heavy support from institutions, upon which they continue to rely on. Compared to ordinary entrepreneurship in West Africa, this community of musical entrepreneurs often benefits from a significant institutional support with various foreign and sometimes even local funding agencies²³ that encourage their initiatives. As Interviewee #1 stresses, such an observation can explain the fact that these entrepreneurs are often confronted with a gradual exhaustion in sustaining their practice.

“The way I work is because of the funding that exist. So I cannot go on working eternally as I do. And even the supporting institutions encourage us to have a more business-oriented approach. They want us to become businessmen, i.e. when I invest in a project, I should not invest at loss but with the hope of making a profit.” **(Interview #1; Music worker, Ouagadougou)**

Foreign institutions offer funding under specific conditions²⁴, which often constrain the intended project. Besides, most of them are currently distancing themselves from African scenes of cultural development, realising the ineffective reliance of local operators and their difficulty in autonomously sustaining their activities. When considering the political economy of the institutional funding they heavily rely on, serious questions can thus be posed in terms of the strategy of this community of entrepreneurial practice in the West African music economy, especially in the long run. Indeed, these musical entrepreneurs do little in terms of radical change, making the most of an existing system. In other words, their local and extended global knowledge is used to make individual benefit without challenging the imbalances of

²³ Namely, Africalia, CulturesFrance (previously AFAA, and now French Institute), OIF, Prince Klaus Foundation, UNESCO, SACEM, French Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Association Diversity (created by the director of Export Bureau of French Music), and different African Ministries of Culture

²⁴ For instance, these specific conditions can imply not supporting non-Francophone artists expenses or imposing the creation of operational platforms among musical entrepreneurs.

the music economy in which they inscribe their practice. As such, in their cognitive as well as pragmatic spaces, the concept of radical change is relatively missing.

2.5.2. Cosmopolitan musical entrepreneurs

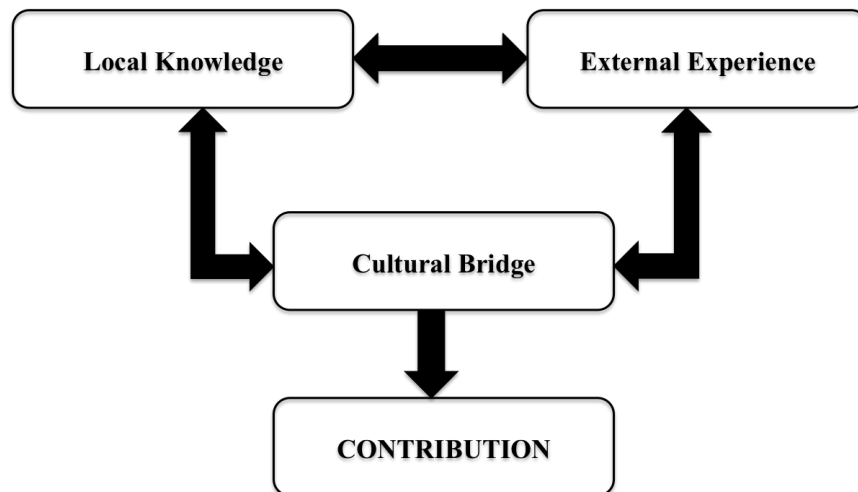


Diagram 2.2: On cosmopolitan musical entrepreneurship

A second type of musical entrepreneur identified is the ‘cosmopolitan²⁵ musical entrepreneur’ who is animated by a logic of contribution and whose practices are sustained by an ‘informed local knowledge’, an ‘external musical experience’ and a strategy of ‘bridging local and global’ music economies. Slightly more than one quarter of the interviewed West African musical entrepreneurs can be identified as belonging to this profile. It occupies the second position in the Burkinabè music economy and the last in the Senegalese one. These numbers may be explained by the relative importance of hip hop entrepreneurs in Senegal, who are already in a logic of collective development as we shall see in the next section, and the predominance of local cultural entrepreneurs in Burkina Faso who are still in a logic of individual benefit-making. Put differently, it seems that the notion of contribution, i.e. in the

²⁵ The specific use of this adjective should be read in line with my critique of ‘cosmopolitanism’ developed in the conclusion of Chapter 3

sense of an improvement of the sector formulated in the long-term, has not yet transformed in Burkina Faso into an alternative conception of development of the field.

As far as their cognitive or ‘thinking’ space is concerned, cosmopolitan musical entrepreneurs are motivated by a desire to contribute to the amelioration of the local conditions of musical production. They are animated by a passion, a sensibility, an aesthetic they share with some local participants, and which pushes them to respond to some needs they identify in their field of predilection. As such, their contribution does not aim to be lucrative at first. Cosmopolitan musical entrepreneurs appear as “peripheral participants” (Wenger, 1998) in both other communities of musical entrepreneurs, i.e. local cultural and hip hop. Being at the periphery is actually significant to their identity, being neither fully inside nor outside. Contrary to other cultural entrepreneurs locally involved in musical fields, they do not have a strong sense of independence or ownership. They are less motivated by a desire of becoming visible than by a wish of rendering the field of their practice visible. As such, their collaborative strategies are mostly motivated by the very collaboration they represent: in other words, collaborating for the sake of collaboration.

“The mandate of the organisation was to support the diffusion but also to support the creation as we would leave the place for artists or groups to work out their projects thanks to the material we had. [...] This was a way for me to make a lot of contacts and feel the artistic pulse of Ouagadougou as well as to initiate a maximum of relationships with local artists.” **(Interview #4; Music worker, Ouagadougou)**

“It was a place of gathering [...]. It was a place which mainly welcomed new talents who had difficulties in getting access to the few spaces of diffusion in Senegal [...] and many young artists got

spotted thanks to their passage there!” (Interview #29; Music worker, Dakar)

Regarding their pragmatic or ‘doing’ space, their philosophy, ethics, i.e. their cognitive spaces, interact with their practice and they ally a long-term vision with concrete contributions. These entrepreneurs have acquired the necessary training outside the locale they now perform in, either in Europe or in USA. They are especially trained and formed – either formally or informally – in one of the different professions of the music field. They are expressly and purposely musical professionals, usually music workers, but also sometimes used-to-be music makers. They are either westerners (but not expatriates) who decide to settle in a West African locale, or part of what has been referred to as a “reverse Diaspora”, i.e. West African participants who return to Africa in order to start their enterprise after having been trained abroad (McDade and Spring, 2005 p.23). The latter are identified as mostly “middle and upper class urban residents [who] [...] live cosmopolitan lives” (McDade and Spring, 2005 p.25). Cosmopolitan musical entrepreneurs can thus be considered as localised cosmopolitans, in the sense that they have a strong knowledge of the local, as well as of the global music economy and its processes of production and consumption. They usually develop their local knowledge through informal networking strategies and experiences, while finding their place inside the wider local cultural community.

Moreover, they are capable of a critical examination of the local music economy, and of identifying its weaknesses in comparison to their previous experiences of other communities of practice in different music economies. As such, they “have a global business outlook while maintaining an inward focus”: they have “the ability to address the unmet demands for goods and services” (McDade and Spring, 2005 p.26). Cosmopolitan entrepreneurs thrive on being Wenger’s “brokers”: they love to create

connections and engage in “import-export”, and so would rather stay at the boundaries of many practices than move to the core of any one practice. Their competence drives their experience, and cosmopolitan entrepreneurs transform their experience until it fits within the ‘regime’ of West African musical entrepreneurs. They are therefore very critical of the local music economy in terms of production and consumption, as well as of its various participants, whether artistic, institutional or operational, and “on a broader scale perceive the need to change business practices and behaviours” (McDade and Spring, 2005 p.38). Cosmopolitan musical entrepreneurs have thus developed a local and cosmopolitan knowledge of the music economy that allows them to play a strategic role as musical intermediary, bridging the global and the local spaces of music production and consumption. Their main contribution is to provide a cosmopolitan approach to the music economy, as their networking strategies are spread mostly on a local-global line. They are capable of acting with respect to a broad and rich conception of the cultural economy. They align their activities with their vision, which helps them to situate their practice. Being both active music makers and consumers with a constant iterative interactivity, they bring a cosmopolitan knowledge, a *savoir-faire* to these locales, in order to give them a push in the right direction. However, connecting local and external worlds can prove to be a difficult process of translation, sometimes limiting their intended cultural mediation.

“The importance of graphic work is not sufficiently recognised. [...] I work as a graphic designer for artists but it was hard for me to get paid by them as they did not recognise this as a proper job required real work on the image, on the pictures. Now, people ask more and more for my services so it starts to be recognised.” (Interview #5; Music worker, Ouagadougou)

“For the people who work for me, there is a problem of civil service. [...] We quickly became a kind of group of civil servants who wait for instructions; however this sector is pro-active: one needs to be

ahead of things, to anticipate needs, to innovate, to create opportunities” **(Interview #16; Music maker and worker, Ouagadougou)**

In both explored locales, the juridical constitution of their organisations varies between associative and individual enterprise status, and this profile stands out as the one that still has most of the informally structured enterprises. Cosmopolitan musical entrepreneurs decide to invest themselves in a specific locale, but are not entirely dependent on it, mainly because it does not constitute their main source of revenue. Among the three identified profiles, these are indeed the ones with a reduced risk-taking strategy. They always have a way to distance themselves from their project, an ‘emergency exit’ and, as such, they do not have the imperative of making a living out of their music-related activities. As Interviewee #4 illustrates, this non-dependency on their musical projects may stand as a considerable constraint in terms of the effective entrepreneurial contribution of this community of practice.

“[...] I always refused to do production as it is difficult to have a financial relationship when one is French with a Burkinabè: we do not have the same stakes with money. For instance, if tomorrow I am really sick, my mother could always help me out to pay for the hospital; something which does not exist in the reality of my Burkinabè collaborator. Money can really be a source of troubles in such a kind of situation and I discovered it just through the renting of my studio.” **(Interview #4; Music worker, Ouagadougou)**

Therefore, with a minimal risk-taking strategy, this profile appears as a palliative form of entrepreneurship that encourages a fragile local music economy by translating global formats into local realities. Although this type does intend to create and innovate while striving to bring about a consequent change, its ‘entrepreneurial’ attribute can be questioned in terms of its limited risks and benefits. As such, the

cognitive space of these musical entrepreneurs displays some elements of radical change that are not easily translatable into their pragmatic space.

2.5.3. Hip hop entrepreneurs

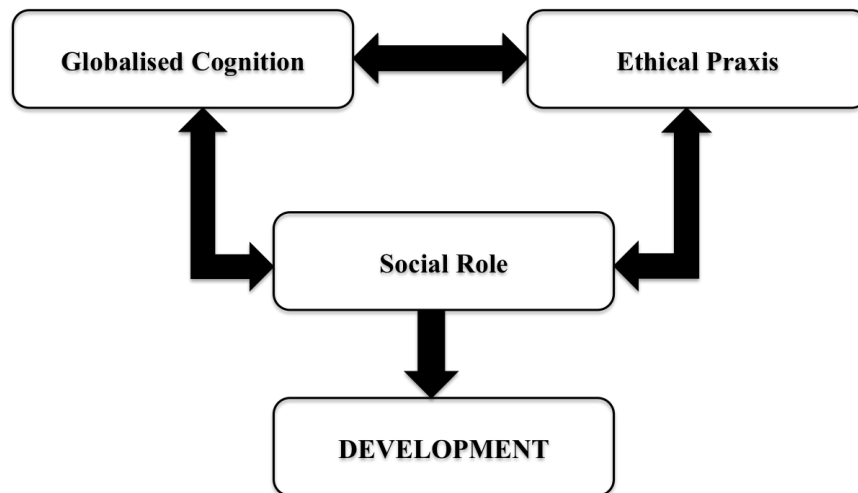


Diagram 2.3: On hip hop entrepreneurship

A third type of musical entrepreneur identified is ‘hip hop entrepreneurs’ who are in a logic of ‘development’ and whose practice is supported by a ‘globalised cognition’ (i.e. the alliance of an informed local knowledge and an external musical experience), an ‘ethical praxis’, and a strategy of ‘playing a social role’. More than half of the musical entrepreneurs interviewed in Senegal can be affiliated with this profile while only about a quarter of those in the Burkinabè scene. These numbers may be explained by the over-representation of local cultural entrepreneurs in Burkina Faso, and the smaller number of artists there having reached an external recognition and experience (see Chapter 5 for detailed discussion). Although hip hop entrepreneurs are not the ones who initiate the practice of musical artists-entrepreneurship in their locale, having

been preceded by some, though rare, successful world music artists²⁶, they are the ones who systematise this practice while aligning it with an understanding of their social responsibility as a new generation of local musical entrepreneurs. In Wenger's terms, this refers to a "process of negotiating trajectories" whereby "the encounter between generations is much more complex than the mere transmission of a heritage. It is an interlocking of identities. [...] This encounter is always a complex meeting of the past and the future, one in which generations attempt to define their identities by investing them in different moments of the history of a practice" (Wenger, 1998 p.157).

"Previous artists did great things [...]. They give us this capacity of taking the choice and responsibility of becoming an artist. We have another responsibility that is to leave that capacity of choice to the forthcoming generations. And in order for these generations to have this choice, [...] I believe that the cultural economic future of Senegal will depend mostly on us, on our vision, on our projects and on our perseverance in maintaining the right direction for the future of culture" (Interview #19; Music maker and worker, Dakar)

As far as their cognitive or 'thinking' space is concerned, hip hop entrepreneurs are animated by a desire of developing and even revolutionising their field of practice. They are in a logic of development and even social change with a strong motivation to develop the field of their practice with a long-term vision. As newcomers, hip hop entrepreneurs find their own unique identities among West African musical entrepreneurs modifying the paradigmatic trajectories of previous artists-entrepreneurs and even rejecting those of 'local cultural entrepreneurs'. As Interviewee #23 comments, their experience drives their competence as they attempt to change the

²⁶ Although this point is further discussed in Chapter 5 and referred to in Chapter 7, I am here making reference to few *mbalax* artists in Senegal who initiated musical enterprises locally. However, the cognitive and pragmatic spaces of these early musical entrepreneurs are essentially aligned with the ones of 'local cultural entrepreneurs' previously identified. Indeed, they are characterised by an individualistic approach to the entrepreneurial initiative (contrary to a communal one of hip hop entrepreneurs) that rendered obvious through the monopolisation of the means of musical production (contrary to a multiplication of these latter inside the hip hop community of practice).

regime of the community of musical entrepreneurs in order for it to include their experience.

“This is not to help hip hop culture! I am myself against this notion of help or aid! People do not attend my shows because they want to help me but because it is the product that I sell and that they want to attend!! The first thing to be done is to change the discourse!”
(Interview #23; Music maker and worker, Dakar)

In doing so, they posit themselves as both cultural and musical intermediaries formulating a firmly local as well as translocal translation of cultural entrepreneurship. Indeed, while hip hop entrepreneurs align their entrepreneurial efforts with the hip hop discourse and style in order to define who they are as musical entrepreneurs, they identify with a broad community of alignment that is Hip Hop (see Chapters 3 and 7 for detailed discussion). As such, hip hop entrepreneurs demonstrate their capacity to generate new meanings while they inscribe themselves and translate an ‘hip hop economy of meanings’ into an alternative form of musical entrepreneurship in West Africa. They thus change their positions within the community of West African musical entrepreneurs (from newcomers to the creation of a new community) and its economies of meaning. This cognitive space in turn inspires their pragmatic spaces of entrepreneurial action, while for instance, their networking strategies are spread along local as well as translocal lines.

Regarding their pragmatic or ‘doing’ space, they are trained as artists and evolve into musical entrepreneurs out of necessity. Akin to ‘local cultural entrepreneurs’, they have a strong interest and incentive to have access to and acquire training, as artists who are learning on the job the requirements of the global music market. Indeed, they have generally gained a significant knowledge of the music economy through their

experiences as artists who have penetrated external communities of practice of this field. Therefore, hip hop entrepreneurs have an in-depth knowledge of both local and global music economies, which allows them to identify the weaknesses of the field in their locale. They know how to evolve in their locale while being critical of both local practices (whether artistic, operational, or institutional) and their local environment, based on their external knowledge. Furthermore, they have a strong desire for autonomy and independence of their musical production: indeed, they are music makers and workers, as well as both active producers and consumers of musical products. The majority of their enterprises are either constituted as an individual enterprise or as an economic interest grouping from a previously accumulated personal capital. They balance their entrepreneurial and artistic aspirations by diversifying their activities and investing in both lucrative and social projects. Their risk-taking strategy is however very high, as they are dependent on their activities to make a living and to lead innovative practices in their field. In turn, this dependency encourages them to develop creative and original professional organisations that respond to both social and sector-related needs.

Hip hop entrepreneurs thus offer an alternative cognition and a sensitively-informed practice of West African musical entrepreneurship: it is about developing their professions while acting in accordance with their motivation for demonstrating the potential of their field of practice for social change. Although they perform in a market economy in which they expect to make a living, they spatialise their cognitive and pragmatic practices in a broader social and cultural economy. Put differently, they make a living while developing the field in which their practices are inscribed, through alternative cognitive as well as pragmatic spaces of musical entrepreneurship. Similarly, their collaborative strategies are motivated by their wider community. As

such, rather than collaborating for the individual benefits ('local cultural entrepreneurs') or collaborating for the sake of collaboration ('cosmopolitan musical entrepreneurs'), they collaborate for the sake of the collective, i.e. the community. Although the organisations initiated by these entrepreneurs are among the youngest active in their field of practice, both the cognitive and pragmatic spaces of this community tend towards radical change as the ethics they develop as hip hop participants strongly influences and informs their entrepreneurial practices. As will be highlighted in Chapter 3 and further discussed in Chapter 7, hip hop entrepreneurs believe and recognise the social role they have to play. This implies to create something out of nothing, to be original in creating, to dedicate creation to the community, and to re-appropriate ideological as well as practical social spaces.

2.6. CONCLUSION

The traditional literature on entrepreneurship requires entrepreneurs to challenge, in an effective way, the environment of their practices: entrepreneurship is about changing the conditions of production, challenging a *status quo* by taking individual risks for larger social impacts. However, this same literature also understands the entrepreneurial processes as being diverse and multi-faceted. As I have argued, the role of the entrepreneur is permeable historically, geographically and industry-specifically, and evolves based on the changing patterns of economic life, which is itself socially and culturally embedded. A similar conclusion can be drawn for cultural and creative entrepreneurs. Although this concept is still vaguely defined, a common ground among cultural and creative researchers is that this form of entrepreneurship concerns entrepreneurs involved in the cultural and creative industries. However, while recognising that the "management of creative businesses requires specific skills in both

the entrepreneurial and the artistic or cultural aspects of the business operations” (UNCTAD and UNDP, 2008 p.40), I have distanced myself from previous work on cultural entrepreneurship that takes music makers as their primary subject of analysis. Cultural entrepreneurs are thus considered as the individuals who stand as intermediaries between demand and supply in the cultural economies, while deploying characteristically informed networking strategies. As such, they react according to their interpretations of their field of practice, while being self-reflective and offering mediation as well as translation of ideas and information (Pratt and Jeffcutt, 2009 p.268).

As stressed, the literature on cultural and creative entrepreneurship stands in clear “contrast to the image of entrepreneurship as an intentionally planned and dramatically staged activity that characterises rationalistic approached to entrepreneurship” while acknowledging the existence of emotional rationalities that are linked to the participants’ identity and thus their practice (Johannisson, 2011 p.136). Cultural “entrepreneurship” (Steyaert, 2007) often lies beyond trivial instrumental, let alone pecuniary motivation, and is related to man’s need to constantly create and recreate his own identity by using his freedom to take responsible action (Johannisson, 2011 p.145). As such, the suggested typology has highlighted the fact that there are different ways of exploring new ideas and leveraging resources for growth (Wilson and Stokes, 2005) and different interpretative knowledge of musical entrepreneurs offer various relative value-added to the local scene of the music economy. Innovations in cultural entrepreneurship can thus be either incremental or radical, depending on the desired and effective impacts of the cultural and musical (inter)-mediation. Moreover, the provided empirical material that insists on ‘local knowledge’ confirms the importance of *in situ* knowledge. Indeed, a common factor among the three types of profile

identified is their reliance on ‘local knowledge’. These findings confirm the “need for entrepreneurs to be both immersed in the culture of the activity system but also, with the help of significant others, to have the opportunity to reflect both critically and individually on what they are doing” (Raffo et al., 2000 p.219).

Drawing on the argument of Pratt and Jeffcutt (2009), my position here is to consider both innovation and creativity in a relative and iterative manner, as effects of their contextuality, of their socially embedded character in time and place as well as in industry. Such an interpretative move “arguably brings innovation closer to the traditional value qualification of creativity, and which brings production closer to consumption” (Pratt and Jeffcutt, 2009 p.267). From this perspective, cultural and creative entrepreneurs intermingle interest in, and knowledge of, consumption and production in the music economy. Indeed, being creative implies a capacity to reconcile and think, through interactive dualities, both the production and the consumption, merging the role of ‘innovator’ and ‘inventor’ and contextualising both individual as well as collective benefits. While being unsatisfied with the existing organisation and condition of production, cultural and creative entrepreneurs act, through a mediated and contextualised knowledge, to change things. In doing so, they take individual risks, which can have consequences for the larger environment in which their practices are embedded. Such an understanding leads me to the conclusion that, although three distinctive profiles may display some form of entrepreneurship in the fields of musical innovation (Pratt and Jeffcutt, 2009 p.373), only the last one, i.e. the hip hop type, can really be considered as radical cultural entrepreneurs. Based on a transcultural ‘thinking’ (Chapter 3), these entrepreneurs offer alternative logics of production, distribution and reception (Chapter 7). As such, they appear to be new actors who pursue different methods and interact with each other differently,

increasing the diversity and potential for creativity and innovation within the entire system of their local music economy (Tschmuck, 2006 p.228).

Therefore, this chapter has introduced the narrative structure of the thesis that departs from 'normative' theses. Indeed, as far as cultural entrepreneurship is concerned, what matters is the interaction of a situated identity and a located practice. As such, my use of the "culturalisation" thesis aims to reclaim this term, in order to reassess the necessary contextualisation and embeddedness of this phenomenon. The gap in the operationalisation of a conceptual framework for West African musical entrepreneurship is thus less a matter of theoretical sophistication, than of engagement with practice. Put differently, accounts of the cognitive and emotional as well as pragmatic and material manifestations of cultural entrepreneurship in the West African music economy have to be captured in the very context in which they are experienced (Johannisson, 2011 p.147). In this sense, my decision to take West African musical entrepreneurship on an economic basis rather than a sociological one (alike Bourdieu or Becker for instance) responds to my focused investigation of the duality of laws and conventions of cultural fields (situated identity) and their specific applications and articulations in a particular context (located practice). Indeed, rather than a general theoretical approach of a social world, the objective of this thesis is to engender a practical intervention in a precise field of theorisation, namely entrepreneurship. This thesis is thus informed by a new narrative structure that is part of the radical methodology developed (Chapter 4) and the reconstitution of knowledge that I am seeking to achieve, one that combines "conceptual innovation, ethical engagement and experimental participation" (Steyaert and Landstrom, 2011 p.131). The iterative necessity of such a narrative first implies that my expectations continually evolve throughout the reconstitution of knowledge I acquire, and second, that the knowledge

is created by participation and not just by observation (Johannisson, 2011 p.146). While theorisation and practice of “entrepreneurship” have too often been kept apart, Chapter 4 stands as my reply to “a general call for situated knowledge originating in dialogues between academics and reflective practitioners” (Johannisson, 2011 p.147). The development of Wenger’s communities of practice as a social space where entrepreneurship is studied allows me to revisit the concept of cultural entrepreneurship and its articulation in the context of the West African music, while it calls for a differentiation of language and logic. Indeed, it requires “singling out the dominant economic discourse as much as opening up for alternative perspectives to conceive entrepreneurial processes” (Steyaert and Katz, 2004 p.186). As far as cultural and creative entrepreneurship is concerned, researchers have been considerably engaging with the former endeavour (singling out economic discourse) but they have done little in opening up alternative perspectives. Nevertheless, we need to develop a more varied discursive repertoire as well as theoretical conceptions and disciplinary anchorages in order to value and safeguard new possibilities brought in by such novel entrepreneurial practices.

Akin to ‘Translation Studies’ thirty years ago, entrepreneurship stands as a “fertile middle space, a little chaotic and unfocused arena, a heterotopic space for varied thinking, a space that can connect to many forms of theoretical thinking and where many thinkers can connect to, a “true” inter-discipline” (Steyaert, 2002 p.8). Entrepreneurship that literally suggests “an-in-between” reassesses the border as the only place where one can be when researching it. Instead of “in-between”, I prefer the idea of the ‘third’ or even “third space²⁷” (Bhabha, 2004); this concept imported from ‘Cultural Studies’ provides “a way to counterbalance the economic and managerial

²⁷ For a detailed discussion of this concept, see Chapter 3.

foundations of entrepreneurship with enough connection to the social sciences and the humanities” (Steyaert and Katz, 2004 p.188-93). As the next chapter introduces (Chapter 3), and as will be further demonstrated in this thesis (Chapter 7), a whole apparatus of critical and poststructuralist approaches is waiting to revise our current conceptions of entrepreneurship studies in order to create a diversity and richness in the thinking and conceiving of entrepreneurship (Steyaert, 2002 p.11-2). The remainder of this thesis thus aims at multiplying entrepreneurship into a more developed multiparadigmatic field, while simultaneously developing an alternative qualitative approach of the phenomenon. As such, Chapter 3 stresses the transcultural dimension of Hip Hop, paving the way to a thesis that continues to experiment with new concepts, methods and applications, for “entrepreneurship is not some absolute value but a practice that needs to be contextualised culturally and socially” (Steyaert, 2002 p.16).

CHAPTER 3

HIP HOP TRANSCULTURAL POLITICS

3.1. INTRODUCTION

This chapter stands as the departure point for my investigations and provides the final conceptual ‘stepping stone’ required to frame the following empirical components of this thesis. In this respect, and beyond the theoretically informed empirical basis offered by Wenger for situating cultural entrepreneurship in the context of the West African music economy, this chapter develops a more varied discursive repertoire to explore the politics of these hip hop entrepreneurs and introduce the transcultural dimension of Hip Hop. Indeed, however useful Wenger’s approach is in terms of counterbalancing the shortcomings of previous models whilst introducing a more grounded perspective on cultural entrepreneurship, it remains short on political and aesthetic considerations. While insisting on the core duality of identity and practice in the constitution of a community, such an approach does not provide the necessary insights into the politics of participants. As such, in order to investigate the political and aesthetic dimensions of an entrepreneurial identity, one needs to go beyond Wenger’s method, while calling for further differentiation of language and logic. This chapter thus explores the specific cultural environment that is Hip Hop, in order to contextualise the productive practices of its West African participants that will be addressed in Chapter 7. The aim of this chapter is to distance myself from any explanatory stance of Hip Hop²⁸ and to favour an exploratory approach that insists on the situatedness of hip hop emergences.

²⁸ By using capital letters for ‘Hip Hop’, I distinguish the ‘transculture’, i.e. the subject in its nominative form, from the adjective, ‘hip hop’ that can be applied to community, entrepreneurship, music, economy, etc.

In this respect, the first part of this chapter is dedicated to a translation of Hip Hop as exemplified by Foucault's concept of "genealogy" (Foucault, 1977), similar to other proposed approaches that challenge binary explanations. Opposed to binary discourses about phenomenon such as globalisation, I highlight how Hip Hop stands as a 'mondialised' expression, a "third space" (Bhabha, 2004) and I situate this movement as a 'transculture', simultaneously marked by singularity and communality, of "borderline" socialities (Bhabha, 2004). In the second part, akin to a concrete interlude, I suggest a particular incursion into Senegalese youth and its postcolonial sociality that situates West African hip hop emergences more generally. In doing so, I illustrate this "liminal" perspective (Nouss, 2005) beyond binaries, which is necessary in order to approach borderline socialities and redefine what it means to live in relation to the borders, to be at the borders. In the third part, I focus on the constitutive performances of hip hop music, one of the aesthetical expressions of this 'transculture'. Understanding Hip Hop as a 'transcultural mediation', I draw on the process of *métissage* in order to formulate hip hop discursive practices as forms of singular *bricolage* (Lévi-Strauss, 1962). Such a perspective allows me to then address the constitutive performances in hip hop music as political actions that displace the borders of common singularities. In conclusion, I echo the subjectivities expressed through hip hop 'transculture' with the contemporary project of political organisation, the one of the "multitude" (Hardt and Negri, 2004; Negri, 2009).

3.2. HIP HOP IN TRANSLATION

3.2.1. On a hip hop genealogy

In this section, I deconstruct the linear and universalist approaches of Hip Hop as a movement, through Foucault's understanding of "genealogy" that distances itself from a strict historiography as well as from any study of the origins (Foucault, 1977). Rather than maintaining a focus on the systematic and particularistic analysis on the origins of this movement, I am interested in the multiple and ongoing expressive, discursive, even body-related praxis and meta-praxis developed through history's accidents, unexpected deviations and unanticipated dispersions. In other words, the "genealogy" of its "descents" (Foucault, 1977). Such a focus postulates a genealogy that is an epistemological project, seeking to subvert the totalitarian nature of globalising discourse regarding Hip Hop. Rather than a single referentiality then, I argue that Hip Hop is multi-polar and multi-referential, while displaying no centrality.

I thus distance myself from previous works on Hip Hop based on race (Forman and Neal, 2004; Neate, 2004; Rose, 2008) or age, (or both) (Kitwana, 2002; Watkins, 2005). Drawing on Chang's contribution (Chang, 2007), I confront the 'age' explanation that sustains that Hip Hop is a contemporary youth culture, and I argue that "generations are fictions"; they are "used in larger struggle over power" and stand as "a way of imposing a narrative" (Chang, 2007 p.1). The explanatory framework that places Hip Hop as a youth culture sounds weak when confronted to the reality of hip hop pioneers whether in USA, France or Senegal, who still actively participate in this

movement, and whose age nowadays vary between forty and over fifty years old²⁹! Besides, the ‘age’ explanation is confronted with subjective and culturally sensitive criteria, distinguishing youth from adulthood. As far as the West African hip hop emergences are concerned, adulthood is less determined by age than it is by the marital status of an individual. Indeed, marriage stands as an integral rite of passage in the adult world, and is conditional to the financial situation of an individual being capable (or not) of providing food and shelter for his own family, and as such, of leaving the familial courtyard and house. Taking a wife is then dependent on having a job, a reality that, as we should see, forces most hip hop participants to remain “in the limbo between childhood and adulthood” (Herson, 2000 p.29).

Furthermore, the racial explanation emerging from the literature is nothing more than a geo-historical framing of Hip Hop as a Black American culture, to be confronted with the actual experiences of Latinos living in American ghettos, of Portuguese or Maghreb immigrant descendents stigmatised in French banlieues, of Algonkin Natives parked in Canadian reserves or even young Africans marginalised in gerontocratic societies. Indeed, the explanation based on race has been held to the current days, despite being exposed to the diversity of hip hop emergences throughout the world, due to an unconditional focus on the origins of Hip Hop. Indeed, early hip hop scholars (Hager, 1984; Toop, 1984; Rose, 1994; Bazin, 1995) agree that Hip Hop was born in the Bronx in the mid-to late 70’s among impoverished Black urban communities.

²⁹ For instance, Didier Awadi from the *Positive Black Soul* (Senegal) born in 1969 has just released a new album, « President d’Afrique »; Imhotep from *IAM* (France), and most of the members of his group were born in 1960 and currently working on their next album; also, GrandMaster Flash, *Furious Five* (USA) is born in 1958 and performed in London on February 10th, 2011. Just to give an indication regarding the generation fiction and the unstable indication given by age, Priss’K, a pioneer female hip hop artist from Ivory Coast, is nicknamed the “Vieille Mère du Hip Hop” (“Hip Hop Old Mama”) and she was born in 1985!

Although they differ in their consideration of the contextual events³⁰, the great majority of these authors point to the geo-historical location of New York City as the origin of the Hip Hop culture. My argument here is that such a geo-historical understanding attests to a single referentiality of Hip Hop. In turn, this approach has led later scholars to consider other appearances of Hip Hop in the world as different appropriations of the original cultural movement based on linear continuities in terms of racial and social geography and history (Bennett, 1999; Mitchell, 2002; Perry, 2004; Basu and Lemelle, 2006).

However, through their references to some cultural essence or essentiality, these approaches suggest a myth of ‘universality’ inherent to Hip Hop that is, I believe, counterproductive to the general understanding of hip hop emergences. This fact has already been touched upon by Chang in his comment on “the end of the American century”, in which he recognised that the “further one got from north America, the greater the dissonance became” (Chang, 2005 p.448). Indeed, in this section of his book, Chang recalls the disastrous experience of the “Black August tour”, in which “an entourage of the cream of ‘conscious rappers’ [from USA] arrived in 2001 to play a concert at the World Conference Against Racism in Durban and a series of dates in South Africa” (Chang, 2005 p.449).

“South Africa’s hip-hop movement had taken root during apartheid in cities like Cape Town and Johannesburg (Gauteng) during the early ‘80s, and helped fuel some of the most dangerous forms of

³⁰ Some of these authors have argued that the USA political context at the end of the 70s, particularly the ‘Reagan era’ and the prominence of neoconservatives should be understood as a precipitating factor in the emergence of Hip Hop as a subculture. Others have considered the birth of Hip Hop as a direct consequence of modern urbanisation through the prism of Robert Moses’ expressways project. From a more economic and housing management perspective, several scholars have maintained that Hip Hop emerged because of the reality of ‘no job’ faced by impoverished communities and the capitalist logic encouraging landlords to leave their buildings to abandonment (if not to fire) and benefit from the insurance (more lucrative than renters). Finally, some have understood the appearance of street gang cultures to be a sociological and cultural explanation of the birth of Hip Hop.

cultural protest of the era. [...] When the Black August crew came to South Africa, local heads hoped for an exchange of ideas and a sharing of stories of struggle. Instead they came away feeling snubbed. [...] Onstage, it began to look to them as if some of the American rappers had developed a Moses complex, dispensing vague pieties about loving the motherland, and stamping across the stage to lecture the crowd about racism and reparations in the United States. [...] The irony was that the Black August rappers were among the most politically educated and committed of commercially successful North American artists.” (Chang, 2005 p.249-50)

As the dissonance of the Black August tour reminds us, Hip Hop is always embedded in the context from which it emerges. I can here refer to the polyphonic conception of the carnevalesque narration of Bakhtin, where “there is no centre that dictates meaning [...]. Singularities all express themselves freely and together through their dialogue create the common narrative structures” (Bakhtine, 1970; quoted in Hardt and Negri, 2004 p.249). Put differently, wherever Hip Hop emerges, another ‘world’, another *mondialité* is created, having for reference its very local innovation. Indeed, neither global phenomena, nor local or “glocal”, hip hop emergences are ‘mondialised’ inscriptions, diverse and multiple, situated and singular.

3.2.2. Mondialisation: beyond binaries

Before going any further, I shall frame this chapter with the concept of *mondialisation* in opposition to the one of globalisation. As such, I draw on the contributions of Nougues, who introduces the concept of *mondialisation*, in contrast with ‘globalisation’; the former refers to the human dimension of an inhabited world, while the latter refers to the concreteness of a soulless economic and material reality (Nougues, 2005 p.76). Indeed, the French language allows such a distinction with the word *monde* that simultaneously stands for “world” and “people”, and *mondialisation* can thus be read as the simultaneous process of their emergence. Through this concept, I oppose the

recurrent binaries inherent in the dialogical discourses about globalisation, a ‘mondialised’ approach that goes beyond centres and borders, identity and difference, to offer a perspective of multiple diversity.

Framed by the generalised interconnections of the contemporary social forms, discourses around globalisation have regularly proceeded from dualisms. Indeed, they involve references to the “First” and “Third Worlds”, to exchanges and differences, to “universal inclusiveness” of distinctions and oppositions, usually formulated in the realm of political economy (Terdiman, 2002). Globalisation expresses the “inter-cultural” and the “transnational” intensification of spaces, events, problems, conflicts and biographies (Beck, 2000 p.73). Foremost, globalisation is conceived as a dialectical process, necessarily thought of in a dialogical manner with localisation: the nation-state versus the global civil society, the global circulation of commodities and their local appropriation, particularisms versus universalisms, national identity versus global solidarity, global unity versus local alterity, the mobile versus the fixed, authenticity versus in-authenticity, etc.

In his essay *Plaidoyer pour un monde métis*, Nouss invites the reader to go beyond binary thinking, namely the centre/border thinking and to adopt a “liminal approach” that not only disregards the centre, but also critically questions the borders. A “liminal thinking” defines identity not in relation to a centre, but in its relations with the borders that separate it from the other, in this way preventing any essentialisation of identity or difference. Displacing the border, in other words, allows a shift from a territorial logic to a transterritorial dynamic (Nouss, 2005 p.51-2). A “liminal thinking” redefines what it means, “to be at the border” and responds to the postmodern critical movement that denies any centrality and affirms the periphery against the centre, rendering by the

same token, centrality to the periphery. Rather, a “liminal thinking” suggests an ontology of the border that is the exact contrary of an ontological border: an “ensemble of specificities” that becomes differential, in perpetual movement, and not an ensemble of fixed differences (Nouss, 2005 p.58).

Border is then a *seuil, limen* (“threshold”) rather than a barrier, a tangent rather than a line of separation, a “third space” (Bhabha, 2004) that is not really an “in-between”: a ternary thinking does not stand on the configuration of three elements. It accepts the dualism of human representations to displace them to another location, a “third space” where they will no longer confront each other, but where they will meet and open each other to every possible(s) (Nouss, 2005 p.62). Indeed, a ternary thinking, a “liminal thinking” illuminates the passage in the politico-cultural lexicon, from “Third World” to “third space” (Nouss, 2005 p.73). The ‘third’ is plural, diverse, alive and multiple and allows for another sensibility than the reigning binary that still blocks the development of new being and thinking emergences. As Nouss puts it, such a “third space” then recalls the possibility of the “and”, of multi-belonging, rather than binary cuttings of hyphenated identities. A “liminal thinking” that confronts any essentialisation with a *pluri-essentialism* (Nouss, 2005 p.44) similar to Morin’s *unitas multiplex* who addresses the challenge of thinking of Europe, that lies in the difficulty of thinking of the multiple in the singular and the singular in the multiple (Morin, 1990 p.24; quoted in Nouss, 2002 p.111). A ‘mondialised’ approach thus calls for a ternary logic, a third space of thinking and apprehending and allows a conception of Hip Hop as an ‘ensemble of specificities’, of singularities. Applying Nouss’s “liminal thinking” to the comprehension of Hip Hop, I situate it as a ‘transculture’.

3.2.3. Hip Hop as a ‘transculture’

Borrowing from the Cuban ethnomusicologist, Ortiz, I argue that Hip Hop – rather than a subculture determined by social given such as race, class or age – stands as a ‘transculture’. “Transculturation” first appears in Ortiz’s *Cuban Counterpoint: Tobacco and Sugar* in order to describe the composite character of the culture of his island (Ortiz, 1995). In the author’s words, “transculturation” expresses “the highly varied phenomena that have come about in Cuba as a result of the extremely complex transmutations of culture” (Ortiz, 1995 p.98). This term designates the adjustment of immigrants to their new status through a painful process of negotiation between elements of their previous culture and those of the new one. As has been stressed, this notion was commonly adopted in order to describe South-American societies and has undergone a new discursive turn in Quebec and Canada since the ‘80s, in order to describe the identity-bursting of contemporary subjects who no longer recognise themselves within the references of national identification (Nouss, 2002 p.103).

Distinguishing between multicultural, intercultural and hybridity, Nouss understands the “transcultural” as “paths of passage” where elements pass from a culture to another. It is a path of passage that allows such a phenomenon, contrary to hybridity that stands as the production of a “settled” third entity after the meeting of two or more cultural components. In strict terms, the “transcultural” is located in the “mediation” and designates the “communality” or the generalised adoption of cultural forms (Nouss, 2005 p.25-7). In other words, the “transcultural” has the capacity of not melting its components in a fusion-like ensemble, but to allow them to meet without dissolving their specificities (Nouss, 2005 p.41) From his perspective, the “transcultural” stands as a collective phenomenon, supposing a median space that

encourages “operations of deterritorialisation and reterritorialisation” (Nouss, 2002 p.102-4).

Borrowing from Ortiz’s concept of “transculturation” and Nouss’s interpretation of the “transcultural”, I understand Hip Hop as a ‘transculture’, i.e. as a culture existing in a permanent openness, a culture that exists by itself, but can only be expressed through other cultures. Borrowing from the ‘Surrealists’ (Breton and Soupault, 1971), the “hermit crab” is a useful metaphor that exemplifies my purpose. Like this small marine crustacean, which does not own its habitat but creates it from empty seashells in order to survive and grow, Hip Hop requires another cultural ‘habitat’ to live and develop as a culture. Wherever Hip Hop emerges, this ‘transculture’ displays, through its three artistic expressions – the dance³¹, the painting³² and music (DJing³³ and MCing³⁴) –, an original translation. Here, the translating relation participates in elaborating and understanding Hip Hop as a ‘transculture’. A translation is a proclamation that necessarily involves a mediation: beyond the transfer of a volatile message, translating means that something can be said in this language and in the other (Nouss, 2005 p.42-3). Translating reveals what all the languages have in common beyond their formal or historical relationships: each language is one, singular and participates in what goes beyond it. Translation is a ‘transcultural operation’, a third language, a third space, open and real.

From this perspective, Hip Hop is a ‘transculture’ insofar that it stands, each time and place, as a singular translation of a commonality. The latter, I argue, is inscribed in the diverse and multiple receptacles of social marginalisation, of “borderline condition”

³¹ Various techniques of ‘breakdancing’ such as *smurf*, *hype*, *double dutch*, *boogaloo*.

³² ‘*Graffiti*’ and ‘*tags*’

³³ Includes *scratch* and *sampling* techniques.

³⁴ Includes *rap* and *human beatbox*.

(Bhabha, 2004). Indeed, my argument is that hip hop emergences disrupt a situation of borders, of margins whose relationships situating social and economic practices are especially manifest in the city. As such, through his concepts of “urban ethos” and its “limits of possibility”, Krims argues that the paradox of contemporary urban change stands in “the simultaneous expansiveness and closure of the city” (Krims, 2007 pp. xxxiii; 7-15). Nevertheless, I insist that the urban location, race, age or class alike, should not be understood as essential, but as contextual. Indeed, a borderline sociality can be recognised in the sense of spatially-organised power relations that recall the situated nature and layering of peripherality (Pilkington and Johnson, 2003 p.261). From this perspective, I argue that Hip Hop constitutes a phenomenon localised on the borders, on the margins of an assumed sociality and often urbanity. Hip Hop is thus this ‘path of passage for a borderline sociality’: this ‘transculture’ of social marginalisation is a collective phenomenon. However, for each emergence, the borderline position in the society is distinctively situated. How this ‘transculture’ is situated in Francophone West Africa and more particularly in Senegal is what I now turn to.

3.3. WEST AFRICAN INTERLUDE: ON SENEGALESE POSTCOLONIAL SOCIALITY

In order to understand how Hip Hop emerges as one of the rare urban cultures common to the whole West African region, I situate its initial emergence in Senegal, where it first disrupted the social turmoil of Dakar’s youth. Indeed, in Senegal, as well as in West Africa, the borderline position previously described has invariably and specifically affected the youngest generations living in the city, in economic, political as well as cultural terms. Taking into consideration the paucity of information gathered

on this issue (Biaya, 2000 p.13; Sommers, 2010 p.2), I first refer to two distinctive metropolitan areas – namely Ouagadougou and Dakar – to illustrate the economic situation of West African young citizens. In Dakar, the population is essentially young with more than 50% of the population being under 20 years old (Agence Nationale de Statistique et de la Démographie, 2007 p.49-50); similarly, Burkina Faso displays an average age estimated at 21.8 years old (Institut National de la Statistique et de la Démographie, EA/QUIBB 2005 p.1). As the table below demonstrates, despite the geographical and historical frontiers, the urban sociality faced by Dakar youth resonates with what the youth of Ouagadougou lives and experiences.

Urban Unemployment	Active population currently not working / occupied (%)	Unemployed population with university degree (%)
Ouagadougou³⁵	18.2	26*
Dakar³⁶	11.7	23.5

Table 3.1: On the ‘borderline urbanity’ of West African youth

Indeed, the West African (urban) society is subjected to a generational segregation where young people are victims of a logic of exclusion based on the tradition of respect to the eldest. This logic which implies obedience, reserve and often silence, has marginalised them from the public and social sphere as well as from the private and familial sphere (Diouf, 1999 p.42). In this framework, young urban people have been confronted with an extreme precarisation of their living conditions (Biaya, 2000 p.13). When exploring urban youth and street culture in Africa, Biaya concluded that this

³⁵ Institut National de la Statistique et de la Démographie

³⁶ Agence Nationale de Statistique et de la Démographie. *Année 2006 p.55*

urban youth “belonged to sacrificed generations, with no future, and in total contradiction with the announced objectives and discourses of the government”; a youth living and evolving against the state and their urban society that both marginalise them (Biaya, 2000 p.22). Certainly, in West Africa, Hip Hop and its ‘transcultural sociality’ has emerged from a translocal situation of marginalisation that has affected the urban youth, who have experienced persisting institutional violence. Below, one of my Senegalese informants comments on the borderline situation of the youth and their conflicting relations with the dominant official urban sociality.

“To be a young person in Senegal is really to be cut-off from a lot of things that are happening. [...] But they have been educated that way. The state made that youth think that way. The state does everything it can to put people to sleep and most of all the young people. [...] We know that we will never get anything from the state and whatever we would ask the state will not give it to us. First, because the state does not understand what is an urban culture, worse what is the hip hop culture. They think that we are the worst enemies of the state because throughout our texts we have always criticised the state.” **(Interview #23; Music maker and worker, Dakar)**

This quote addresses the conflicting and mutually suspicious relations between the government and a disillusioned youth, who lack confidence in any future perspective and are stuck in an awaiting attitude. In Francophone West Africa in general and in Senegal in particular, the postcolonial sociality has been marked by ideals of panafricanism such as Senghor’s *Negritude* (see Chapter 5 for detailed discussion) that were founded on the one hand on the territorialisation of identity, and on the other, on the racialisation of geography (Mbembé, 2000 p.30). A core idea recurrently expressed was the re-enchantment of tradition based on an dialogical imaginary that rested on intellectual references both to the local and the global; what Senghor refers to as the cultural “rendez-vous of giving and receiving” (Mbembé, 2000 p.28). African critics,

dominated by a Marxist and nationalist political economy as well as by a native-oriented pulse, were then inscribing the quest for political identity in a temporality purely instrumental and conjectural. However, the disjunctions between economic, political, cultural and symbolic territorialities have since accelerated and it is now at the “interstices” that historical action takes place (Mbembé, 2000 p.43). This historical action clearly distinguishes between the cohorts of individuals born before or at the edge of independences, and the “children of the crisis” (Biaya, 2000 p.29; Biaya, 2002 p.350).

Social disjunctions were mostly revealed in the city that had become a policed space, ordered for the needs of social control, touristic merchandising and display of the cultural identity of the state (Diouf, 2002 p.269). In Senegal, the period 1980-2000 saw a political turn where new socialities and urbanities began to emerge from social disjunctions (see Table 3.2 for details). The contextual situation of these disjunctions lies in the succession of Senghor by Abdoulaye Diouf to the Presidency of Senegal (1981), in the difficult democratic transition and the contested elections in 1983, and in an extremely unfavourable economic conjuncture that was maintained until the 1988 elections. Between these two dates, the *Sopi*³⁷ and its violent urban riots consecutive to the pre-campaign, campaign and 1988 elections as well as the *Set Setal*³⁸ – a youth and local movement centred on the neighbourhood in opposition to national movements – emerged in a quasi permanent ambience of university crisis (Diouf, 2002 p.264). These social disjunctions were thus expressed through a strong citizenry mobilisation that

³⁷ *Sopi* means « change » in *Wolof*. It is the slogan of the Senegalese Democratic Party (PDS).

³⁸ *Set Setal* means “clean and make clean” in *Wolof*. This movement was considered as a symbolic response to the tragic border dispute with neighbouring country, Mauritania in 1989, that resulted in a massacre – carried out in Senegal primarily by gangs of economically disenfranchised youth – of thousands of Mauritians in Senegal and Senegalese in Mauritania (B. Herson. *Fat Beats, Dope Rhymes & Thug Lives: Youth, Politics and Hip-Hop Culture in Dakar p.18*). For a detailed analysis of the *Set Setal*, see M. Diouf. *Des cultures urbaines entre traditions et mondialisations*; M. Diouf. *Urban Youth and Senegalese Politics: Dakar 1988-1994* And M. Diouf. *Fresques murales et écritures de l'histoire. Le Set/Setal à Dakar*

was led by the youngest urban generations, pupils and students. Indeed, the youth was then the first social group to have manifested, in a determined and often violent way, their hostilities towards the reconfigurations of the nationalist movement and to suggest other modes of being and appearing (Diouf, 2002 p.262).

Although wall frescos stood as the most spectacular manifestation of the *Set Setal*, *mbalax* could also be identified as the specific soundtrack of this movement. As such, Youssou N'Dour's famous track *Birima* released at the end of 1996, in a difficult political as well as economic conjuncture, underlined the actual identity reformulation of the urban youth. In this song, he sings the story of this Dionysian character, prince of party and wine. The messages being clear: on the one hand, it distanced itself from the technocratic power cherished by President Diouf and the ruling class; on the other, it signalled a variation in the modernising *griot* practices (Biaya, 2002 p.347). As has been argued, *Set Setal* and its music, the *mbalax*, marked the end of a century, the end of Léopold Sédar Senghor and his dream of a Euro-African culture, and inaugurated a Senegalese modernity that was plural. Based on constant mixing and remixing, the political moment of this movement was reached with the realisation of the political change and the arrival of a new segment of the *establishment* (Abdoulaye Wade's *Sopi*) in power (in 2000) (Diouf, 2002 p.276).

However, the *Set Setal* never questioned the cultural construction of the ruling class, only displaced its poles of reference, from neo-colonial intellectual (President Senghor) or administrative (President Diouf) referents, to *Wolof* and Muslim heritages. In other words, neither the *mbalax* nor the *Set Setal* were ever capable of reflecting the deepening of the economic crisis and the emergence of new social actors; the poor, marginalised and revolted, claiming for new socialities. In this situational context, an

initial West African hip hop emergence, carried by the Senegalese ‘generation’ *Boul Faalé*³⁹, appeared among the contemporary borderline socialities that could not find their existence, neither on the nationalist project nor on the reformatting enterprises of the *Sopi* and *Set Setal* (Diouf, 2002 p.278). Indeed, in the ‘90s, a cultural movement, whose main actors were once again the youngest urban generation, boomed as the privileged vector of youth affirmation, with a new ethos as well as new figures of success (Havard, 2001 p.64).

Although the hip hop ‘affiliation’ with the *Boul Faalé* generation is not to be questioned, the most prominent figure of this cultural movement, Mohammed Ndao alias Tyson, did not belong to the Senegalese hip hop emergence but to traditional wrestling. While developing the image of a young person having succeeded thanks to his own work (being self-trained) and without paying attention to the prejudices expressed by the elders in the profession, Tyson sent a strong message to a youth that aspired to free itself from local socialities prescribed by secular traditions and authoritarian nationalist framing. *Boul Faalé* soon became hyper-identified to Tyson, who allowed a political and commercial recuperation of this slogan during the 2000 presidential election in favour of the Socialist Party (PS)⁴⁰ (Havard, 2001 p.67-8). The hegemony of the *Boul Faalé* generation was thus shattered by this election campaign, in which Tyson appeared as a treacherous leader to its natural supporters, the youth (Diouf, 2002 p.282). The argument however is that despite such a political cooptation provoked by this *Boul Faalé* emblematic character, the values, attitudes and

³⁹ *Boul Faalé* means “don’t worry”, “never mind” in *Wolof*. It is the title of the first musical cassette released by the Senegalese hip hop pioneer group, *Positive Black Soul* in 1994, in which the group formulated a vehement discourse denouncing the corruption of the PS (Diouf’s political party) then in power. The song entitled in the same way as the cassette met an incredible popular success and became the first hymn of the new *Boul Faalé* generation.

⁴⁰ The Socialist Party (PS) led by President Diouf was well aware of its unpopularity among the youngest generation and hoped to re-conquer this part of the population in this way.

aspirations that were incarnated in this movement survived and evolved, while being diffused, especially by the participants in the Senegalese hip hop emergence.

	1980-1990	1990-2000	2000
Political Party in power	Socialist Party (PS)	Socialist Party (PS)	Senegalese Democratic Party (PDS)
Popular Politics	<p style="text-align: center;">SOPI</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⇒ General popular desire for ‘change’ reflecting a “crisis of values” ⇒ Peak expression in late 80s urban riots ⇒ Slogan of PDS ⇒ Refusal of directions imposed to democratisation process of Senegalese society by political and social institutions (Diouf, 2002 p.265) 		<p>Consecration of SOPI with the election of A. Wade to the Presidency of Senegal and the consequent ‘change’ of political party in power</p>
On Events	<p>1983: Contested Legislative Elections</p> <p>1988: Troubled Presidential Elections</p>	<p>1994: Release of hip hop track, <i>Boul Faalé</i></p> <p>1996: Release of <i>mbalax</i> track, <i>Birima</i></p>	<p>Presidential Elections</p>
On People	<p style="text-align: center;">“GENERATION 88”⁴¹</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⇒ Main actor of SOPI ⇒ Production of distinct references and emergences of new political subjects ⇒ Focus on urban modernity rather than ‘national’ modernity ⇒ Deconstruction of socialist version and nationalist memory 		

⁴¹ “Generation 88” stands in reference to the year 1988 as a symbolic date, when a whole world collapsed, with its system of values, its founding referents, its spaces and mechanisms of regulation and negotiation. Indeed, 1988 stands as a moment of rupture during which new actors emerged, inscribing themselves in the social agenda through their capacity of producing a discourse that reflected social reality. For a detailed discussion of this issue, see A. Diaw. *Les intellectuels entre mémoire nationaliste et représentations de la modernité* p.567-71

Popular Movement	<i>Set Setal</i>	<i>Boul Faalé</i>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⇒ Realist insubordination of the youth ⇒ Focus on the neighbourhood / reformatting enterprises ⇒ Collective construction of local memory ⇒ Reflection of political (and educational) crisis ⇒ Soundtrack: <i>mbalax</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⇒ Nihilist defiance of the youth ⇒ Focus on self-accomplishment / self-emancipation ⇒ Individual construction of trans-local memory ⇒ Reflection of social (and economic) crisis ⇒ Soundtrack: hip hop music 	<p style="text-align: center;">Decline of <i>Boul Faalé</i> movement through the cooptation of its prominent figure by PDS</p>

Table 3.2: On the new urbanities of Senegalese social disjunctions

Looking at the Senegalese postcolonial sociality reveals how social disjunctions were expressed through a strong citizenry mobilisation that was regularly led by the youngest urban generations, rejecting their ascribed sociality by the political power and the economic situation, as well as the submissive prescriptions of the tradition (Diop et al., 2000 p.159). This is the contextual situation from which an initial West African Hip Hop emerged among a Senegalese urban youth looking for a “path of passage” (Nouss, 2005), a ‘transculture’ where their borderline sociality could be formulated. As such, hip hop music became an artistic path of self-creation, expressed through particular procedures and aesthetics, to which new forms of sociability and cultural expression were attached, in complete rupture with the dominant urban culture (Biaya, 2000 p.23).

3.4. MÉTISSAGES OF HIP HOP MUSIC

Understanding Hip Hop as a ‘transculture’ allows for the recognition of this movement as an ‘ensemble of singularities’, a mediation allowing a collective phenomenon. Hip Hop is this ‘transcultural mediation’, which is not an ‘in-between’ but a “third space” (Bhabha, 2004; Nouss, 2005), a “path of passage” (Nouss, 2005), a constitutive location permitting singular action. Through the example of its musical expression, the aforementioned action stands as the focus of this section, a productive action that comes under the process of *métissage*. What is of interest as far as *métissage* is concerned, is that this process (neither a condition nor a state) escapes any norms and stands as a singular experience; the process of *métissage* displays a singular fate, the fate of a singularity (Nouss, 2005 p.31). It is mobile and constantly becoming; it uses transcultural mediation but it is not attached to it. *Métissage* is the lived possibility of belonging to multiple singularities, of jumping from one to another, and another, alike Carroll’s *Alice* who can stand on one side and the other of the mirror (Nouss, 2005 p.28-9). Put differently, it is not about resting on what one is, but aiming at what one could be, both the singular and multiple, indicative and conditional. As Nouss puts it, the *métissage* comes under Lévi-Strauss’s ‘*bricolage*’ (Lévi-Strauss, 1962): while the erudite is preoccupied with and submitted to structures, the ‘*bricoleur*’ trifles with structures in order to construct other realities (Nouss, 2005 p.33). In this section, contrary to a traditional ethnomusicologist approach that focuses on the relationships between musical production, reception and the society from which it emerges, I am interested in the individual self-creation process of a ‘mondialised’, ‘transcultural’ sociality, under the constitutive action of *métissage* displayed in hip hop music.

3.4.1. Hip hop music as a form

Hip hop music comes under *métissage* in that it can be apprehended as a ‘form’, never settled; a *métisse* form that moves from a singularity to another. Indeed, hip hop music is like the choreographic form, open to the becoming of the body rather than the imposed figure in gymnastic or skating competitions (Nouss, 2005 p.42). Rather than a concept or an object, hip hop music stands as a system of communication, a type of speech which is “dissociable” from its content: a “formalised dynamism, a “form-force”, i.e. a form which stands as a totality neither set nor stable (Zumthor, 1984 p.15). In other words, hip hop music is a ‘form’ in the sense developed and applied by Barthes to a “myth”. Barthes stresses that a myth is “a mode of signification, a form” and, as such, I understand that hip hop music “can be a myth provided it is conveyed by a discourse” (Barthes, 1993 p.109). Therefore, the hip hop musical genre is vast and encompasses a multiplicity of discursive practices⁴² inscribed in various social, political, economic, geographical or linguistic contexts. For instance, the Senegalese emergence displays a hip hop musical form that is far from being uniform as Niang schematically pointed out. There is the “hardcore” form that describes the most radical groups; the “cool” or “soft” form that refers to an emphasis on themes such as love; and a third form that mixes the two (Niang, 2006 p.181). I argue that beyond these three tendencies, there are multiple other forms of hip hop music located in the Senegalese emergence. Indeed, hip hop music is a ‘form’ whose substance is open to any and every discursive orientation of a fantasist or real singularity. As far as Barthes’s “myth” or hip hop music are concerned, “the form does not suppress the

⁴² *Conscious Rap, Dirty South, Political Rap, East Coast, West Coast, Crunk, Midwest Rap, Hardcore Rap, Gangsta Rap, Jazz Rap, Street Rap, Mainstream Rap, Old School, Pimp Rap, Pop Rap...* all of which are NOT mutually exclusive – for a glimpse into each genre, please refer to the following Wikipedia entry http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_hip_hop_genres.

meaning, it only impoverishes it, it puts it at a distance, [and] it holds it at one's disposal" (Barthes, 1993 p.109).

As such, *bricolage* is inherent to hip hop music as a 'form'. I immediately recall the event where I discovered, to my great surprise, that a hip hop artist and *beatmaker* in Ouagadougou was listening to some songs of Billie Holiday. Being one of my favourite jazz artists I could only mention how touched I was that we had similar 'other' musical tastes. Astonished he replied: "Actually, I am just searching for some inspiration for a *beat!*" Indeed, *sampling* is a musical technique which implies the composition of an original instrumental *beat* through the appropriation of bits of musical events, i.e. through the selection and combination of parts of pre-recorded songs (Shusterman, 1995 p.273). *Sampling* transforms the entire approach to music-making, whereby musicians' consumption of new technologies – in terms of taste and choice – has become implicated in their musical practices at the most fundamental level (Théberge, 1997 p.198-200). "Technological imagination" (Huysen, 1986) can be deployed at an unprecedented scale, allowing for the hip hop *bricoleur* to express an individual singularity and a subjective commonality.

As most alternative popular music⁴³, hip hop music has been commonly perceived as a non-intellectual discordant noise which de-emphasises and largely excludes harmony and melody, in favour of beats and rhythms. As such, first emerging as an improvisational music, it emphasises "performance rather than composition, creation rather than interpretation and spontaneity rather than formality" (Smith, 1997 p.516). But beyond this, coming under the *métissage*, hip hop music is an aesthetics that violates traditional norms of artistic musical creation: it trifles with these normative

⁴³ I am here referring to jazz, rock'n'roll, or punk for instance, in their early years.

frameworks just like the *bricoleur* with his/her structures. These aesthetic infractions lie in the performance of the DJ that is “composed by appropriating bits of musical events”, “selecting and combining parts of pre-recorded songs to produce a new soundtrack” (Shusterman, 1995 p.273) as well as in the one of the MC who – between spoken words and singing, combining poetic devices with argotic, vernacular slang – perverts artistic genres and traditions. For the latter, I can refer to the singularity of the *Boul Faalé* verbal expression created by the Senegalese urban ‘generation’. Indeed, a *Boul Faalé* language has been identified through the emergence of an “approximative” *Wolof* that incorporates English, French and Arabic words and expressions while proceeding to a diversion and perversion of the traditional Senegalese language (Havard, 2001 p.70; Niang, 2006 p.177).

3.4.2. Performing hip hop music

The *bricolage* at stake in hip hop music puts forward the performative process of constitution that is at play in this aesthetics and underlines how hip hop music speaks to and through the body. The hip hop musical genre can be classified among what may be considered as the oldest form of music, i.e. vocal music. The primacy of the human voice here is particularly relevant, as “the voice, because of its physiological basis and its communicative functions, is a primary instrument for emotional expression” (Scherer, 1995 p.246). Opened onto an exterior towards which it aspires, through its very agency, the voice appears as a “wish-to-speak (*vouloir-dire*) and a desire for existence” (Zumthor, 1984 p.25). Therefore, making music and especially vocal music, can become a way of not only expressing ideas but also of genuinely living them (Smith, 1997 p.522). Here, I argue that when engaging in discursive performances, the MC offers an oral expression that gives primacy to the rhythm and the prosody in the

semantic. Indeed, hip hop music belongs to the field of orality that can be defined as the integration of the discourse in the body and in the voice, and of the body and the voice in the discourse (Meschonnic, 1995). Meschonnic invites us to think a “form-subject” specifically through poetics: to think of a “form-subject” is to think of language as a form of life, to think of the political and social subject (Meschonnic, 1995 p.21). Understanding the voice as the historical location of poetics (Meschonnic, 1982 p.289), Meschonnic reminds that our “mouth is full of body⁴⁴” (Meschonnic, 1982 p.661-2) and as such, the fundamental link between poetics and orality stands in the *historicité* of the discourses (Meschonnic, 1982 p.691).

“The poet is he who finds everything by losing everything in the act of writing⁴⁵” (Meschonnic, 1982 p.670)

The voice stands as the metaphor of the subject, symbol of its “most interior originality” (Meschonnic, 1982 p.294). The performances of the MC thus stand as a “writing of the voice” (*écriture de la voix*) (Rubin, 2004) that gives way to a semantic phenomenon, an emotional translation. As such, the voice is an “internal plural”, a “simultaneity” (Meschonnic, 1982 p.292), an “infinite diversity” (Rubin, 2004 p.9) in which bodies and emotions, the actual ‘real’, in other words, pierces through the symbolic (Rubin, 2004 p.15). Rather than a reference to the reality of the artist, in the discursive performance of the MC, it is the actual individual that is given. This “gesture of language”, this “performativity” rises as an indexed meaning where the semantic precedes the semiotic: it is “organic” (Kristeva, 1969). Indeed, in hip hop music, poetics lie before the discourse as well as in the words employed by this mode

⁴⁴ This is my translation and a shorter version of the original text: “On a du corps plein la bouche. [...] Le critère du corps est la théorie du langage, la poétique à l’oeuvre dans un texte.” H. Meschonnic. *Critique du rythme: anthropologie historique du langage* p.661-2

⁴⁵ This is my translation of the original text: “Le poète est celui qui, écrivant à corps perdu, écrit à corps retrouvé” Ibid. p.670

of expression. This common singularity of mind and body in hip hop discursive practices is illustrated by the extract below, from the track, *Toute une vie* of the Cameroonian group, Negrissim', (from their album *La Vallée des Rois*) where the MCs mix French and English, with traditional African references to the 'elders' (*les Anciens*).

“I know where I’m going, and where I’m coming from / Young African with a microphone in hand / You want to know why I rap all day long / Young African with a microphone in hand / I have the science of lyrics that comes from the elders / Young African with a microphone in hand / [...] It’s life that remains hard to stomach for me / [...] It’s in my blood, [...] Spilled blood that spreads on each verse⁴⁶” (Negrissim', 2009)

Orality and spatiality are inseparable and such a spatialisation proceeds through a singular body, that places the individual voice and reveals by the same token that the myth is a truth of desire stronger than ones of philology (Meschonnic, 1982 p.150). Indeed, as this quote points out, there is a hip hop ‘transcultural myth’, inspired by the multiple borderline situations, where the hero has to struggle in order to survive. However, this common myth and its poetics are revealed through the positioned, historicised singular discourse of an individual’s body and voice whose “life remains hard to stomach”. The action of talking then, this “science of the lyrics”, is situated “in his blood”: in other words, the MC lives “from” the language and “in” the language, as Meschonnic was suggesting for the poet Celan (Meschonnic, 1982 p.291). ‘Writing his voice’, organically performing his discourse, his “truth of desire” uncover the “form-subject” of “a young African with a microphone in hand”.

⁴⁶ This is my translation of the original text: “Je sais où je vais, et d’où je viens/ Jeune Africain, microphone dans la main / Tu veux savoir pourquoi je rappe du soir au matin / Jeune Africain, microphone dans la main / J’ai la science des lyrics qui me vient des Anciens / Jeune Africain, microphone dans la main / [...] C’est la vie qui me reste au travers de la gorge [...] J’ai ça dans le sang, [...] Du sang versé qui se répand sur chaque verset” Negrissim'. *Toute une vie*

However, hip hop music is characterised by the performances not only of the MC⁴⁷ but also of the Disc-Jockey (DJ). The DJ or the musical conceiver – in order to distinguish this character from the nightclub animator whom (s)he has dissociated himself from through the years – also generates a powerful rhythmic environment (on which the MC can inscribed his voice, his own rhythm and *flow*) with the aim of moving the bodies of the crowd through his *beat* (Rubin, 2003). As Shusterman correctly puts it, hip hop music when ‘moving’ the crowd, challenges the whole mind/body opposition and insists that “bodily movement and impassionate feeling are not the enemies of cognition but often necessary aids to it, that cognition includes more than what is conveyed by propositional content, and that non-propositional forms of cognition can often create the context necessary for properly understanding certain claims of the propositional knowledge” (Shusterman, 1995 p.278). Similarly to the MC subject then, I maintain that the DJ, with his/her techniques of instrumental *sampling* and programmed rhythm can also ‘write his voice’ in his performance, and produces an ‘organic *beat*’ where again, the semantic precedes the semiotic.

Furthermore, *sampling*, the very technique of hip hop music creation, is always localised and embedded in the context of its emergence, and as such, it is constantly informed by the *historicité* of the Disk-Jockey (DJ). To illustrate this point, I can refer to the United States, where hip hop artists from the West Coast sample tracks of local artists such as George Clinton, while East coast artists rather tend to sample tracks of James Brown. Following the same logic, West African hip hop artists – like the Senegalese Daddy Bibson who samples tracks of Oumar Pène or Baobab – sample tracks of Baaba Maal, Salif Keita, of *sabax*, or of *kora*. *Sampling* as a new technique

⁴⁷ Although the MC initially played a more entertaining role in this musical landscape where s/he was simply introducing the DJ to the crowd, I argue that the MC’s part became predominant in the musical creation, evolving from ‘Master of Ceremony’ to ‘Master of Composition’.

allows, in other words, not only to pay homage and tribute to previous musical artists (this “technological imagination” I referred to earlier) but also to develop a new knowledge based from the records (Rose, 1994 p.79), while making the technology do things that it is not supposed to. Through their alternative appropriation of the new technologies available in music production, hip hop artists have acquired new forms of knowledge and new concepts of musical sound that are quite unlike traditional forms of knowledge and practice associated with musical theory, performance and composition. This form of ‘technological virtuosity’ is in turn encouraged by a technology (digital synthesisers, sequencers and drums machines) allowing for an independent, solitary, singular production whereby it has become possible for an individual to perform all the roles necessary to make a successful recording (Théberge, 1997 p.222).

Considering how hip hop music is shaped by and articulated through the advanced reproduction equipment (Rose, 1994 p.71), it is worthwhile putting in parallel the technological context of emergence of hip hop music with the one of the other most popular urban musical genres in Senegal, *mbalax*. *Mbalax* artists, like most of ‘world music’, were traditionally accompanied by a live band of instrumentalists. Contrary to the sound of *mbalax* that needs to be adapted to different audiences, hip hop music grew with a ‘sound’ culture⁴⁸ offering an already translated creation. With the fusion of instrument and recording devices, traditional local networks of session musicians became less of a determining factor in the constitution of musical ‘sounds’. In this context, a ‘hip hop sound’ emerged, a ‘form’ necessarily singular and plural,

⁴⁸ While previous generations were speaking of a particular ‘style’ of playing or composing music, since the early 1960s musicians as well as their critics and audiences, spoke more and more of developing a unique ‘sound’. The introduction of such a term is indicative of the changing technologies of musical production and its impact on a complete system of production involving the organisation of musical social and technical means. See P. Théberge. *Any sound you can imagine : making music/consuming technology* p193

subjective and full of its “technological imagination”. Multi-polar in its expression, demonstrating no referential centrality, the hip hop sound does not require further adaptation to be grasped by foreign audiences. Unlike other popular urban musical genres such as *mbalax*, which are globally recognised as ‘world music’, hip hop music⁴⁹, in its multiple *historicités*, appears as an already ‘translated’ musical creation and thus stands as a *métisse* form for singular trajectories. Indeed, hip hop music has become a ‘mondialised myth’ that integrates the spatialised and historicised individual body in its discourse. In doing so, it reminds us that a borderline situation is not synonymous with subordination. On the contrary, as we shall now see, this holds considerable implications as far as ‘political actions’ are concerned.

3.5. ON HIP HOP POLITICS

This section explores how the musical practices in Hip Hop, the myths and poetics of its distinctive popular music, interact with and inform alternative political configurations and redefinitions. Although I do maintain that hip hop music remains a ‘form’ open to any and every singularity, for the sake of my political argument, I want to distinguish two broad tendencies in hip hop discursive practices, akin to Niang previously, regarding the Senegalese emergence. One is still based on the entertaining praxis of the Master of Ceremony (commercial rap) and the other discoursing on a very empirical ground (hip hop music with a message). Contrary to (commercial) rap that plays on imaginary fantasies for the sole sake of popular entertainment and individual profit, hip hop music (with a message) depicts actual identities and realities with an expressive social commentary that offers descriptions of singular existence as

⁴⁹ Interestingly enough, the western music corporations dealing with this musical genre from Senegal or other part of the African continent, usually labels it under a joint banner ‘world /hip hop’ (see Naïve, for instance)

well as instructive messages to reshape borderline sociality. What is to be retained from this distinction is that ‘hip hop music with a message’, while deploying an historicised (rather than a fantasised) ‘narrative’ – that refuses the past and positioned towards the future – tends towards a new ‘event’, “a new event that can only be revolutionary” (Negri, 2009 p.102). As such, the following sections stress how West African hip hop political productions alert us to an alternative political *praxis* that participates in the inclusion of ‘borderline generations’ of the ‘multitude’.

3.5.1. To those who set the borders

Given the insights of post-structuralism, we know that politics is not an abstract realm but a concrete space that can be approached through the analysis of perceptible structures, identity constructions and social relationships. As far as Attali is concerned, music contains a theory of society as it is and as it aspires to be; and this theory of society is also a theory of space (Attali, 1977). Other authors such as Frith explore the dialectics existing between identity and music reaching the conclusion that, to experience music, is to live an identity and to access the former is to engage with the latter. As Frith states, “making music is not a way of expressing ideas [but] it is a way of living them” (quoted in Smith, 1997 p.522). Put differently, “[...] Hip Hop is a mean for individuals to elaborate their own route” (Bazin, 2000 p.7) and its musical expression has become this aesthetic emergence where everybody can project him/herself while having the opportunity to develop a critical judgement on his/her borderline conditions.

Through the “writing of the voice”, hip hop music allows hip hop participants to become acting social and political subjects. As Laclau and Mouffe remind us, the

political process is a problematic of “identities put at risk, rather than a contest between actors whose identities (and hence ‘interests’) are already given [...] identity and interests are not something pre-political but something formed in discourse and hence reformed in political struggle” (quoted in Smith, 2003 p.135). I understand Bhabha’s “experience of anxiety” as the outcome of such a situation where identities put at risk are formed in discourse and reformed in political struggle. Indeed, Bhabha understands modernity as being about “the historical construction of a specific position of historical enunciation and address” (Bhabha, 2004 p.348) and contrasts it with the narratives of borderline conditions, such as the ones of hip hop ‘transculture’ participants. It appears from this standpoint that hip hop musical actors, emerging from this borderline condition, develop discursive practices in order to contest the modern reality they face which marginalises them. Their borderline existence incites them to engage into a “poetics of praxis” (Bhabha, 2004 p.307) through which they can begin to negotiate their “incommensurable differences” and, by doing so, open up a cultural space, a “third space”. Through its *métisse* musical form, Hip Hop becomes this “path of passage”, this “third space” where ‘out-of-place’ socialities formulate their problems of identification with their localities, their desires of individuation and vivid realisation. This is what Interviewee #23 stresses, when explaining what motivates his discursive performances:

“Whenever we were saying that we were coming from Thiaroye, people were fleeing from us because it was synonymous of drugs, thieves, deviance, etc. We really wanted to show that in Thiaroye, there were young people who were smart and who were not as these prejudices would define them. People were ashamed of saying they were from Thiaroye [...] and we wanted to show them that one could live in Thiaroye and still be someone!” **(Interview #23; Music maker and worker, Dakar)**

Through “*being someone*” while coming from Thiaroye, Interviewee #13 displaces the borders of his borderline situation. Smith asserts that the “most familiar response to deterritorialisation is the desire to reterritorialise” (Smith, 2003 p.152). In other words, hip hop subjects, feeling ‘out-of-place’ in the locality they inhabit, re-inscribe themselves in their locale, through “the situatedness of their knowledge as well as their unique positionality vis-à-vis the discursive spaces” (Smith, 2003 p.11). Their transcultural sociality allows a process of *métissage* of hip hop subjects, the ability to stand on the borders while creating the possibility of moving to either side, alternatively and simultaneously. To illustrate such an experience of the ‘jumping possibility’, I refer to the musical comedy realised by AURA (United Artists for African Rap)⁵⁰, “The Extraordinary Stories of the Poto-Poto⁵¹ Children”, in which hip hop artists participate in the recognition of the borderline sociality of West African urban youth while productively displacing their borders. Using their own vernacular (French, English but also *Haoussa*, *Wolof*, *Bambara*, etc.) in their musical expression, AURA members engage in this representation while each of them incarnates one of African youth’s suffered realities. Indeed, the child-beggar (Moussa), the child-prostitute (Priss’K), the child-soldier (Awadi), the street fruits vendor (Moona) or the chronically ill child (Keyti) for instance, all constitute figures that are part of the urban cartography of West African population. Through their collective interpretation of the

⁵⁰ AURA is a network of young West African hip hop artists who have united together in order to deploy an ideological project based on a continental vision of the younger generations and their future. AURA first emerged as a network following a mega-concert organised in 2005 in Ouagadougou to encourage birth registration among West African populations. This unique hip hop collective includes the Senegaleses Didier Awadi and Numukunda (Radikal PBS), Xuman (Pee Froiss), Myriam (ALIF), Keyti (Rap’Adio) and Big D; the Mauritanian Big Power; the Togolese Bobby (Djanta Kan); the Nigeriens Pheno B (Kaidan Gaskia) and Safia; the Burkinabes Smarty (Yeelen) and Smockey; the Ivorian Priss’K; the Gambian Egalitarian; the Beninese Moona; the Guinean Moussa (Degg J Force 3); and the Malian Jo Dama (Tata Pound). The seventeen members of AURA originate from ten different countries throughout West Africa (Benin, Burkina Faso, Gambia, Guinea, Ivory Coast, Niger, Mali, Mauritania, Senegal and Togo). For more detailed information, please consult: <http://www.aurahiphop.com/>

⁵¹ Used throughout the Francophone ensemble, “Poto-poto” is a popular expression that means ‘mud’, ‘ghetto’, ‘misfortune’, and/or ‘hardship’. Neighbourhoods in Kinshasa and Abidjan are even named after this expression.

same reality, through playing their musical show, AURA artists inscribe a translocal borderline sociality of West African youth. In doing so, they place the “subjective voices of experience”, “the voices from the borderlands who have been marginalised, displaced, oppressed or dominated” (Sandercock, 1998 p.110) onto a ‘third terrain’ where they are not only tolerated, but valorised. The urban singularities they represent through the characters they interpret in the musical comedy are given a role, a part to play in this fictional reality, which is the stage. For over an hour, more than recognition, agency is given to marginalised urban youth: they act, they talk, they can express themselves, they cease to be invisible in the city, and become the main actors, the visible protagonists of this musical comedy.

The discursive practices of AURA artists are thus politically loaded: urban singularities form an ensemble and move from a borderline condition to a situation where the borders have become their very possibility of an alternative sociality. Through their interpretations of these young characters in the musical comedy, hip hop actors, express an alternative sociality for marginalised youth to the one imposed until now by the dominant cultural gerontocracy. In the “Extraordinary Stories of the Poto-Poto Children”, oppressed younger generations not only become visible and free citizens, they are also identified as translocal singularities united by a common reality. Furthermore, through the recurrent references in their lyrics to their cultural leaders such as the Burkinabé revolutionary Thomas Sankara, the Senegalese academic and founder of the « African Renaissance », Cheikh Anta Diop or the Congolese political resistant Patrice Lumumba, hip hop actors ‘write their voice’ discursively and move the singularity of West African youth away from marginalisation and oppression towards pride and possibilities. From this standpoint, AURA members, emerging from the borderline condition, develop discursive practices in order to displace the borders

set by dominant sociality and urbanity, which communally and singularly marginalise them.

3.5.2. To those who sit on the borders

The previous section demonstrated how hip hop actors actively oppose the dominant culture, the ‘dominant urbanity’, the ‘hegemonic sociality’ in an explicitly political and ideological way through their aesthetical discursive practices. Indeed, hip hop music stands as a political action enacted by borderline socialities whose discursive performances challenge the fixed mappings of spatial structure and social order of the city. However, these discursive practices also stand as a commitment, a responsibility (Benga, 2002 p.301) taken by hip hop participants when they ‘write their voice’. A voice singular and multiple as I stressed earlier. And this is key, for as Latour reminds us:

“[...] he who talks does not talk *about himself but about another*, who is not *one* but Legion. [...] he who talks does not have speech; he talks on others’ behalf⁵².” (2003 p.160)

Behind a hip hop artist, there is a ‘family’, a *posse*, a *crew*. The *crew* not only accompanies hip hop artists to their performances, even joining them on stage to assist with the shouting of the chorus, verses, etc. but it is also essential in helping to maintain, promote and support the musical endeavours of hip hop performers by taking a variety of ‘official’ jobs (Herson, 2000 p.33-5; Niang, 2006 p.178). Although the exploration of potential alternatives to urban youth economic stagnation through hip hop music will be the focus of Chapter 7, I want to briefly illustrate my point with one of the pioneering hip hop groups in Dakar who would regularly call upon young

⁵² Italics in original text

people of its neighbourhood to ensure security during their performances. As one of the members of the group puts it, it was about “*giving work to all the crew I grew up with; and giving work to the neighbours*”⁵³. These young people who used to hang around in the streets became members of this group’s *crew* and occupied the ‘function’ of bodyguards: after ten years of practice, they officially created their bodyguard agency that is now linked to the musical enterprise of one of the members of this hip hop group.

The *crew* thus stands as a collective that gravitates around hip hop participants and is usually formed around friendships and based on the neighbourhood. Locating the *crew* in the neighbourhood is critical, as the reputation of an artist or a group is dependent on its recognition in their respective neighbourhood (through podiums, schools performances, etc.). As one of my informants says, “*it is first about getting a name in the neighbourhood*”⁵⁴. Moreover, the constitution of the group is fundamental because it is through it that the legitimacy of the “writing of the voice” is given. As such, Niang stresses that hip hop artists “identify permanently with their groups, even if they also represent broader communities [...] [and their] attachment to the posse is always inextricably related to the omnipresent principle of commitment” (Niang, 2006 p.179). Indeed, and as an hip hop group from Dakar’s *banlieue* highlights, discursive performances of hip hop artists are given legitimacy because they are always multiple and ‘represent’ something that is larger than a singular voice:

“We added the ‘wa’⁵⁵ in front of BMG as it had become something of a whole neighbourhood, the whole Thiaroye and not only rappers.

⁵³ Interview #20; Music maker and worker, Dakar

⁵⁴ Interview #28; Music maker and worker, Dakar

⁵⁵ “Wa” in *Wolof* means « those from » in reference to the family, the *crew*, but also more largely to the neighbourhood the hip hop group represents.

Whenever we were moving to go to the CCF⁵⁶ for the Rap Nights for instance, the whole neighbourhood was coming.” (Interview #23; Music maker and worker, Dakar)

Therefore, hip hop music stands as a two-fold political action, as a singular “writing of the voice” that is at the same time multiple. Although hip hop artists are not into politics (i.e. they won’t support any political party contrary to the other *Boul Faalé* character, Tyson for instance), they are eminently political: they have a commitment towards what I call their ‘emotional site’. Their ‘emotional site’ refers to their *posses*, their *crew*, and more largely to their neighbourhood or their community, whether defined as ‘hip hop transculture’, urban youth, West African youth, or general borderline socialities. In other words, their ‘emotional site’ refers to the ‘multiple in the singular’. Evolving from individual subjective narrators to informal ‘representatives’ of their community, political orators for their people, they reach this “moment of political reactivation”; indeed, in Laclau and Mouffe’s lexicon, they engage in a “process of ‘becoming macro’ where the ‘relations of subordination’- which are socio-cultural – are converted into ‘relations of oppression’ – which are political in the strict sense” (Marchart, 2003 p.90).

“[...] political enunciation has the singular characteristic of giving substance and reality to the question of delegation that makes us talk: ‘When I talk, someone else makes me talk – I obey – and that someone else says only what I tell her/him to say – s/he represents me’. [...] To be sure, uttered talk never belongs to those who say it, but its origin is nevertheless identifiable and it is this identification that defines the political form of talking: *‘In the name of whom, of which other agents are we talking?’*⁵⁷” (Latour, 2003 p.157)

As such, Latour defines the “political form of talking” or ‘politics’, as a “constituent enunciation” that aims to ‘put into existence’ that which would not exist without it

⁵⁶ “CCF” stands as an abbreviation for the French Cultural Centre.

⁵⁷ Italics in original text

(Latour, 2003 p.149). This definition is particularly relevant, as it helps us to conceptualise the singular and multiple “writing of the voice” of hip hop participants and their ‘emotional site’. As such, I argue that hip hop artists develop a political “discourse” that is understood as “a totality which includes within itself the linguistic and the non-linguistic” (Laclau and Mouffe, 1987 p.82): they communicate their message not only orally and verbally but also bodily, i.e. through the locating of their singular sociality in their ‘emotional site’. This can be illustrated during hip hop musical performances where, as I previously mentioned, hip hop artists are supported by the active presence of members of their *crew*, this presence of multiple bodies on the stage. As the quote from Interviewee #21 highlights, such a posture blurs the traditional distance existing between the performer and the audience: the stage becoming almost as crowded as the public arena. The artist and the audience jointly, collectively, communally participate in the discursive performance. This near-fusion of the audience with the performing artist reasserts the ‘political dependency and complicity’ of hip hop artists and their ‘emotional site’.

“The star system is less developed in Hip Hop than in other musical genres such as variety or traditional which means that these hip hop artists can be very close to their audience, and the population. Rappers better see people, better see the reality that people experience because they are with people, and do not close-off themselves in ivory towers!” **(Interview #21; Music maker and worker, Dakar)**

3.5.3. Hip hop ‘biopolity’

Hip hop artists singularly talk about a common sociality: their individual narratives erected as political actions hold as a constant referent the ‘emotional site’ they represent. When developing musical performances, hip hop participants create this

specific link between their singular lives and their ‘emotional site’ from and for which they speak. Here, I want to refer to Foucault’s notion of “biopolitics” where resistance is rooted in what is precisely at stake in power relationships, i.e. life itself (Foucault, 1976). I therefore suggest that the life of hip hop artists, as representatives of that of their ‘emotional site’, becomes the place of emergence of new political actions. In other words, how, as Foucault himself stated in *La Volonté de Savoir*, “life somehow makes itself heard, and thus voices out its resistance against the system which aimed at controlling it⁵⁸” (1976 p.191). In this respect, the ‘life’ of Senegalese hip hop artists allows them to proceed as such, while being characterised, by the specificity of their relationships with their ‘emotional site’, as Interviewee #21 has already stressed, and by a much higher level of education than previous generations of artists as Interviewee #19 maintains:

“People in Hip Hop are people who have at least the BFM or the French Baccalaureate. They are well educated and can express themselves and write better than most of people.” (Interview #19; Music maker and worker, Dakar)

They talk for those who cannot speak for themselves and give them by the same token the possibility of knowing and understanding (Benga, 2002 p.302). Political on the terrain of politics, they offer an alternative practice initiated on the ‘borders’ of the institutional paths of democratic discourses⁵⁹ and thus fill in a considerable gap between the public officials of the republic, and a great part of its population. As such, in their discursive performances, they address issues that are considered as taboo in

⁵⁸ This is my translation of the original text: “[I]a vie est en quelque sorte prise au mot et retournée contre le système qui entreprenait de la contrôler” M. Foucault. *Histoire de la sexualité I - La volonté de savoir p.191*

⁵⁹ Political expression in vocal music is of course not new, expressing either pro-establishment (national anthems) or anti-establishment (protest songs) messages.

their respective countries: such as governmental corruption⁶⁰, legalised injustices afflicting African women⁶¹ (excision, rape, forced marriage, etc.), or excessive privatisation of public services⁶². The mobilisation of AURA around the single *On ne signe pas* (“We don’t sign”)⁶³ perfectly illustrates this point. Indeed, in December 2007, one of the Senegalese members of the West African collective released a musical track denouncing the Economic Partnership Agreements; a few days later, the other members of the network joined him in order to record a panafrikan version of this song. With this track sung in English, French as well as in different vernaculars of the ten West African countries represented by AURA artists, the objective was to allow the population to understand what the EPAs were about and what was implied by these agreements⁶⁴. Furthermore, such a practice is not only limited to a simple denunciation but also encourages people to stand up for themselves, talk for themselves and express their own opinions. This alternative practice of political discourse recalls the primal role youth can play in contemporary politics as citizens. Making their private domain of a borderline condition constantly in dialogue with the public space of politics, hip hop artists participate in the construction of a citizen consciousness (Diouf, 2002 p.285). Interviewees #23 and #28 explain:

“We know that kids love hip hop culture and we want to use this culture to make them aware of their surroundings. I believe that pupils and teachers, who should not wait for the state, should maintain schools. This is something that we would like to teach throughout the country and in different sectors: make the youth understand that they should not wait for the state and should act to

⁶⁰ Listen to Smockey, “qui profite le crime” – song in one of his album that suffered from governmental censorship and thus was not released. But also Didier Awadi’s songs « J’accuse » and « Stoppez-les » in Staycalm! *Fangafrika: la voix des sans voix - Rap Made in West Africa*

⁶¹ Listen to the Nigerien female rapper, Zarra Moussa known as ZM’s last album, « Kirari »; and ALIF (Attaque Libératoire de l’Infanterie Féminine), Senegalese female hip hop collective’s song « Douta Mbaye » *Ibid.*

⁶² Listen to the Malian collective Tata Pound’s track “Mon Pays S.A.” *Ibid.*

⁶³ See the video of the song at <http://www.awadimusic.com/>

⁶⁴ See the video of the song at

<http://blog.myspace.com/index.cfm?fuseaction=blog.view&friendID=172648791&blogID=344301313>

maintain their own environment, which is theirs or will be the ones of their younger brothers or sisters. [...] These are more projects of citizenship.” (Interview #23; Music maker and worker, Dakar)

“We can influence a lot of people with the music we do [...] because we are the only ones to say a bit of the truth. We give facts and know how to report on what is going on in the society. Even religiously speaking, we incite people not to follow the religion and their spiritual guides just like ships but rather to individually reflect on the nature of religion. At various levels, we intervene and denounce certain behaviours in the society.” (Interview #28; Music maker and worker, Dakar)

Therefore, the discursive performances of hip hop artists may be construed as a political action as, on the one hand, they singularly displace the set borders of their sociality and, on the other, they ‘put into existence’ another polity, evolving from the commonality of borderline situations. This second aspect of hip hop political action has been raised by one of the pioneering Senegalese hip hop artists who defines his aesthetical performances as “musical activism”. Activism, in a general sense, can be described as intentional action to bring about social or political change⁶⁵: it is a claim for an alternative way of thinking and practicing democracy. As such, the ‘putting into existence’ of ‘hip hop biopolity’ attests that hip hop music also stands for a ‘form’ enacting democratic principles, as “it matters that democracy can be practised in radically different, including unconventional, ways” (Saward, 2003 p.174). Indeed, as has been emphasised, “in countries, like Senegal or Mali, where the unions, the press – i.e. the usual intermediaries between the individual and the authorities – have many difficulties to correctly assume the role normally reserved for them, it is claimed that rap constitutes ‘a means of communicating [...], thus a medium for claims and an instrument of development’ in its own right” (ENDA, 1998; quoted in Niang, 2006 p.170). In this respect, the informative and educative dimensions of hip hop political actions are a key capacity in raising political and social consciousness. Breaking down

⁶⁵ See Wikipedia entry “activism”, <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Activism>

the barriers between the performer and the audience, rendering them fluid and ambiguous, hip hop music stands as an exemplary action meant to offer visions and models of alternative forms of sociality that can be consciously chosen. From this perspective, music stands as a powerful vehicle for discursive performances, political actions that can be disruptive of the existing social order and thus liberating and progressive. *Métissage* singular and multiple “writing of the voice”, subjective and objective political discourses, hip hop music offers a perspective on the world that has been not voiced, becoming by the same token, an impulse of change for social and political history (Howes, 1949 p.169).

3.6. CONCLUSION

I began this chapter drawing on Foucault’s notion of “genealogy” in order to frame my understanding of hip hop ‘transculture’ against any totalising discourse. Indeed, in questioning the race or youth explanation, and opting for an exploratory stance, I aimed to deconstruct the institutionalisation of scientific discourse about Hip Hop. I thus claimed for a ‘hip hop genealogy’ in order to de-subjugate and free historical knowledge, reactivate “minor knowledge” and let “singular discursivities” draw a common ensemble (Foucault, 1994 p.164). As such, I argued that conceiving of Hip Hop as a ‘transculture’ allows for the translating insurrection of its “subjugated knowledge” (Foucault, 1994) that distances itself from a functional and systematic understanding of Hip Hop. Indeed, even when apprehending it as a *lingua franca*, a “path of passage” for disenfranchisement, marginalisation, borderline condition, the latter necessarily is a singular situated subjectivity, a starting point to understand hip hop emergence as historicised *mondialité*.

Moreover, Foucault understands “subjugated knowledge” not only as veiled *historicités*, but also as “people knowledge”, singular knowledge that is disqualified by the hierarchies of philology, science and knowledge (Foucault, 1994 p.164). This second characteristic of his “genealogy” has to be paralleled with the two-fold political actions of hip hop participants I introduced in previous sections. I insisted on the constitutive dimension of their discursive performances, their singular and multiple, ‘transcultural’ (communality) and *métis* (singularity) “writing of the voice”, both of the MC and the DJ. Furthermore, the ontological character and the constitutive dynamics of the ‘hip hop biopolity’, through its active expression and its information access to all, recalls one of the premises of ‘Cultural Studies’ that communication stands as productive process of subjectivities. Indeed, it offers an audacious act of political imagination: a process in which the subjects create new institutional and social models based on their own productive capacities (Hardt and Negri, 2004 p.354). Again, ‘hip hop biopolity’ offers a “genealogy” as defined by Foucault, in which the singularities and commonalities of borderline socialities constitutively coincide.

Throughout this chapter, I recurrently called upon a “third space”, where “liminal” thinking and being is possible, where the singular is in the multiple and the multiple in the singular. It is now worthwhile noting that, quoting Baudrillard, Nouss concludes on the implications of such a “liminal thinking” stating that: “what can checkmate the system, are not positive or negative alternatives but singularities that are neither positive nor negative [...] they constantly invent their game and their own game rules” (Baudrillard, 2004 p.10; quoted in Nouss, 2005 p.65). Such a reference to singularities is not without recalling the subjectivities of resistance expressed in the concept of “multitude” (Hardt and Negri, 2004; Negri, 2009). Indeed, a “multitude” stands as this “ensemble of singularities”: it is not unified but remains plural and multiple (Hardt and

Negri, 2004 p.125). A “multitude” produces and reproduces social subjectivities autonomously from any centre and stands as an auto-referential “living flesh” whose anthropology is one of simultaneous singularity and commonality (Hardt and Negri, 2004 p.159): it is a “Legion” living in an “interstitial space” (Hardt and Negri, 2004). I argue that the “Legion” is consisting of the ones sitting (though always in a dynamic manner), on the borders. The ‘hip hop biopolity’ is such a “Legion”, already evoked by Latour (Latour, 2003 p.160). It is a capable subject of this *mondialisation*, a “multitude” that displays a conflictual action opposing an existing form of social integration. In this respect, Touraine introduces the subject as actor and as a movement in the political sphere, through the mobilisation of convictions linked to moral and personal issues.

“I call the individual’s attempt to become an actor ‘the Subject’, which is not to be confused with experience as a whole or with some higher principle that guides individuals and gives them a vocation. *The Subject has no content but its own production*⁶⁶.” (Touraine, 2000 p.13-4)

Contrary to cosmopolitanism whose universality stands as a “presupposed given” in need of being preserved (Bensaïd, 2005 p.132), a “multitude” is in permanent construction of subjectivities of resistance. Indeed, cosmopolitanism appears as a sentiment of ‘universality’ based on the respect of differences that glorifies and ‘instrumentalises’ them in a humanistic way. Although some scholars have invested in this semantic field, both avoiding its traditional transcendence and re-spatialising its formulation – whether with its “venacular” (Bhabha), “critical” (Mignolo), “rooted” (Appiah), “alternative” (Appadurai) or “ethical” (Nouss) expressions – cosmopolitanism remains an ideal. It still postulates an abstract humanity erected at the level of a universal legislator. Rather than the cosmopolitan then, the productive

⁶⁶ Italics are my emphasis

subject of such a “liminal thinking and being” is a “multitude” that expresses the *métisse* possibility of the ‘and’ with the challenge that it becomes the ‘hand’⁶⁷, i.e. the actual body, singularly situated and productively constituting the subject. In this respect, one objective of this chapter was to stress how such a challenge is currently being carried by some hip hop participants whose “common singularities” (Hardt and Negri, 2004) transculturally situate them in specific *‘historicités’, mondialités*, and affirm them as a “multitude”.

To conclude, “genealogy” as an anti-science that is neither an empiricism nor a positivism (Foucault, 1994 p.165), can be translated, in my corpus, as the expression of a “community of practice”, singular and multiple, ‘transcultural’ and ‘mondialised’: one that stands beyond an ideal, the dialogic opposite of the impersonal globalisation. It was thus essential to frame hip hop subjects from a political perspective insofar that the “multitude” is a project of political organisation that can only be realised through political practice (Hardt and Negri, 2004 p.262-3). However, the political project of the creation of the “multitude” extends and consolidates itself throughout the whole society (Hardt and Negri, 2004 p.257). In other words, as in any context of biopolitical production, the constitutive actions of hip hop participants weaken the distinctions between economic, social and cultural dimensions. Such a political conceptualisation was therefore required as an effective framing of the practicalities addressed in Chapter 7. Indeed, the political actions of hip hop musical participants call for an original form of cultural entrepreneurship: the ethics they develop as hip hop artists strongly influences and informs their entrepreneurial practice. They thus organically offer a ‘philosophy’ that sensitively informs their practices. In this respect, I have now comprehensively outlined my conceptual framework for exploring how the political

⁶⁷ I am here somehow paraphrasing Nouss’s concept where in French the challenge of the possibility of the ‘et’ (‘and’) lies in that it becomes the ‘est’ (from ‘être’, which means ‘to be’).

productions of Senegalese hip hop *métis* interact with and impact upon the economic production of their musical expression. As Interviewee #23 states “[...] *people already recognise that rappers do not only say the truth but they are also workers and developers*”⁶⁸. Following such a comprehensive conceptual framing, the next chapter seeks to explain the connections between the research design and methodology, and the theoretical trajectory of the thesis as a whole, while also addressing the contextual specificity of a West African case study.

⁶⁸ Interview #23; Music maker and worker, Dakar

PART TWO

SPEAKING FROM THE FIELD

CHAPTER 4

GROUNDING IN THE FIELD:

RESEARCH DESIGN, METHODS AND REFLEXIVE ANALYSIS

4.1. INTRODUCTION

The early framing of this thesis, Chapter 2 focused on literature related to “cultural entrepreneurship” and “community of practice” (Wenger, 1998) in order to examine the relationships between hip hop music as a distinctive space of cultural production and its role in dis/abling social change in two urban locales. Within this framing, my specific focus on the role of the music economy for least advanced economies is driven by a desire to understand how and why hip hop spaces of musical entrepreneurship are constituted in Francophone West Africa, and by which particular social relations. A specific objective of my research is thus to further sharpen the focus on the role of cultural economies in the ‘Global South’ by providing a critical examination of the performance of musical entrepreneurship in West Africa’s social and economic change. Drawing on Barrowclough and Kozul-Wright’s (2007) hypothesis that the developing world can use and benefit from its creative assets and cultural resources as a source of economic growth, I have investigated both in general, music as a viable economy for developing countries, and in particular, the contribution of the ‘hip hop effect’ in its economic and organisational as well as in its socio-political dimensions.

In this respect, this chapter will detail the framework used to undertake the empirical component of my research and outline the methods used for responding to my inquiry into the working processes in the West African cultural economy and more precisely the entrepreneurial processes at play in the hip hop music economy. It will also

provide the theoretical and empirical rationale of the research process that lead to the building of an emergent theory of West African cultural entrepreneurship in the music field. As will be demonstrated, the strength of this research lies in the iterative dimension of its design and application. The presentation of the steps in the research process illustrates the rough sequence of actions I have taken as a researcher, but they also convey the cyclical nature of the research process, thus stressing that it is far from linear, and that theory and method contingently co-evolve.

Appreciating the interrelations between a situated identity and its practices as well as the ‘social fabric’ in which cultural economies are inscribed, I have therefore identified and profiled a network of actors involved in the Francophone West African musical fields. Such an approach recognises music both as a cultural and an economic activity, and revisits the notion of cultural entrepreneurship by emphasising the political and social embeddedness of musical practices, positioned at the intersections of politics, economy and culture. The political dimensions and the identity construction of hip hop participants, and also their productive and constitutive economic activities, have been apprehended when exploring the mode and potential of the hip hop music economy as a critical factor in social change for West African societies. As such, my inquiry is motivated by the necessary contextualisation of both the object (the hip hop music economy) and the subject (entrepreneurial participants) of analysis.

4.2. REFLECTION ON MY ROLE AS PARTICIPANT OBSERVER

“What makes information knowledge – what makes it empowering – is the way in which it can be integrated within an identity of participation.” (Wenger, 1998 p.220)

Drawing on Wenger's contribution, I distinguish knowledge from information, with the former being created and acquired through participation. Such a conception of the nature of knowledge and its production recognises the necessary 'reflexivity' of the researcher. As such, my research displays a process of learning about a situated experience (the one of hip hop musical entrepreneurship in West Africa) but also, a process of learning from what I call an 'experiential situating', i.e. a situating of the research through the experience of the researcher. An 'experiential situating' can be illustrated by the metaphor of "getting one's hands dirty". Indeed, this popular expression first recognises that researchers leave 'traces' and even trace from their experiences the knowledge they elaborate; second, it stresses that researchers should be aware and reflect on their own traces. Put differently, knowledge creation and acquisition, because of this 'experiential situating' "is not, and can never be, a neutral activity" (Murdoch and Pratt, 1993 p.425).

As will be further detailed in this chapter, my 'experiential situating' involved a participant-observer positioning, a method by which I became one of the research instruments. In doing so, I recognise that my participation was a vital element of the research design (Johnstone, 2007 p.106). Immersing myself in the organisational life of the object of my research proved to be strategic in identifying 'who' was doing 'what' 'where' and 'with whom'. Having an operational purpose as an introduction did open doors, and helped retrace the various professions intervening in the local music field. Indeed, by working for a local organisation I came into contact with people in the framework of my participation. Besides, participants in this music economy came to know me as a member of the field first, and only at a later stage as a researcher. I was thus not perceived as a commissioned researcher whose agenda may have been motivated by the interests of an external organisation. Neither was I solely perceived

as an independent researcher whose (presumed) academic language and discourse would have set a distance with the subjects of my research. Rather, I was beforehand identified as a practitioner in a field of practice to whom participants could relate more easily.

In this respect, I chose to use my personal and professional experiences to relate to the participants in this field of practice: I was trained and worked in the management of cultural organisation both inside and outside the Francophone West African ensemble; I was originally from and lived several years in this ensemble, being knowledgeable of its common language, accents and expressive referents. However, I was also a doctoral student based in the U.K. whose research focused on these participants, implying a considerable distance between my informants and myself. As such, I put forward my personal and professional assets in order to convince others of my valuable participation, without ever hiding my researcher status. ‘Internship’ was an expression that proved convenient in characterising my participation and that recognised both the working and researching dimensions of my presence. Moreover, such a double profiling allowed me further possibilities as far as my positioning was concerned, depending on the situation and the requirements of my research process.

“Who I am potentially shifts with each speaking, each moment of being positioned within this or that discourse in this or that way” (Davis, 1992 p.57) and while my participation certainly eased some encounters, it made others even more difficult. I was able to somehow rectify this bias by distinguishing two periods in my fieldwork: an initial phase dedicated to my participation in the field of practice and a second phase dedicated to the conduct of formal interviews. As such, while in the first phase I affirmed myself as one of the participants in the field of practice, in the second, I

presented myself as an independent researcher whose involvement with and commitment to the welcoming organisation was over. In doing so, I made clear that participant observation only stood as one of the (diverse) phases of my research project. Nevertheless, because of the enduring affiliation of my name, if not attachment to the welcoming organisation, in the mind of some participants, it was essential for me to be very careful and cautious when making the selection for my case study.

Therefore, in a positive sense, my participation affected how the members of this field of practice talked and behaved during my formal inquiry. They came to know me in the framework of my participation and to consider me as an effective participant in their field of practice. However, there were also negative repercussions as well. Indeed, my participation was attached to the organisation that welcomed me and, as such, implied an 'experiential situating' that was located in a web of affinities that had been developing prior to my arrival. Besides my name remaining attached to the organisation, my research was also 'scarred' by my 'field role', i.e. my practice in this organisation. 'Going native' is an ever-present risk in a research process following such a method (Bollingtoft, 2007 p.419), and I remember at least one instance during my participation when I over-identified with the discourse and practice of the organisation that welcomed me⁶⁹. In fact, it was not always easy to be fully conscious of the nuances of all my motives and such an over-identification clearly diverted me from being as effective as I might have been (Reeves, 1994 p.107).

⁶⁹ While the organisation that welcomed me considers foreign participants considerably, it pays relatively less attention to their relations with local ones. Being in contact with both types of participants, I remember once reflecting such a discursive positioning in total opposition with my own 'usual' behaviour.

This process of reflexivity thus stood as an “attempt to identify, do something about, and acknowledge the limitations of the research: its location, its subjects, its process, its theoretical context, its data, its analysis, and how accounts recognise that the construction of knowledge takes place in the world and not apart from it” (Shacklock and Smyth, 1998 p.6). To be sure, being the primary instrument of my research inquiry, I had to reflect on my own “microtheories of action (that is contextually specific ideas about what works in the real world) and to relate these microtheories to institutional norms” of the field and to participants’ expectations (Brookfield, 1986 p.245). As such, my participation in this field of practice as well as the different methods used, proved to be a vital element in the research design, as they allowed me to continually negotiate “how, when, and why to situate and privilege whose voices” (Fine, 1998 p.152). I was able to ensure that it was not simply my worldview, by confronting it with those I researched, as well as other more objective phenomena. Such an approach thus required ethical considerations and had the potential to influence the validity of my thesis, but it also permitted the dimensions of the research design and its application to be iterative and reflexive. Indeed, recognising my simultaneous involvement in data collection and analysis encouraged the use of multiple sources of data, as well as the development of holistic descriptions, enabling multiple levels of analysis. In this respect, early planning and coordination of materials were important, but the cyclical rather than linear pattern of investigation was crucial in permitting me to get closer to the actual reality of cultural entrepreneurship in the West African music economy. In other words, the fact that data collection and analysis activities were taking place interchangeably during the research process.

4.3. CASE STUDY APPROACH

My research focuses on a contemporary phenomenon, i.e. hip hop musical entrepreneurship, within a real-life context, the one of Francophone West African societies. In order to answer the ‘how’ and ‘why’ questions related to the emergence of hip hop entrepreneurship in this specific musical field, I have selected a case study approach. “In general, case studies are the preferred strategy when ‘how’ and ‘why’ questions are being posed, when the investigator has little control over events and when the focus is on a contemporary phenomenon within some real life context” (Yin, 2003 p.2). These explanatory questions (‘how’, ‘why’) deal with operational links rather than mere frequency or incidence and, as such, they respond to my investigation of the networks of participants involved in a multi-faceted and complex music economy. Indeed, one of my theoretical assumptions was that this music economy, as any cultural economy, involves a diversity and heterogeneity of participants, with their respective practices, perspectives and objectives. As such, the case study approach was especially well suited as it offered, through its process of iterative-parallel research, the opportunity to “tease out and disentangle a complex set of factors and relationships, albeit in one or small number of instances” (Easton, 2010 p.119). As will be discussed later in this chapter (see section 4.5 for detailed discussion), the flexibility of this approach encouraged both the iterative and reflexive dimensions of my research.

Furthermore, the research stems from a revelatory case whereby I had the opportunity to observe and analyse a phenomenon previously inaccessible to scientific investigation, namely the hip hop music economy in Francophone West Africa. As mentioned in the introduction, existing knowledge base regarding ‘Southern’ cultural economy in general and the Francophone West African hip hop music economy in

particular, is poor and this research aims to further inquire into this revelatory case in order for it to become a critical case that can confirm, challenge or extend previous literature on cultural entrepreneurship. Therefore, this revelatory case stood as a rationale for conducting a single case study, and, in order to increase the power of the aimed analytic conclusions, I selected two sub-cases, i.e. two case study units. Such an approach allowed for a comprehensive scope to investigate a small number of social entities and situations with an open-ended form of inquiry and all encompassing methods (Yin, 2003; Easton, 2010). Indeed, focusing on understanding the dynamics present within this music economy, the approach implied that material was to be collected using multiple sources of data while developing a holistic description through an iterative research process that enabled multiple levels of analysis.

4.3.1. Case selection

A second theoretical hypothesis was that the complexity of such a music economy involved some degree of translocality. Francophone West Africa forms an ensemble that, despite considerable geographical and historical differences, shares both an identity and a practice. For instance, I assumed that producers in a given locale would rather share working affinities and collaborate with producers from another locale than with distributors of their own locale. Therefore, two case study sites were selected in order to investigate the translocal dimensions of music production and organisation, as well as the particularities of local conditions and mobilisations. The purposeful choice of Dakar (Senegal) and Ouagadougou (Burkina Faso) was justified by two criteria – cultural/musical dynamism and specifically characterised society – based either on secondary sources of information available online or prior first-hand knowledge.

Concerning cultural/musical dynamism, Dakar (Senegal) was ‘naturally’ selected for the numerous well-known musical artists originating from this country, and as it is the location of the initial revelatory case. For this first criterion, the choice of Ouagadougou (Burkina Faso) was justified by a secondary background research⁷⁰ that revealed the multiplicity and continuing dynamism of its local cultural initiatives⁷¹. The second criterion implied that when paralleled, the two case study sites displayed, in most radical ways, the social, historical and geographical disparities existing in the Francophone West African ensemble. In other words, they are ‘extremities’ of the same ensemble. While Senegal stands as a port country historically open towards the ‘exterior’ of the West African ensemble and with a dominant ethnicity, *Wolof*, Burkina Faso is an inland country, the geographical crossroad for the ensemble, inhabited by more than sixty ethnicities. Besides the economic dimension that classifies Senegal as one of the most prosperous and Burkina as one of the poorest of the ensemble, the specific characteristics of their societies present contrasting perspectives in terms of contextualising the Francophone West African music economy.

Moreover, in order to provide detailed analysis of focused primary data, i.e. empirical and grounded information on what is actually occurring in the complex production chain of this music economy, I followed the design of Music Production System (MPS) – UNESCO, which is a step-by-step process of inquiry into the various components constituting the chain of production of the music industry (Pratt, 2011). This process aims at a qualitative understanding of the value chain for the production and distribution of creative goods and services from the content origination to the

⁷⁰ In the year preceding the start of my PhD programme, I researched – in the framework of a previous diploma – intensively the cultural policy of Burkina Faso.

⁷¹ *FESPACO* – the Pan-African Festival of Cinema and Television in Ouagadougou is one illustration of Burkina cultural dynamism but references can also be made to the *SIAO* (International Salon of Craftwork in Ouagadougou), or the *Récréatrices* (Festival of Contemporary Theatre in Ouagadougou).

production, reproduction, consumption, education, training, as well as archiving and copyright issues (Pratt, 2008). Following a qualitative approach, the sampling method adopted for the collection of focused primary data was thus a theoretical one. This sample included producers, recording studios owners and technicians, copyright bureaux, art schools, music museums, cultural policies officials (municipal as well as national), international cultural cooperation services, associations of music professionals – managers, producers, musicians – but also infrastructures of music distribution and diffusion (show rooms, media).

I purposely chose respondents and sites for their specific knowledge and relevance, and therefore the selection was exhaustive with regards to meaning, with the implicit aim of reaching an in-depth understanding of what was occurring empirically (Yin, 2003). Such a case study approach allowed me to (at least temporarily) circumscribe who, how many and what fields of inquiry should be addressed as part of my research. However, it did not provide a ‘ready-made’ formula regarding access to the various sources of information needed or to the participants and their field of practice. As such, early planning and coordination of sources and materials were the only ways of overcoming these problems.

4.3.2. Initial contact

As a first step in planning my initial fieldwork in Ouagadougou from September to November 2008, I started to build up a database of key organisations participating in the cultural and musical field. Considering the paucity of printed material available in the U.K. on this issue, I proceeded to gather background information from the Internet. In this process, the repertoire of organisations displayed on the website of the Ministry

of Culture of Burkina Faso stood as a major source of information⁷². Also, throughout the year preceding fieldwork, I regularly consulted online newspapers articles looking for cultural/musical references and, at times, websites of cultural/musical organisations that were referred to in articles. It appeared that only the biggest organisations active in the cultural/musical field afforded a cyber existence that I was able to identify in my Internet research.

Internet development in Africa still faces major problems, mainly because of a lack of connectivity. More than 70% of internet traffic within Africa is routed outside the continent, driving up costs for business and consumers (Waters, 2007) and implying an average Internet penetration among the population of 4.7% while the world total is 20% (Europe and North America have 43.4% and 71.1% respectively) (Pingdom, 2008). As such, smaller cultural/musical organisations do not always have the resources, both in financial and temporal terms, to invest in the realisation of a website and its demanding maintenance. Although the costs of individual Internet access may be unaffordable for most of these organisations, a widespread practice in African urban centres concerns the access to Internet from “cybercafés”. However, accessing the Internet from such places is not without difficulty: first, it is costly and, as such, is used only on a punctual basis⁷³; and second, the connection remains of poor quality, with ISPs counting their throughput in megabyte per second, and sometimes even kilobyte per second, while the rest of the world tends to be connected with gigabyte per second (Pingdom, 2008).

⁷² http://www.culture.gov.bf/Site_Ministere/textes/etablisements/etablisements.htm

⁷³ Indeed, rather than a constant access, cybercafés offers a punctual access, i.e. people go there to use punctually Internet services but cannot really afford to be there constantly nor to have a continual access to Internet throughout their working day for instance.

Therefore, the online information gathered was rarely up-to-date and left room for interpretation, especially regarding the importance of the organisations in the actual local music economy. Such a method gave few details regarding the day-to-day activity of the organisations as most of the information collected concerned only news about one specific project coordinated by the organisation with little indication as to how active the organisation actually was. Still, this method permitted to gather a dozen of references, half of them ‘appearing’ as main active organisations in the local cultural/musical economy, and, as such, it was a starting point for further ‘snowballing’ by recommendation. This method allowed me to address letters to referenced organisations that formally introduced my research, and asked for the scheduling of a meeting with a referent of their choice. Most of the time, I only had the name of an organisation, and could not systematically identify ‘referent-persons’ who would suit for an interview. However, West African postal services can be unreliable and only four of the interviewees I met in Ouagadougou actually received my introductory letter. Among these four participants, and although they had all kept my letter (as I noticed when I actually met with them), none of them ever replied.

When planning the second part of my fieldwork in Dakar from December 2008 to February 2009, I changed strategy and did not use any anticipatory letters that would have introduced me before ‘landing’ in the field. Indeed, what my experience of Ouagadougou’s fieldwork taught me was that such a technique was not really worth the effort, as being recommended by participants through word-of-mouth was more effective. Still, as for Ouagadougou, throughout the year preceding my fieldwork, I regularly consulted online newspapers, webzines and websites of cultural/musical organisations that were referred to in these articles, in order to constitute a preliminary database. Contrary to Burkina Faso, the Ministry of Culture of Senegal did not offer a

useful repertoire of locally active cultural/musical organisations. However, I was able to constitute a database composed of a dozen of references from other secondary informative sources online. To the latter, rather than a letter, I sent an introductory email, personally addressed, with some supporting documentation in attachment, presenting my research and asking for a possible meeting. With this new strategy, I received one reply. In other words, and as I had somehow anticipated thanks to my experience in Ouagadougou, this method also failed. As such, beyond the unreliability of postal services, it appeared that the formal and somehow impersonal introduction, rather than a personal recommendation, had too little resonance with the practices of these participants.

4.3.3. Formal interviews

An important part of the research consisted of a series of interviews with participants engaged in the local music economy in order to investigate the active networks and organisations in this specific cultural scene, as well as the opinions interviewees had on the situation of the sector they practice in. As previously mentioned, my research focuses on investigating the diversity and heterogeneity of the actors, their management practices, aims/goals, perspectives and objects of practice but also the contextual conditions of their performances. As such, formal semi-structured interviews proved to be a key method for engaging with these participants, for understanding their conceptualisations of the music economy, as well as their experiences of it through their respective practices.

Semi-structured interviews as directed conversations permitted an in-depth exploration of the local music economy with informants who had the relevant experience to shed

light on it (Charmaz, 2006 p.25). The open-ended nature of the interview promoted a conversation-like interchange, but also provided a forum for the informants to question me, as the researcher, about my own biases, impressions, motivations and intentions. “An interview is contextual and negotiated” (Charmaz, 2006 p.27) and as such, the semi-structured form of the interviews meant that ‘surprises’ were manifold, and my interviewing skills and approaches had to be flexible enough to accommodate the contingencies of each conversation. Throughout the interviews, I was taking notes either of ideas that were emerging from what the informant was telling me or important points to note when the interview was going in an unanticipated direction that was not initially planned in the research guide. All the interviews were conducted in French, my mother tongue (and the ‘official’ language of the interviewees), and recorded for later transcription.

The preparation of formal semi-structured interviews was realised before leaving for fieldwork, and implied the development of an interview schedule (see Appendix A) as well as the elaboration of a consent form (see Appendix B). The interview guide was composed of four main parts: the profile of the informant, the profile of the enterprise, the profile of their business network and the profile of the local cultural and music economies. In order to elicit the ideas, views and opinions of my interviewees, I tactically developed questions in order to focus and organise this intended information (Johnstone, 2007 p.111). The administering of interviews was conducted with individuals rather than with groups, in order to illuminate personal perceptions and beliefs, and the consent form was presented and signed by each interviewee at the beginning of the interview. Although the majority of the interviewees stated that they were not concerned with their names being used, the consent form made clear that participation in the research was voluntary and that interviewees had the right to refuse

to answer any of the questions and were free to stop the interview at any time. It also stated that all the information provided was confidential and would be fully anonymised when reported. Although parts of interviews are used in the thesis, interviewees are not identifiable from the text. Anonymity and freedom of interruption allowed interviewees to appreciate the interview as an opportunity to provide insights into the factual processes involved in their practice as well as an opportunity for them to 'have a say' regarding the current situation of their sector. As such, drawing on what has become a classic critique of the objectivity of the research interview (Oakley, 1981), seeking to validate the subjective experience of my informants was an ethical requirement of the research process.

Over seventy interviews that lasted on average 1.5 hours were conducted across a range of participants involved in the cultural and music economies in the two case study units of analysis. I had initially planned on conducting sixty interviews in each locale; however, this early plan was based on a random number that I estimated before even having started my preliminary investigation through Internet research and initial contact. As such, while the number of potential interviewees was considerably reduced after preliminary investigation, the total of interviews finally conducted corresponded to the point at which no new information or themes were observed in the data. In other words, when I had reached saturation.

In Ouagadougou, I thus conducted fifty-one interviews that I initially classified under 'artistic network' (12), 'institutional network' (15), 'media network' (6) and 'operational network' (18). The 'artistic network' was composed of interviewees that I identified as artists, and among them mainly musicians; the 'institutional network' included interviewees working in official institutions involved in the local cultural

economy such as Ministries, city-halls, cooperation services of foreign embassies and public-owned cultural sites (music museums, art schools, showrooms, etc.); the ‘media network’ included interviewees belonging to media spheres (written press, radio as well as TV) of the local cultural economy; and the ‘operational network’ was composed of interviewees that participate in the local music economy from privately developed initiatives. I have transcribed, translated, commented and analysed the eighteen ‘operational network’ interviews conducted there. In Dakar, I conducted twenty interviews: from the ‘operational network’ (11) and the ‘institutional network’ (9). I have transcribed, translated, commented and analysed the eleven interviews that I identified with the ‘operational network’. To be sure, the selection of informants was purposive (though iterative) and based on their specific knowledge and relevance. I extensively used snowball techniques that allowed me to ask each interviewee about who should be consulted and interviewed next, i.e. potential interviewees I may not have foreseen. Furthermore, and as I shall now turn to, my selection was informed by the diverse ethnographic techniques of data gathering used.

4.4. LIGHT ETHNOGRAPHY

Preliminary Internet research and postal contacts did not provide a guarantee regarding my access to participants, nor did these methods confirm the relative importance of the organisations that I referenced. As such, ethnographic methods occupied an important position in the research process of data gathering, informed by my case selection based either on secondary sources of information available online or prior first-hand knowledge. Although my fieldwork experience was not extensive, varying between two and three months, ethnographic research methods allowed me to immerse myself in the field of practice of interest, to follow the actions of participants as it unfolded

over time, and to gain a greater understanding of the processes of entrepreneurial emergences in the music field (Johnstone, 2007 p.101). Such a light ethnography consisted of participant observation, passive observation, informal interviews and journal-keeping, four methods that were used in a cyclical pattern of investigation rather than a linear design (Johnstone, 2007 p.99). Therefore, these ethnographic methods were used in an iterative way, and as I will argue further in this chapter (section 3.6), the material thus collected was essential in allowing me to move from contextual to internal knowledge.

4.4.1. Participant observation

As mentioned in the beginning of this chapter, participant observation in both fields implied an intensive involvement with the practices of my informants. Such an internal position provided a background from which I could proceed to informal interviews as well as passive observation. I recorded and reported on this experience while keeping a journal that combined my daily working practices, my observational notes as well as an analytic memo of my informants' practices. As such, participant observation permitted, beyond a contextual positioning, the use of other complementary methods in my ethnographic approach that were essential in providing more focused information.

In order to profile the network of actors involved in the music sector in Ouagadougou, I decided to investigate it by suggesting my participation in an organisation I had noted in my preliminary database. Besides sending a formal letter, I furthered my strategy by writing emails to referent-persons I could identify and made repetitive phone calls to ask whether they had accepted my participation. Financial conditions appeared to be

their main worry so I made clear on several instances that my participation was entirely voluntary. This organisation appeared to be the ideal site in which to begin the participative aspect of my research, as it annually organises the oldest and largest hip hop festival in the Francophone West African ensemble. The festival took place from October 13th to 18th 2008. I thus joined the team at the beginning of September, and worked there until the end of October, for two months. I was in charge of three residencies of creation (slam & beatbox, dance and vocal music) which took place from October 1st to 15th. As such, I became the key referent in the organisation, both for international, as well as local artists, and was responsible for logistics. Moreover, I was in charge of the festival's decentralisation, all the shows taking place in the regions (Pô, Koudougou, Ouahigouya, Fada N'Gourma and Bobo Dioulasso) during the festival. This responsibility implied jointly representing the organisation with the referent-person during negotiations with mayors of the cities that welcomed the festival, as well as being the key referent for regional partners who participated in the organisation of the decentralised event.

After a short break of a couple of weeks back in Europe, I conducted fieldwork in Dakar (Senegal) from December 2008 to February 2009. In order to profile the network of actors involved in the music sector in Dakar, again I decided to investigate it just as I had done previously in Ouagadougou. I had prior first-hand knowledge of an organisation especially active in the field from personal contacts and previous working experience. I was thus recommended to the referent-person of the organisation, but still made further contacts by emails and phone calls to confirm my participation in the organisation. I did not know the referent-person personally but I was very well aware that this individual was a key resource in the Senegalese music field, being involved in various organisations, associative, institutional as well as

private. Furthermore, this organisation coordinated the first-ever West African hip hop musical comedy show that was then successfully touring throughout the regional ensemble. I integrated the team in the beginning of December and worked there for three months. I participated in the coordination of the representation of the musical comedy taking place in mid-December in Niamey (Niger). I was also in charge of the proposal for a potential ‘hip hop cluster’ addressed to the Presidential Board for the Strategy of Accelerated Growth (SCA). Moreover, I coordinated the realisation of the first empirical and comprehensive repertoire of musical enterprises in Senegal, a study that was ordered by a French association involved in a project on Francophone West African cultural enterprises⁷⁴. Finally, I assisted the referent-person on an intervention in the recently voted law on Copyright and Neighbouring rights during the first edition of the “72h Hip Hop” festival which took place on January 1st, 2nd and 3rd 2009.

4.4.2. Informal interviews

Few informants with whom I conducted in-depth interviews were also informally interviewed while I was involved in their field of practice. They were my working colleagues and, most of the time, the referent-person in the organisation that accepted to welcome my ‘internship’. As such, they were well aware of my ‘double status’ as well as of the fact that, while interviewing them in an informal way, I was still ‘recording’ them. Therefore, in terms of informed consent and ethics, the stipulations of the consent form they signed during the formal in-depth interview applied. To be sure, whenever they did not want me to ‘record’ something they expressed during these informal interviews, they straightforwardly mentioned it, and in this way made

⁷⁴ The repertoire is entitled “Entreprises Musicales au Sénégal” but has not been published as such. However, the information it contains has been used to feed the database of another project, ARPÉM (Support for the West African Network of Enterprise Incubator in Musical Field). For more details, see: <http://arpem-culture.org/>

clear that such information should not be part of my ‘recording’, even informally. Therefore, and beyond the background information it provided, the material collected through this informal technique is used in the thesis in a similar fashion to the material gathered through formal in-depth interviews, though in a less systematic and more modest manner⁷⁵.

Being with the people I was working on a daily basis with constituted an opportunity for me to further understand the processes of their actions, their strategies but also to investigate their opinions and views about their practice. Although I was participating in the organisation, on several instances I realised that things that were ‘obvious’ for my informants remained only vaguely understandable to me. My collaborative participation with informants allowed me to develop a certain intimacy with them. Thus, being one of their colleagues, I was sharing a trusting environment with my interviewees, and I was able to ask ‘naïve questions’ on their practices and their context. These informal interviews were even more like conversations, with only an initial general focus or direction about something that kept my attention, and that I wanted to further investigate (Johnstone, 2007 p.110).

In Ouagadougou, one of the artistic residencies I was in charge of was a novelty in the programming of the festival, although such an initiative has become more and more popular and applied in ‘Northern’ cultural organisations. I was thus especially interested in knowing how the referent-person came up with such a promising musical project. First, it seemed that the naivety of my question left my informant dubious but after a short time of reflexion, he replied that such projects were everywhere in the *air*

⁷⁵ Indeed, as informal interviews, they could not be neither ‘tape’ recorded, neither transcribed nor analysed as were formal interviews. However, and whenever needed, I could write down information, in the words (or as much as possible in the words) of my informants, in my journal.

du temps (“spirit of the times”). His reply suggested that everywhere, in cultural and musical economies, there was an *air du temps* that encouraged certain initiatives, beyond geographical borders. There were elements of commonality across various cultural and music economies that were then embedded in different situations.

Similarly, while realising the empirical repertoire of musical enterprises in Senegal, I was astonished by the systematic silence of interviewees regarding their business figures. Being a colleague of the referent-person on the project, I innocently asked him what he thought could explain such a repetitive behaviour from the respondents in our common investigation. Again, a bit surprised that I did not suspect the justification for their silence, the referent explained to me that the fear of fiscal repression discouraged respondents from being in any way precise about their business figures. His explanation gave me a good indication of the non-facilitating and even discouraging business environment cultural and musical entrepreneurs are evolving in, and where the tax system could and has been used as a means of repression. As such, this information encouraged me to recognise and further investigate the necessary contextualisation of the music economy from a specifically localised political economy.

4.4.3. Passive observation

Passive observation was used in an informal and unstructured way, as a supportive and supplementary method in the ethnographic part of data collection (Bollingtoft, 2007 p.412). I especially used this technique during informal gatherings of participants in the music field to collect information about relations between participants, but also about implicit problems present in their field of practice. This technique gave me

insights into this cultural music economy in its broad ‘natural’ context at different times and to a multitude of perspectives (Bollingtoft, 2007 p.410) which helped me to identify how small the field of music and cultural economy is (considering the recurrence of participants).

On several occasions, I attended cultural events (concert, shows, etc.) that I was usually informed of by one of my colleagues or people I met through my practice in the framework of the organisation. These events were informal gatherings for the community of participants in the music economy. I attended an important musical event in Dakar in which several of my informants were either participating or attending. One of them informed me of another show taking place the same evening and in which he was also participating, right after his performance, and offered me to join. That night, I realised how awkward it was that two musical shows draining the same urban crowd were taking place at the same time. I also noticed that the sponsors were exactly the same, and wondered about the competition over scarce resources. While providing descriptive rather than explanatory material, such observations were helpful in pointing towards a certain individualisation of musical practices, and in directing my other methods that could provide more of an internal knowledge towards such an inquiry.

4.4.4. Journal keeping

With participant and passive observations as well as informal interviews, events were taking place more quickly than they could be recorded, and I needed a space where I could record descriptions and direct observations of what was said and done (Johnstone, 2007 p.109). Indeed, the amount of information collected through these

methods was incredible and I could not always take out my notebook to record them. Therefore, a regular exercise at the end of each day, was to relive the day, its encounters, its scenes and informal interviews and to note whatever information I collected, feelings or thoughts I had.

As an essential part of undertaking qualitative research, keeping a research diary thus allowed me to descriptively note various events that occurred in a day and to start reflecting on different aspects of the research process. In this respect, it proved to be an invaluable resource in filling in the context of my research, and in reminding me of critical incidents as well as particular aspects of fieldwork (Blaxter et al., 2006 p.49). The technique of a journal was thus coherent with and necessary for the cyclical nature of ethnographic methods used and allowed me to reflect on the focus of later observations and interviews. Indeed, it both gave me regular practice of distilling my ideas into writing, and served as a trigger for later reflection. As I shall now turn to, the cyclical design I opted for induced reflexive and iterative dimensions to my research.

4.5. REFLEXIVE RESEARCH DESIGN

4.5.1. Iterative research design

What the detailing of the procedures and methods used for data collection reveals, is that the research process evolved in an iterative way, distancing itself from any imposition of a single method. Planning and executing fieldwork were different than expected, and required me to adapt and acclimatise myself to the field of interest in order to be able to gather the necessary information. As such, the introductory postal contacts I initiated for Ouagadougou's fieldwork reminded me that postal services are

not the best means of communication for the chosen case study sites, and thus later informed my change of strategy for Dakar's fieldwork. Moreover, the very few replies I had with this technique raised serious concerns in terms of effective access to informants and forced me to find a more appropriate strategy for gaining access to the field. Indeed, this technique demonstrated that a strict formal introduction of my research was not adequate in order to get a foot in the door of anticipated informants, and left me concerned about the quality of data collected in this way. I thus selected an ethnographic method as an alternative introduction strategy, i.e. participant observation, whereby I first became a familiar character in the field of practice of my informants as a working colleague for the referent-person, and as someone participants came to know. This method of introduction proved to be key, not only for entering the field but also for gaining access to informants and conducting my interviews. Indeed, informants got to know me as someone they saw working and were able to assess the seriousness of my participation in their field of practice; as such, they began to be willing to comment (formally as well as informally) on their personal experience.

From my participation in the field, I innovated other strategies of introduction, which I used especially with informants I was not directly referred to, and that were as specific to the case study sites as they were divorced from any Northern rationality or expectation. As such, I learnt that trying to schedule formal meetings with informants for an interview was mainly a waste of time, as people would cancel, postpone, or even forget. Indeed, I initially scheduled interviews with relevant informants but systematically ended up waiting a considerable amount of time in an office with often nobody to receive me! After few attempts, I realised that I had to find an alternative strategy, and my referent-person in Ouagadougou suggested that the most efficient way was to call future interviewees whenever I would be ready to conduct the

interview and meet them directly where they were. This involved travelling a lot throughout the city and being able to find my way quickly among the various neighbourhoods and sites (from restaurants, to bars, to spaces of musical diffusion and sometimes offices), but also adjusting to the timetable of my interviewees, i.e. meeting them during the day or at night, and during the week and weekends depending on their business rhythms. Although time and energy-consuming, this adaptive strategy proved to be very effective in terms of meeting and interviewing informants.

Moreover, the cyclical ethnographic methods I used facilitated not only introductory but also networking strategies that proved to be effective in selecting interviewees. These networking strategies implied both a further selection of interviewees based on their relevance that I noticed while participating in the field of practice and snowballing. Indeed, on the one hand, I identified informants that I purposely selected to conduct formal interviews, and the other, informants suggested other participants that I should interview. I thus conducted a considerable number of interviews that were not anticipated. In Ouagadougou, two-thirds of the interviews used in the analysis were initiated through networking strategies realised in the framework of my responsibilities for the organisation I worked for. Similarly, almost three quarters of the interviews conducted in Dakar were initiated through networking I undertook while participating in the field of practice.

I eventually met several of the informants I previously contacted by post or email either during informal gatherings where I could reintroduce my research or after being referred by one of the participants I collaborated with, while at the organisation. However, I did not conduct interviews with most of the organisations that I had initially referenced in the database, constituted from Internet research before leaving

for the field. To recap, this initial database provided essentially vague and unverified information leaving considerable room for interpretation as far as how active the organisations actually are. Therefore, the networking strategies deployed through ethnographic methods coupled with the snowballing techniques became more accurate sources of information for the selection of interviewees. And the decision to conduct formal interviews after my participation in the field of practice confirmed this adaptive strategy. Highlighting how my methods worked and were necessary, such an iterative research design acted as an informal qualitative triangulation and a saturation method that allowed me to move from contextual to internal knowledge.

4.5.2. From contextual to internal knowledge

The iterative process of data gathering techniques implied a necessary flexibility in terms of planning and executing fieldwork, and permitted adaptive strategies to be deployed in order to access information. Moreover, such a process also contributed to a reflexive reframing of the object of my research while allowing me to practically move from ‘contextual’ to ‘internal’ knowledge, again offering a solution to the problems of planning and executing fieldwork given its heuristic nature. Indeed, reflecting on the research process, the iterative design of data collection was vital in moving from exploratory to focused information, and then from focused to selective information, along the continuum of ‘contextual-internal’ knowledge.

The methods that provided exploratory information were the cyber-research and the postal contacts as well as passive observation. The data gathered with these techniques provided a base from which I could branch out into a myriad of directions. These techniques offered an initial incursion into the object of the research and provided

primarily 'descriptive' information that remained general in scope. Accordingly, passive observation during informal gatherings permitted me to start drawing some relational links between the different participants, without being able to certify whether my observations were pertinent, or being able to understand the 'how' and 'why' of what I was observing. Put differently, with the information gathered through these methods, the difficulty of knowing what aspects were important and which ones proved to be irrelevant, was not overcome (Bollingtoft, 2007 p.422). For instance, the organisations that did not have an online presence (i.e. a website) in my preliminary database were initially considered as small organisations, most probably unimportant, but they later turned out to be very central in the research process. Indeed, both organisations I worked for did not have a website at the time of my Internet research, although I was able to identify them through various articles talking about their specific projects or through personal contacts. However, once I 'landed' in the field I realised that they are both recognised and respected entities by the participants in their field of practice, and are among the most active in their respective locale. Similarly, apart from the few major organisations identified in the dataset, most of the initially referenced organisations proved to be of little relevance for the object of research being dissolved; inactive, inconsistent or poorly structured.

Other methods permitted me to go beyond contextual knowledge, and closer to internal knowledge, by providing focused information: informal interviews and participant observation. These techniques allowed me to become more familiar with the field of practice, the participants as well as the processes in operation, and to distinguish the most interesting features (Bollingtoft, 2007 p.422). For instance, I acquired such 'internal' knowledge while participating in the coordination of the representation of a musical comedy show in Niamey. In terms of the environmental challenges, Niger,

although located in the West African region, stands as an extremely expensive destination: there are indeed very few flights, and none of them are direct from Dakar (though it would only be a few hours flight). This raised questions regarding the difficulty and expansiveness of the regional transport system, essential to the organisation and promotion of any music economy within the regional ensemble. Besides, while dealing with financial issues for both welcoming organisations, I noticed that bank transfers were almost inexistent and all money transactions were realised in cash, which implied that participants have to regularly carry a considerable amount of money with them. In another occasion, I noticed competitive relationships among organisational partners belonging to different spatial networks. When managing the artistic residencies, I realised how differently local and international artists were treated: international artists had significant fees compared to local artists and were required to duly sign contracts, while none of the local musicians were ever proposed a contract to be signed! These different relational practices incited me to inquire specifically into the daily management of cultural and musical organisations and to further consider and recognise the dynamics of the various networks of partners intervening in the structuring of the organisations.

Moving from contextual to internal knowledge, I was thus able to generate clearer research questions and concepts that required selective information (Bollingtoft, 2007 p.422). Indeed, the focus provided by methods such as participant observation and informal interviewing permitted an internal knowledge of the way the music economy was practiced in the case study sites. In turn, this internal knowledge allowed me to reflexively and selectively redefine and reframe the information to be collected through formal interviews. Indeed, from that point I could go beyond the primary information to ask more well-thought, context-informed and challenging questions

during in-depth interviews. For instance, although the interview guide was most of the time respected, it was reframed by the data collected, allowing a confrontation of perspectives and terminologies used by previous informants. Indeed, the whole research guide was elaborated with the notion of ‘entrepreneur’, but I quickly realised that this term was imported from my own corpus and had only little resonance with the formulated reality of my informants. Rather than forcing them to adapt their discourse to mine, I adopted their own terminology, of the ‘operator’. This not only allowed me to put the informants more at ease but also to develop an initial typological concept of an ‘operational network’. To be sure, moving from contextual to internal knowledge implied that analysis was often taking place in the middle of data collection and was used to help shape its development (Bollingtoft, 2007 p.423). Data collection and analysis activities were taking place interchangeably during the research process and permitted that I got closer to the actual reality of the phenomenon of interest. Indeed, data collection was concurrent with analysis, to allow the data collection plan to be changed and a better theory discovered (Eisenhardt, 1989; Mäkelä and Turcan, 2007). An iterative and reflexive process that was confirmed by the triangulation of the different perceptions collected, adding rigour, breadth and depth to my investigation.

4.5.3. Triangulation

The iterative research design that permitted moving from contextual to internal knowledge, demonstrates how an informal qualitative triangulation and a saturation method were integral to such a design. Indeed, throughout the research process, the method of triangulation stood as a rationale for the use of multiple sources of evidence (Yin, 2003 p.95). As such, I triangulated data with respect to place and person by selecting two case study sites but also by using a methodological triangulation within

qualitative methods (online research, participant and passive observations, formal and informal interviewing) (Denzin, 1970; quoted in Yeung, 1997; Bollingtoft, 2007). “Triangulation is inherently a call for multimethod in social scientific research” through which different data complement each other in revealing different facets of the social world (Yeung, 1997 p.64). Indeed, this methodological tool allowed me to obtain a deeper understanding of the studied phenomenon, moving from contextual to internal knowledge by gathering exploratory, focused and selective information. As such, it encouraged an overlapping between the collection and analysis of the data, enabling the research to be properly refocused and the appropriate theoretical sampling to be selected (Mäkelä and Turcan, 2007 p.136). From this perspective, my fieldwork in Ouagadougou was pivotal in allowing me to revise and reformat both the content of data and the procedures of investigation.

While in Ouagadougou, I noticed the paucity of what I refer as hip hop entrepreneurs and I consequently oriented my research towards cultural entrepreneurship in general. From this field, I realised that I could not talk about hip hop music without talking about the music economy in general, and that I could not talk about the music economy without talking about the cultural economy. Coming back from this site, my research was then centred around the cultural economy in general, and the three main networks active in the scene: ‘artistic’, ‘institutional’ and ‘operational’. The latter network was revealed to be the focus of my research – constituting my primary interviews (Appendix C) – while the remaining networks identified provided contextual information. When I arrived in Dakar, this new research paradigm built from the Ouagadougou case study site accompanied me and framed my research process. However, participating in different projects, namely within the ‘hip hop cluster’, I realised that my original idea about hip hop entrepreneurship had a strong

resonance there. More precisely, contrary to Ouagadougou where no more than two hip hop entrepreneurs could be identified, in Dakar, several of them were actively participating in the field, and so, the formal semi-structured interviews I conducted mostly focused on them. Indeed, while in Ouagadougou I considered the different networks mentioned, in Senegal, on the other hand, my formal interviews were only conducted with participants from the ‘institutional’ (contextual) and ‘operational’ (internal) networks. In other words, my experience of getting involved in the field in two different settings (place, time and person) reflexively oriented the objects of my inquiry and analysis.

Triangulation permitted an iterative reframing not only in depth but also in scope, as it allowed me to conduct my investigation from various perspectives on the Francophone West African music economy. At least three different perspectives were used, allowing me to constantly reflect on the relevant orientation of my research:

- 1) What I thought and constructed from the data gathered on the Internet;
- 2) What I observed and perceived from my experience in the field (personal insights from participant and passive observations);
- 3) What I was told and described by relevant informants (those I selected for formal as well as informal interviews).

Triangulation allowed me to institutionalise a process of reflexion in the research project and to generate novel understanding through the fusion of horizons. For instance, through participant observation I was able to re-identify the relevant people I wanted to interview, not solely based on the database I initially constituted, but also on the people I collaborated with, while at the organisation. Similarly, informal interviews

recurrently permitted me to further identify and circumscribe, mainly through snowballing, the network of actors I wanted to interview, and to crosscheck the most relevant orientation of my object of analysis. As such, asking an informant about who should be consulted and interviewed was not bias-free and may have led to the exclusion of certain participants in the network who did not have affinities with primary informants. This was however counter-balanced by my own passive and participant observations that contributed to identify the key players in the local music economy. Thus, the convergence of my findings enhanced confidence in the quality of the research, adding to the empirical grounding of the results (Mäkelä and Turcan, 2007 p.124).

Making connections within particular cases and permitting the most appropriate combination of methods to research a concrete phenomenon (Yeung, 1997 p.65), triangulation provided me with confidence in demonstrating that the results of the research were more than the product of my vivid imagination. Indeed, the multi-method design as well as the two case study sites forced me to acknowledge inconsistencies as an ongoing part of the research project (Bauer and Gaskell, 2000 p.345). As such, while my experience of getting involved in the field in two different settings did reflexively orient the objects of my inquiry and analysis, it also illuminated how my thesis focused on the Senegalese case where the productive practices of hip hop entrepreneurs were significantly identified and situated. Indeed, the analysis developed in the previous chapter (Chapter 3) has already suggested such a focus. However, I contend that the contrasting insights provided by the Burkinabè case were critical in highlighting the complexity and translocality of the processes involved in the Francophone West African music economy. In this sense, although Senegal here stands as the main reference, this research does concern an under-

researched 'ensemble', while the Burkinabè 'test-case' stresses processes that would not have been perceivable by looking at the Senegalese case alone. In fact, the 'regional' dimension of this music economy and its dynamics could not have been addressed without the contrasting insights mirrored in the case of Burkina Faso.

In this respect, triangulation, as well as transparency and clarity of procedures of data elicitation, participated in marking confidence regarding the research process and its discoveries. Put differently, the systematic, iterative and reflexive approach permitted by the various methods employed in the research process allowed me to increase the confidence but also, with the recurrent surprises and thick descriptions offered, the relevance of claims formulated from the qualitative data I gathered. As such, I do feel that my methods worked and were necessary, while my research design maintains a level of transparency and integrity that consistently accounts for the fact that social research is always affected by the interactions between interviewer and subjects and their particular interpretations.

4.6. QUALIFIED GROUNDED THEORY: ITERATIVE DATA ANALYSIS

After having realised how determinant the iterative process between the research practices and its object was during data collection, I followed a similar iterative design for the analysis of the data collected, between the sorting of the data and the analysis. An initial step was taken toward this process during the transcription of primary interviews that simultaneously involved translation, from specifically accentuated French into English, and reflexive commenting. This procedure consisted of grounding the analysis in the data through an iterative analytical process that involved simultaneous coding and organising of data with theory-building.

4.6.1. On qualified grounded theory

Although I recognise the theoretical assumptions I had before proceeding to data collection that I formulated in the introduction of this chapter, the objective was to analyse the collected material while minimising my interference, in order to let the data emerge by themselves. As such, I applied a version of “grounded theory” (Glaser and Strauss, 1967) as a practical method but not as a theory that assumes a theoretical starting from *tabula rasa*. To be sure, grounded theory as a method implies a set of practices and principles rather than strict prescriptions or packages (Charmaz, 2006 p.9). Again, the choice of such flexible guidelines was justified by the recognition of my simultaneous involvement in data collection and analysis, an iterative research process I wanted to further pursue.

Consistent with my own research process, where the decision regarding the breadth and depth of the sampling was taken during the research process, the practice of grounded theory makes no clean break between gathering and analysing data (Wagner et al., 2010 p. 7-8). Besides, this method aims to “move qualitative inquiry beyond descriptive studies into the realm of explanatory theoretical frameworks, thereby providing abstract, conceptual understandings of the studied phenomena” (Charmaz, 2006 p.6). Therefore, this approach toward my data analysis consistently responded to the explanatory dimensions of my original inquiry into ‘how’ and ‘why’ hip hop musical entrepreneurship emerges in the Francophone West African ensemble.

Originally, Glaser and Strauss (1967; Glaser, 1978; Strauss, 1987) included among the defining components of grounded theory practice:

- “Constructing analytic codes and categories from data, not from preconceived logically deduced hypotheses;
- Using constant comparative method, which involves making comparisons during each stage of the analysis;
- Advancing theory development during each step of data collection and analysis;
- Memo-writing to elaborate categories, specify their properties, define relationships between categories, and identify gaps;
- Sampling aimed toward theory construction, not for population representativeness; and
- Conducting the literature review *after* developing an independent analysis.”
(Charmaz, 2006 p.5-6)

These defining components put forward how grounded theory practice does not rely specifically on existing literature or previous empirical evidence, and permits a mediation between theory and practice while preserving at its heart the interplay of data collection and analysis. As such, the use of grounded theory method is especially appropriate when confronted with an inadequacy or inexistence of theory on a subject (Mäkelä and Turcan, 2007 p.133). My application of a version of this practical method was thus justified by the fact that such an approach fit well with the situation in which my research finds itself, where there is little empirical validation of current perspectives. However, and to insist, my use of grounded theory method stands only as a version of its original conception; my approach recognises theoretical assumptions and, as such, disputes the strict inductive manner in which a theory is grounded.

By recommending that literature research be postponed until the main theories have emerged from the data, the grounded theory method risks “a tendency towards an ‘eclectic empiricism’ in which too many empirical categories (what the grounded theorists call ‘theoretical categories’) are combined in a typical atheoretical framework. Causal relations and tendencies between the referents of these categories and the phenomenon at hand are perpetually lost” (Yeung, 1997 p.62). Rather than purely inductive then, my research process was in practice an iterative one, employing both deductive and inductive cycles of data collection (Easton, 2010 p.124). Indeed, deduction helped to identify the phenomenon of interest, i.e. the Francophone West African music economy, suggested what mechanisms may be at play, i.e. cultural entrepreneurship, and provided links with previous research and literature. Induction, by another token, provided empirical data to be explained, and tested the explanations. Thus, I achieved a “harmonious synchronisation between deductive abstraction and inductive grounding of generative mechanisms [...]; an iterative process of abstracting theories based on an immanent critique and the grounding of abstractions in concrete data” (Yeung, 1997 p.63). Put differently, while preserving the iterative approach of my research process, I analysed collected evidence on which particular emphasis was placed, i.e. primary interviews transcripts, while drawing themes from the abstract theory available in literature as well as ‘emergent’ categories that arose from the interviews transcripts themselves.

4.6.2. Thematic coding

A first analytical step in grounded theory method is qualitative coding, i.e. the process of defining what the data are about by categorising segments of data with a short name. The codes simultaneously summarise and account for each piece of data by selecting,

separating and sorting data in order to proceed to an analytic accounting of them (Charmaz, 2006 p.43-5). This process involves constant comparison as it defines what is happening in the data in order to shape the analytical frame from which I build the analysis. Progressively, from an initial and explorative phase to a focused, selective one, I “conceptualise, reduce, elaborate and relate data and categories to integrate them as novel theory (Mäkelä and Turcan, 2007 p. 136). From a particular object of study, I work towards a general one, while going from broad data into sharpened themes.

The initial phase, “open coding” (Strauss, 1987), consisted of proceeding to an incident-by-incident coding with a sample of the primary interviews I had transcribed, namely those of the ‘operational network’ participants identified in Ouagadougou⁷⁶. While sticking to the data and reading through each of the transcribed interviews, I started to develop codes, i.e. to name part of the data in my own words while keeping the original text of the interviews. Remaining quick and spontaneous to maintain the openness of the process, I was at first extensively creating new codes but, progressively, the use of already created codes became recurrent and the need for creating new ones, saturated. Using gerunds most of the time to help identify processes (Glaser, 1978; Charmaz, 2006), about seventy codes were created in this way. Examples of open coding were, for instance, ‘becoming an entrepreneur’ which related to the (both formal and informal) formative and training steps of the interviewees; ‘developing networks’ referring to the various strategies undertaken by interviewees to collaborate at different scales; or ‘discouraging cultural entrepreneurship’ that pointed

⁷⁶ To insist on the rigour of my selection process, only 14 of those 18 interviews were actually kept. Indeed, three (3) individuals who were initially integrated in the operational network were, after analysis, classified under the institutional network populated by individuals who are 1) executors rather than creators/initiators of a public or private project and 2) who do not follow a logic of risk taking which engage them personally as individuals.

to the various instances that interviewees stressed as constraining their working practices.

In the second phase, I extended the sorting of the data by thematically organising the codes along the framing axis of “conditions”, “actions” and “consequences” (Charmaz, 2006). This procedure demonstrated the relative importance of contextual conditions in the phenomenon under study, with recurrent coding references to the institutional environment (‘describing and analysing the institutional practices’); the situation of the field of practice (‘describing and analysing the music sector’); or the general social dynamics (‘describing and analysing the macro-cultural and popular environment’). From this axial analysis driven by contextual conditions, I revisited the initial coding with the objective to transform the previously identified codes into families, and to specify the properties of the families. This process stood as another stage of conception, reduction, elaboration and relation of data while engaging in further family grouping, detailing key families and progressively reaching saturation.

Moreover, the grounded theory approach recommends that a range of questions and reflexions should be written around these emergent categories that take the shape of theoretical memos, which are provisional attempts to draw out connections, problems and questions. As such, I developed ‘code memos’ as well as ‘interviews memos’. Code memos involved a limited number of meta-themes drawn from revisiting the interview’s initial coding, and indicated the main points stressed by the interviewees. Meanwhile, the interview memos allowed me to comment on the expectations I had while collecting the data and the emergences they permitted, i.e. what I expected in conducting this interview and what actually emerged from it. The memo process was

thus iterative and encouraged a systematic tracking of empirical observations while considering how they affected my changing conceptualisations of the research design.

Therefore, I had my analytical ‘recipe book’ ready when turning to the second sample of primary interviews, those of Senegalese participants in the ‘operational network’. Indeed, the initial analysis of Ouagadougou’s sample played a ‘pilot role’ in the whole data analysis and paved the way, while leaving room for improvement regarding Dakar’s sample. Ouagadougou’s sample encouraged me to favour the transcription of interviews from the ‘operational network’ in Dakar while keeping the interviews from the ‘institutional network’ as contextual information. Besides, and although less numerous, Dakar’s sample was more elaborated and detailed in terms of coding and memo-writing than the previously realised Ouagadougou’s sample, and thus, provided richer information. In other words, thematic coding implied a systematic and iterative analytical method as a true craft skill: I was learning by doing. Indeed, a bit like in cooking, the more of an expert I became, the more I improvised and internalised the principles of a recipe and I continued with what worked.

From these combined processes, coding and memo writing helped me to develop schedule for the subsequent interviews, and I distinguished the core idea of the research, i.e. cultural entrepreneurship or innovative management cultural production in a non-creative environment. Two notions were then essentially obvious: ‘cultural entrepreneurship’ and ‘space of cultural/musical production’. In critical realist terms, cultural entrepreneurship could be identified as the “entity”, i.e. the systemic practice and ‘spaces of cultural/musical production’ as the “causal mechanisms” (Easton, 2010). Put differently, this dynamic coding framework permitted a provisional comparison that drew together preliminary connections across the participants and the

cases. This comparison did not seek to quantify or rank the ‘order’ of themes but rather to look for patterns, variations and consistencies in activity or thinking expressed with the case-specific categories. As such, the grounded approach I employed, involving ongoing coding, analysis and research design, allowed me to produce three datasets; two space-specific and one subject-specific. One on the space of cultural/musical production in Ouagadougou; a second on the space of cultural/musical production in Dakar; and a third one, a transversal dataset on profiles of Francophone West African musical entrepreneurs.

From these datasets, it was then possible to look for ‘core themes’, which accounted for much of the variation in patterns of behaviour, activity, and intention or general thinking across the empirical study participants. In this respect, the first empirical chapter (Chapter 5) developed out of the two space-specific datasets while emphasising the Senegalese dataset in its analysis and making some contrasting references to Burkina Faso. Indeed, Chapter 5 engages with the case-specific themes that are centred on the political economy of cultural production as well as the cultural economy of music production in Senegal. The two final empirical chapters (Chapters 6 and 7) emerged out of the transversal dataset that profiled distinctive characteristics of musical entrepreneurship in Francophone West Africa. As such, both chapters use insights from the two case study sites and highlight the complexity and translocality involved in the productive practices of West African musical entrepreneurs. While Chapter 6 surveys the manifold themes related to the cultural anthropology of these entrepreneurs generally, i.e. developing, working and learning entrepreneurial practices in their cultural fields, Chapter 7 focuses on the radical innovation of hip hop entrepreneurial practices specifically.

Furthermore, while focusing on the ‘operational network’ through the memos and notes compiled in conjunction with the interviews transcripts themselves and the categories and themes, the ideal-typology introduced in Chapter 2 emerged, of West African musical entrepreneurs and their respective ‘doing’ and ‘thinking’ processes. This explanatory tool on the one hand, responded to my inquiry into the diversity and heterogeneity of the cultural entrepreneurs active in the Francophone West African music economy, and on the other, revealed the distinctive contribution of hip hop entrepreneurship to this specifically situated economy. Reaching this point in my analysis signalled to me that I was ready to begin the challenge of theory-building, i.e. the ability to comment, with empirical evidence for support, on the contingent relationships between hip hop music, cultural entrepreneurship and social change.

4.6.3. Theory building

“Theorising means stopping, pondering, and rethinking anew. [...] The acts involved in theorising foster seeing possibilities, establishing connections, and asking questions. [...] When you theorise, you reach down to fundamentals, up to abstractions, and probe into experience. The content of theorising cuts the core of studied life and poses new questions about it.” (Charmaz, 2006 p.135)

“Theorising is a *practice*. It entails the practical activity of engaging the world and of constructing abstract understandings about and within it” (Charmaz, 2006 p.128). In the analysis process I undertook for the primary empirical component of this thesis, the process of theory building was part and parcel of qualitative analysis. To be sure, this underlines the inter-dependency between theory and method. As such, I put words to empirical emergences and develop, grounding in the data, three datasets that already reflect the theoretical emergences. These datasets then informed the structure of the

chapters though still in an iterative way, evolving with respect to their confrontation with the existing theoretical framework. To reiterate, I was seeking to explain:

How hip hop musical practitioners emerge in the West African cultural economy? What their entrepreneurial practices are? And, how hip hop entrepreneurs have been able to contribute in original ways to social change in West African societies?

Within these research questions, it is evident that certain *a priori* assumptions have informed the formulation of the questions themselves. As such, by asking ‘what’ entrepreneurial practices are at play in hip hop music, I was in effect postulating that hip hop politics and economy encouraged a certain form of entrepreneurship in West African musical fields. Moreover, the ‘how’ questions, suggested, rather than asked, that hip hop musical entrepreneurs emerge in this economy and singularly contribute to social change in Francophone West African societies. The grounded nature of my analysis has, however, helped to ensure the validity of the research despite my own bias evident within the original questions posed prior to my investigation.

The empirical research reveals, for example, that not only hip hop entrepreneurs, but a diversity of other cultural entrepreneurs participate in the promotion of the West African music economy in their locale. In other words, problematic as they may be, the questions posed have resulted in an iterative analysis of empirically-derived information from a step-driven production of an ideal-typology of contextually specific participants. Indeed, entrepreneurial practices in this music field stand as a whole whose constituencies can be characterised through three distinctive processes, or in critical realist terms, through three generative mechanisms: ‘local cultural’,

‘cosmopolitan musical’ and ‘hip hop’. Whichever their profile, these entrepreneurial operators share two essential characteristics: 1) their project/initiative is based on their will, and originate with them; 2) whatever the degree, they all take risks which engage them personally as individuals. I thus went from identifying three networks of participants active on the local music economy – ‘institutional’, ‘artistic’, ‘operational’ – as the object of my analysis, to then focusing on the distinctive ideal-types of ‘operators’, and finally to revisiting these operational profiles in terms of entrepreneurial profiles linked to specific spaces of action. In short, this step in the analytical process acted as further data reduction, i.e. a form of “iterative abstractions” whereby, being interested in a whole entity (hip hop musical practices in the Francophone West African cultural economy), I abstracted its constituents (Yeung, 1997).

The case study approach permitted the exploration of a phenomenon whose boundaries have not been clearly evident, and the contextual conditions emerge as highly pertinent to the phenomenon studied. Indeed, the object and subject of the research, i.e. practices of and participants in musical entrepreneurship, are context-dependent, or more precisely “contingent” (Yeung, 1997; Easton, 2010). As such, theory building as an analytical generalisation permitted me to deal with such an open fuzzy boundary system. It discovered “knowledge of the real world, by naming and describing broad, generative mechanisms that operate in the world” (Healy and Perry, 2000 p.123). I thus developed a ‘family of answers’ that covers several contingent contexts and different reflective participants, albeit imperfectly. Again, “from a critical realist perspective, expansion and generalisation come from identifying the deep processes at work under contingent conditions via particular mechanisms. [...] The best explanation, that is the one most consistent with the data, is what is being sought”

(Easton, 2010 p.126). From formulating the research questions through the theory building phases of the research design, the information collected thus permitted the development of operational links traced over space though not really over time. Indeed, this research was cross-sectional rather than longitudinal, focusing primarily on individual experiences and actions as well as on collective experiences and practices.

These steps in the analytical process enabled me to reach the explanatory ‘conclusion’ that cultural entrepreneurship stands as a particular “entity” whose “mechanisms” produce completely different actions at different places and times (Sayer, 2001; Blundel, 2007 p.51). I was able to then move beyond the description of social situations to a more critical assessment of the relationship between structural factors and human agency. Indeed, even when letting the data emerge by themselves, the researcher intervenes, as transparently as possible, in giving them coherence, i.e. a shape. A work is engaged through the clarification and ordering of such empirical emergences in order for them to be later used and confronted with the theoretical frameworks they should contribute to. An additional step in the theory building thus introduced a discussion of alternative literature to enhance the explanatory value of the conceptual framework. Chapters 3 and 7 highlight these and other contributions.

The strength of theory building is the likelihood of developing a theoretical understanding of real mechanisms, and the contingent ways in which they combine to generate effects (Blundel, 2007 p.63). As such, through the flexibility offered by the grounded theory as method, my own preconceptions about hip hop entrepreneurship and cultural entrepreneurship in general were ‘unfrozen’ in an equally step-wise direction, as each new interview presented novel lines of inquiry and the potential re-

framing of my research. Again, the challenge was to generate a corpus of emergent themes with which to draw continuities and discontinuities of ideas, actions and processes in a focused manner, which critically address the limits of my proposed research questions, while providing direction to outline the lines of inquiry for further research.

4.7. CONCLUSION

This chapter has emphasised the iterative nature of my research design process, which was based on the data collection approach of ‘experiential situating’. Such a data collection approach is founded on the notion that knowledge creation and acquisition necessarily bear the ‘traces’ of the researcher who should, in turn, acknowledge this process in the research practices and knowledge production. As such, I have used a variety of methods and have had to devise ways of integrating vast amount of diverse material. Indeed, I interacted directly with the study participants; I participated actively in their working practices; I gauged how to behave or proceed at any given moment; I made judgement calls on what to take note of or record; and I constantly re-evaluated how a particular line of inquiry did or did not offer promise for answering the research questions I posed. These were all practical difficulties in the field that I had to face and negotiate, while being issues that required ethical consideration and had the potential to influence the validity of my thesis.

Therefore, there were ethical and practical challenges throughout the research process and, among the particular strategies I used to overcome such concerns, continual processes of reflection were key. Indeed, in an iterative way, such a systematic reflexivity ensured that oversights in ethical consciousness, accountability and

transparency in the research process, confidentiality of data, and the determination of how the data would be presented and used after the research was completed, were constantly dealt with so that such concerns did not threaten the validity of my research. Still, there were weaknesses but, as I have shown, I did all I could to achieve the best results. In the end, I generated text that I analysed using a modification of grounded theory. Indeed, the analysis of the interview transcript materials was enabled through an adaptation of grounded theory as analytical method that preserved the extent to which theory and method have been inextricably connected. As such, the conceptual and practical rigour used can legitimately convince the reader that I have a valid 'dataset', which will be confident to read and reflect upon in subsequent chapters. In this respect, Chapter 5 introduces the results that emerged from such a methodological 'grounding in the field'.

PART THREE

SITUATING MUSICAL PRACTICES IN FRANCOPHONE WEST AFRICA

CHAPTER 5

SENEGALESE FRAMING OF THE WEST AFRICAN MUSIC ECONOMY

5.1. INTRODUCTION

Although multiple studies on cultural productions and their economy exist in America and Europe, in Francophone West Africa, such works have remained rare. A Senegalese research group's publication on the musical industry in their country is thus first of its kind, and published only very recently, in 2008⁷⁷! This notable absence is, I believe, essentially due to the political economy developed and followed by successive governments in the Francophone West African ensemble, which neglects the notion of music as an economic sector in its definition of cultural production. Nevertheless, a music economy has always existed in these territories, both in their traditional and contemporary societies. As any cultural production, West African musical phenomenon is situated (Niang, 2008 p.83), and needs to be comprehended in conjunction with the social, economic and political spaces from which it emerges. Therefore, the general aim of this chapter is to contextualise and locate the music economy in the Francophone West African ensemble, while emphasising the role played by its different participants, whether they be society, public authority or musical productive community. In doing so, I will focus on Senegal, while providing some contrasting insights in reference to the Burkinabè experience.

The first part is dedicated to the socio-economic history of musical production in Francophone West Africa. This section stands as an incursion into the traditional system of musical production, putting forward the instrumental and functional sociality

⁷⁷ I am here making reference to the publication S. Ndour. *L'industrie musicale au Sénégal: essai d'analyse*

of this aesthetic expression, as well as contemporary emergences and developments of popular musical practice. The second part then focuses on the political economy of cultural production in general, underlying the legacy of the French system and its state monopolistic cultural politics. Highlighting the tradition of Senegalese ‘politics of culture’, this section demonstrates how its successive governments struggled (and unfortunately still in vain) to translate it into an informed and sustainable ‘cultural policy’ *per se*. Finally, a third section addresses the implications of such an official ‘politics of culture’ for the music makers and workers, as well as their enterprises. Indeed, the legal invisibility and the individualisation of musical practices as well as state management of copyright constitute the pragmatic and constraining framework for this productive community. As such, this chapter looks at the ways in which cultural production in Francophone West Africa is socially, politically and economically situated in time and space.

5.2. SOCIO-ECONOMIC HISTORY OF MUSICAL PRODUCTION

In Francophone West Africa, musical production has emerged from a double heritage: traditional African and French colonial. In order to understand contemporary developments of the musical production, this double socio-economic history needs to be acknowledged and recognised. While traditional music production puts forwards the social function occupied by the *griot*, contemporary musical practices in West Africa have been popularised through three main phases of development. The first phase identified is 1940-60, a period dominated by colonial musical practices; the second is 1960-80, a time when musical practices reflected a quest of identity for newly independent nations; and finally, 1980-2000, a third phase of development, the period when local musical practices reflected global tendencies of the music market.

5.2.1. Traditional functionalist economy of musical production

In traditional West African society, the artist was considered as “an agent of social regulation” who was working at the service of the community (Seri, 1984 p.110; 112) and music was practiced only as a socio-cultural instrument of intervention. A semantic approach confirms this: in Senegalese linguistic groups, as in most West African populations, there is no generic term to designate ‘music’ as classically defined in Europe, i.e. as the art of combining sounds in a nice way for the ears (Seri, 1984 p.109; Ndour, 2008 p.18). Indeed, rather than referring to the ‘musician’, *Wolof*, for instance, designates the ‘singer’, *woykat*, or the different ‘instrumentalists’ such as *tamak*, *xalamkat*, or *tëgkat u sabar*. Put differently, musical productions in Francophone West Africa, as a Northern approach may have defined them, display an instrumental sociality and symbolised as a ritualistic and functional field, intermingled with life and social ceremonies. As such, artist-musicians in traditional West African societies occupied an almost sacralised function in the life and the reproduction of society (Kaboret and Kabore, 2004 p.8).

The functional and instrumental sociality of the artist-musicians was traditionally accompanied with certain political as well as economic dimensions and powers. Indeed, these traditional societies recognised specialists in the various fields of tradition, such as the *griots* or *gével* in *Wolof*, who are masters of speech and performing arts (McNee, 1998 p.3). Although the oral tradition belonged to the whole community (with *griots* being at the service of a given social group), only certain individuals, namely the *gével*, had the capacity of exploiting it with the aim of making profit. Traditionally, only *griots* benefited from the power of authority thanks to which they could animate the political, social and economic life of their group (Seri, 1984

p.116). As such, *griots* constituted a part of the population who had social legitimacy for musical performance and who lived from their artistic practices.

Such a social functionality of the artist was thus based on an ‘economy of retribution’⁷⁸: a system of gratification whereby *griots* played the role of cultural animator, historical transmitter and protocol responsible while being remunerated by their *géer*, whom they provided their services to. These remunerations varied depending on the occasion and included food, money, cereals, cola or clothes (Kaboret and Kabore, 2004 p.9). As such, the arts of *griots* were not free of charge but based on a principle of reciprocity between the artists and their *géer*, whereby the *gével* improvised an original composition in praise of his *géer* while being inspired from the collective, communal tradition (McNee, 1998 p.4). On the one hand, this historically complex cultural and social formation of music production displays a functionality based on the traditional cast system of *griot*, and on the other, the relationships between the *géer* and the *gével* indicates an economic function.

However, through the processes of colonisation and later independencies, two other forms of economies appeared along side the traditional economy of retribution. First, an ‘economy of representation’ emerged, with cultural production taking the form of live exhibitions (concerts and live performances). This form of cultural production arrived in West Africa with the colonisation as a practice managed and consumed by the colonisers and for the colonisers, and was an activity of specialists in a closed space for solvent people (see section 5.2.2. for detailed discussion). Second, an ‘economy of reproduction’ boomed with the development of new technologies of information and communication: cultural production then took the form of recorded

⁷⁸ I am here profoundly indebted to Abdoul Aziz Dieng, who suggested this extremely useful distinction between “economy of retribution”, “economy of representation” and “economy of reproduction”.

products that involved a copyright system through radio as well as phonograms (see sections 5.2.2. and 5.5. for detailed discussion).

5.2.2. Contemporary popularisations of musical practices

From 1940 to 1960, musical production in Francophone West Africa grew to include a new form of musical practice, that of the French colonisers. Indeed, with colonial penetration, a new urban society composed of European expatriates (mainly French), national civil servants and West Africans of different nationalities emerged in cities like Dakar and Ouagadougou (Kaboret and Kabore, 2004 p.10). Although the great majority of the local population continued to consume its traditional musical practices as before, this new urban society appeared as a new public with original needs, as far as musical practices were concerned. The local population particularly frowned upon this novel form of musical practice that involved the performance of orchestras playing in bars and nightclubs. Indeed, as in most societies at this stage, such popular music was then socially considered as an activity of marginal alcoholics and prostitutes, a pursuit without a future which families were opposed to (Benga, 2002 p.297; Diouf, 2002 p.276; Ndour, 2008 p.31).

Rather than using and modernising traditional African music, the colonial period thus initiated an 'economy of representation' that encouraged the creation of local orchestras by civil servants who punctually played interpretations of the French popular repertoire. Indeed, the colonial administration was proposing courses of musical theory to its civil servants, as well as access to music instruments loan for the acquisition of musical material in order to perform French musical heritage (Ndour, 2008 p.20). As such, the acquisition of western instruments was possible only through

the colonial institutions and these instruments were used to satisfy the desires of the new public composed of urban Westerners as well as West Africans trained in French schools. In the early days of this economy of representation, musical productions were thus of foreign origins (*musette, valse*, etc. and later on *jazz, salsa*, and *rumba* with the arrival of US GIs in Senegal) and performed in French, English or Spanish. As such, musical performances were an elitist urban activity performed exclusively with western instruments, essentially involving interpretations of a foreign musical repertoire (Benga, 2002 p.291).

From 1960 to 1980, West African musical production developed to incorporate the quest of national identity that emerged with the recently independent states into their practices. While during the colonial period, artist-musicians had no choice other than to cater to, the imposed musical tastes of the new urban colonial society, at the time of independence of Francophone West African countries (early 60s), the latter encountered novel developments. Indeed, the first years of independence were marked by musical practices that reflected a search for national identity that brought together their various musical heritages, both traditional and western influences. As such, this period stood as a political move that indicated the beginning of a revolutionary evolution of West African musical productions. For instance, this development led to an originally Senegalese rhythm, a new modern popular music that incorporated traditional percussions to orchestras based on western instruments: the *mbalax*⁷⁹. Increasingly, the musical orchestras were referring to the traditional musical practices

⁷⁹ The *mbalax* is an accompanying wolof rhythm that is played by diverse percussions/drums: the *nder* or *sabar* with a high-pitched sound; the *gorong-yegé* is a high-pitched as well but used for solos; the *mbeug-mbeug* which is the equivalent of the bass; and the *ndeund* that is an instrument of the major-drum (N. A. Benga. *Dakar et ses tempos: Significations et enjeux de la musique urbaine moderne (c.1960-années 1990)* p.291)

of *griots* to enrich their musical performances by incorporating a local repertoire (Benga, 2002 p.291; Ndour, 2008 p.22-23).

In Burkina Faso, artist-musicians started to compose (and not only interpret) songs performed in national languages, such as *Mooré*, but remaining in the rhythms of foreign music (Kaboret and Kabore, 2004 p.36). In the 1970s, however, Burkinabè orchestras began to offer original compositions that were not only performed in national languages but also that were founded upon traditional rhythms such as *warba* (Kaboret and Kabore, 2004 p.40). Similarly, in Senegal, with cultural manifestations such as the Black World Festival (FESMAN) (1966) or the National Youth Week (1968), musicians started to introduce the use of local languages such as *Wolof* in their musical performances besides traditional instruments, alongside western instruments (Benga, 2002 p.291; Ndour, 2008 p.22-23). In the 1970s, the traditional rhythms on which *mbalax* relied became the basic structure, onto which other musical genres would affix themselves.

It was also a time when the mechanisms of an ‘economy of reproduction’ started to emerge, with the development of media, especially the radio, and this had an important impact on the evolution of music and its affirmation of a national identity. During this period, the only possibility regarding the recording and the transmitting of musical productions was through national radio. Indeed, neither Senegal nor Burkina Faso possessed an independent recording studio then. Moreover, national radio stations were the sole stations authorised to transmit, and thus occupied a monopolistic position on the airwaves (Benga, 2002 p.290)⁸⁰. As such, in a time of national euphoria,

⁸⁰ However, Senegalese or Burkinabé populations could listen to other national radios such as Radio Mali or Radio Conakry, the latter being especially popular for Sékou Touré’s discourses and Guinéan music. See A. F. Kaboret and O. Kabore. *Histoire de la musique moderne du Burkina Faso* p.45

musical production offered a brilliant example of national unity and integration. However, in their respective locales, artist-musicians could not yet make a living out of their musical practices (Kaboret and Kabore, 2004 p.45): they were either non-professional artists in the sense that their artistic occupation did not allow them to earn proper revenues; or civil servants, i.e. employed in national troops and whose only hiring contractor was the state (Bosman, 2007 p.1).

From the 1980s and throughout the 1990s, these musical practices saw another development, as artists-musicians struggled to inscribe their ‘nationally flavoured’ productions onto the global playground of the music market. While in Burkina Faso the 1980s stood as a period considerably constraining in terms of the development and emancipation of its musical production⁸¹, throughout the 1980s, *mbalax* musicians continued to investigate this equilibrium between the *griots*’ tradition and a necessary opening up towards foreign musical styles and genres. These musicians were also searching for new opportunities (other than the ones offered by national radio) in recording, sound engineering and music distribution. At the beginning of the 1980s, the Francophone West African music economy was thus based in major European urban centres, mainly Paris (but also London), where the market engines of ‘world music’ were emerging. Indeed, in Paris especially, after the success of the first West African group living in Paris, Touré Kunda, many other artists such as Mory Kante (Guinea), Salif Keita (Mali) or Youssou N’Dour (Senegal) who were living in their home country came to Paris in mid-80s in search of this ‘international buzz’.

⁸¹ Throughout the 1980s, Burkina Faso suffered four military coups: in 1980, 1982, 1983 and 1987 (see Ibid. p.47 for more details). Besides such a socio-political instability, the Revolutionary period (1983-87) considerably constrained the development of musical productions through various political prerogatives such as a curfew that lasted almost two years (with its consequent impact on live performances usually organised at night), the imposition of a ‘revolutionary’ entrance fee for the few live performances that were organised (300F cfa that did not allow orchestras to survive) and artistic directives as far as musical creations were concerned (in praise of the Revolution and the new Burkinabé nation – rather than the one of Haute-Volta – inhibiting as such the free creativity of already popular orchestras).

While no major musical figure from Burkina Faso marked this period⁸², various delineations of *mbalax* managed to adapt to the sonorous imperatives of the ‘world music’ market and follow a particular trajectory via European distribution and marketing companies. Youssou N’Dour with *Virgin London* and *Sony Music* in the United States; Baaba Maal with *Island Records* (U.K.); or Ismaël Lô with *Barclay* (France) (Benga, 2002 p.299) are among the musicians who revealed themselves through this ‘world music’ phenomenon. As such, from the 1990s onwards, the emergence and evolution of Senegalese popular music significantly changed the social conditions of its musicians and the social perception of musical practices. Indeed, with the international success of Senegalese musicians abroad, music was less perceived as a fruitless activity for deprived people, but rather as an efficient means towards social mobility. In the popular imaginary, the musician was then perceived as a wealthy individual capable of satisfying the needs of soliciting people (Ndour, 2008 p.28; 31). Again, the example of Youssou N’Dour, who is considered a successful musical entrepreneur, illustrates the triumphant passage of an individual from a lower social class to a wealthy one. And as one of my informants illustrates:

“The statement that “artists need to be helped” is something to which people would respond: they are rich enough already!”
(Interview #20; Music maker and worker, Dakar)

By the end of the 1980s and beginning of the 1990s, the realisation of the economic potential of musical productions implied new dynamics in the field of music, in that it has become not only a way of social ascension but also a professional activity and a business. The local ‘economy of reproduction’ exploded, while private infrastructures

⁸² Amadou Ballaké, a Burkinabè singer, could be considered as an exception to this, having received a ‘Golden Disk’ in Ivory Coast in 1982 and for having joined the successful band, *Africando*, in 2001. However, this artist was never popular in his own home country and his success never recognised nor acclaimed as such in Burkina Faso.

of music recording and editing⁸³ started to emerge, and with liberalisation⁸⁴, new and privately owned radio stations as well as written press appeared to challenge the monopolistic status of public media. The same happened in Burkina Faso, where private radios FM have multiplied since 1988, the date the first free radio, Horizon FM⁸⁵ (Kaboret and Kabore, 2004 p.56). It was also a time when the cassette tape boomed throughout the region with new duplication plants such as the ones of Seydoni (Burkina Faso) or Jololi (Senegal). Meanwhile, the majors of the recording industry, despite doing a lot for the promotion of African music in the previous 50 years, fled from the continent (except in South Africa), discouraged by the indifference of governments to act against piracy that had reached between 80% and 90% of the market in Francophone West Africa (Arnaud, 2007). Therefore, throughout the 1990s, new, non-governmental actors emerged in the field of musical production in both economies of representation and reproduction. Managing to support a nascent local music economy, they proved to be fundamental intermediaries between the individual and the collective, the political and the artistic, the local and the international (Mensah, 2007). In this respect, the incursion of such developments into the political framework remains essential for their comprehension (see section 5.3. for detailed discussion). However, before turning to the political economy of cultural production in Francophone West Africa, I want to conclude this section on a crucial aesthetic note.

⁸³ References can here be made to Youssou N'Dour's label "Jololi" created in 1996 in Senegal or "Seydoni Production" created in 1999 in Burkina Faso. These two enterprises both included, in a pioneering way, a recording studio and musical edition and distribution facilities.

⁸⁴ The liberalisation of papers and radio took place in 1989 in Senegal with the consequent creation of diverse musical programming on new radio stations such as Dakar FM, Sud FM or Walf FM. For detailed information, see B. Herson. *Fat Beats, Dope Rhymes & Thug Lives: Youth, Politics and Hip-Hop Culture in Dakar* p.19; N. A. Benga. *Dakar et ses tempos: Significations et enjeux de la musique urbaine moderne (c.1960-années 1990)*

⁸⁵ Throughout the 1990s, other private FM radio stations emerged in the Burkinabè media scene, such as Radio Salankoloto, Radio Pulsar, Savane FM, or Ouaga FM.

5.2.3. On the 1990s and their generational aesthetics

From the late 1980s and beginning of the 1990s, another popular musical form emerged on the Senegalese urban scene⁸⁶, and ten years later (early 2000s) on the Burkinabè urban scene: hip hop music. This popular musical genre displayed singular aesthetic distinctions in terms of its instrumentality and its address compared to previous popular music such as *mbalax* that was inscribed in the ‘world music’ phenomenon. Indeed, and contrary to previous generations of popular musicians, hip hop music has always relied on new information and communication technologies as far as its instrumentality is concerned. While *mbalax* and other ‘world music’ artists were most of time accompanied by orchestras or were instrumentalists themselves, the new generation of musical artists employed the cheapest instrumentality possible, i.e. B-sides⁸⁷ of cassettes that were used as back up music over which the artists could rap (Herson, 2000 p.7). Early familiarity with this new technological support was then enhanced with the arrival of further information and communication technologies that facilitated the process of musical production (see Chapters 3 and 7 for detailed discussion). As such, the material instrumentality of hip hop music radically distanced itself from that of previous generations of popular musicians.

Until the emergence of this musical practice, there had been no tradition or practice of *protest songs*⁸⁸ aiming to transmit a critical commentary on lived reality. Indeed, while *mbalax* successfully achieved a social transformation of musical practice, it did not challenge some artistic elements of the traditional performance in terms of its address.

⁸⁶ For detailed information on the Senegalese hip hop emergence, see the Wikipedia entry http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hip_Hop_Galsen

⁸⁷ B-sides are the instrumental versions of American or French hip hop singles that were on the other side of cassettes tape, with the vocal and instrumental version on the A-side.

⁸⁸ An exception can be noted with the anti-colonial discourse of a musical group, *Rossignol*, created in 1945 in Bobo-Dioulasso (Burkina Faso). For more details, see A. F. Kaboret and O. Kabore. *Histoire de la musique moderne du Burkina Faso* p.68

Indeed, *mbalax* has always remained a musical genre marked by the indigence of its musicians, with compositions that are generally centred on the praise of a member of the political or religious *establishment*⁸⁹ (Benga, 2002 p.297). While revising the traditional instrumental repertoire of *griots*, *mbalax* musicians always maintained the structure, the destination as well as the subjects designated by this music. As such, *mbalax* stands as a ‘music of *griots*’, i.e. a praising music of ambience and dance that is addressed to the body, that feeds the social life and *vice versa* (Diouf, 2002 p.277). Popular music such as *mbalax* that aims to entertain people and make them dance has regularly dominated the urban music scenes throughout Francophone West Africa, and is extensively consumed through TV, radio and in bars or nightclubs. In this respect, I can refer to the Ivorian *coupé-décalé* that has recently invaded the Burkinabè urban ‘soundscape’.

Therefore, in radical opposition with the festive, joyful and dancing sound of most West African popular musical genres revealed through ‘world music’, hip hop music, which is often considered as the sonorous territory of younger generations, has offered an alternative musical practice to a disillusioned urban youth whose living conditions have been severed by the first years of structural adjustments, and whose hopes of a decent future have been aborted by the *année blanche*⁹⁰ (Benga, 2002 p.301). Following a process of appropriation of foreign popular music, a new generation of musical artists broke with the cheerful and celebratory popular music in vogue, and developed a musical expression that voiced their dual anger and hunger while incorporating realistic defiance and pragmatic criticism in its message. As such, hip

⁸⁹ Few exceptions exist with artists like Ousmane Diallo alias Ouza or Seydina Insa Wade who managed to develop a more subversive discourse in their compositions

⁹⁰ The “année blanche” or “white year” corresponds to an invalidated academic year following the disputed electoral process that created an unprecedented political crisis in 1988, with severely repressed student riots (for detailed discussion, see Chapter 3).

hop musical artists have distinguished their aesthetics from those of previous generations of popular musicians. Their respective productions are not only materially but also symbolically, in resonance with the political economy of their times.

5.3. POLITICAL ECONOMY OF SENEGALESE CULTURAL PRODUCTION

This section highlights how the perspectives supporting French and Senegalese political economies are similar, with cultural production being a field of intervention of the nation-state. Their respective translation and application vary, and call for attention towards the possible discrepancies existing between an imported institutional model, and the located productive practices of the cultural field in Francophone West Africa. Although focusing on the Senegalese experience, the next sections look at Francophone West Africa in general, while making regular references to the Burkinabè situation. As argued in Chapter 4, despite the historical and geographical differences existing between Senegal and Burkina Faso, these two countries are ‘extremities of a same ensemble’. In this sense, and as far as the political economy of cultural production is concerned, they both have imported and applied the French conception of culture, as a key state instrument in building and consolidating a national identity. Whether framed in a socialist (Senegal) or a communist (Burkina Faso) political context, governments of both countries have thus translated such a French inheritance into a state monopoly and nationalisation of culture, as well as its means of production. However, differences among their respective application of this translation do exist, and are mainly expressed through the concretely pro-active political deeds initiated by the Burknabè government in the fields of cultural production. Indeed, and as it will be highlighted in Section 5.4, public officials in Burkina Faso have participated in the

structuring of a music economy, in a more effective fashion than their Senegalese counterparts, while setting up legal instruments and public institutions with financial and administrative autonomy. Nevertheless, despite these few notable differences in terms of actual political practices, there is, in Francophone West Africa, a ‘common’ understanding of cultural production and its related political economy, which has been inherited from the French model. Focusing on the possible discrepancies existing between such an imported institutional model, and the situated productive practices of the cultural field in this ‘common ensemble’, is thus crucial in understanding the accentuated working conditions of West African cultural workers, which are further addressed in Chapter 6.

5.3.1. State monopolistic politics of cultural production

Most countries in Francophone West Africa, such as Burkina Faso and Senegal, share a colonial history, a common legacy as previous French colonies, in their perspective and approach towards cultural production. Indeed, during the colonial times, while the “British West African territories were administered as political and economic units entirely separate from Britain, [...] French African leaders, however, were constantly being reminded of, and indeed, themselves subscribed to, the idea of the unity and integrity of Greater France” (Crowder, 1965 p.40). As such, the fundamental difference between the two colonial regimes was the British “indirect rule” and the French “direct rule” (Ndour, 2008 p.20). To illustrate, let us be reminded that, during colonisation, Francophone West African elites, such as Léopold Sédar Senghor (Senegal) or Félix Houphouët-Boigny (Ivory Coast), who later led their countries to independence, occupied ministerial functions in the French governments of the 4th republic (De Guiringaud, 1982 p.442). In other words, the French colonisation not only

proceeded through an economic and a political indoctrination, but also a cultural one, whereby most of the West African leaders felt deep affection and respect for France and its universalist ideas.

Therefore, an aspect of French culture that has been absorbed by its previous colonies is its institutional imaginary of cultural production as being intrinsically linked to the national identity. For instance, during the Burkinabè four-year revolutionary period (1983-87), the communist and still popular president, Thomas Sankara, a musician himself, extensively used artists (musicians, actors, etc.) as vehicles to spread the revolutionary ideal. His government thus expressly solicited these artists to perform art forms for the population that were considered to be partisan. Put differently, artistic and cultural expressions were essential instruments in the formation and representation of the national identity. Besides, the reasoning of culture as a state instrument in building a national identity was there best illustrated by the change initiated by President Sankara of the country's name, from "*Haute-Volta*", as defined under the colonial regime into "*Burkina Faso*", a *Mooré*⁹¹ expression, which means "men of integrity". Similarly, in Senegal, shortly after independence the state made several openings towards the creation of a national culture (Snipe, 2003 p.53). Indeed, the first president of Senegal, Léopold Sédar Senghor, used his literary ideal of *Négritude* to pave the way towards cultural emancipation, believing that the latter was the necessary condition to other political, economic and social independence (Sylla, 2002; Delas, 2006 p.1). For Senghor, *Négritude* was to be conceived as a national and democratic ideology, an efficient instrument in elaborating an identity discourse and in building and consolidating national unity (Delas, 2006; Benga, 2008). As such, exploiting a mythical-historical vein, from its early years onwards, the newly created Senegalese

⁹¹ *Mooré* is the language of *Mossi* people, one of the main ethnicities of Burkina Faso

state manipulated cultural production as a public object in its integral ‘development’ policy of the Senegalese ‘nation’ (Benga, 2008 p.2).

Indeed, in Senegal, since the early days of independence (1960), the field of cultural production has been defined as the avenue for the national entrance into modernity. In this respect, ‘nation’ and ‘development’ stood as the founding myths of a Senegalese modernity that rested on discourses of identity and unity (Diaw, 2002 p.550). Such an intellectual enterprise aimed at distancing Senegalese modernity from colonisation, understood as the moment of imperial and western modernity, which imposed a negation of its colonies’ culture and sovereignty. The ‘nation’ and its cultural identity were thus founded on an intellectual and scientific exercise that aimed at reconstituting its own regime of validation and truth. However, these modern myths did not reveal any fundamental paradigmatic rupture with the previous imperial modernity (Diaw, 2002 p.551-2). Indeed, resting on the ideological triangle of Senghor with its three poles that were *Négritude*, ‘Francophonía’ and ‘African socialism’, such a Senegalese modernity appeared as a mere appropriation, rather than a proper contestation of Western and colonial modernity. In this respect, although essentially developed in opposition to French colonialism, the ideal of *Négritude* still copied France’s traditional view on culture and the state, while applying it to the new independent Senegal. As suggested in Chapter 3, the myths of ‘nation’ and ‘development’ as well as of the ‘state-architect’ translated just another imperial modernity that implied an exclusive appropriation of the conception and application of Senegalese modernity⁹² (Diaw, 2002 p.567). Here, it should be recalled that while integrating the French legacy towards cultural production as a constituent of the national identity, early

⁹² A Senegalese modernity that included exclusionary practices (against those who did not acquire the competence and expertise from western schools, those who do not live in the city nor speak French for instance) as it relied on “Enlightment Universals” (the notions developed during the French Enlightenment period) and on the discursive and symbolic repertoire of western and colonial modernity.

Senegalese authorities believed that this field stood as a national endeavour whose responsibility (in definition and practice) was borne solely and exclusively by the state.

Inspired by the French model, Francophone West African states thus generally considered cultural production as an exclusive state competency, participating in the “enforcement of the national conscience” and possessing an “integrating and assimilating function” (Mbengue, 1973 p. 24; 29). As such, for Senegalese public authorities, “it was obvious that the state only possessed the means to accomplish such an endeavour of national interest” (Mbengue, 1973 p.23). From this perspective, the Senegalese ‘nation’ was imagined as the historical subject of the identity and modernity of the new independent country, and implied a new philosophy, a new literature, a new art, a new society, in short, a new “*homo senegalensis*” (Diaw, 2002 p.553). For Senghor, such an entrance into modernity implied the revalorisation of traditional values and practices, what was often referred to as the “renaissance of traditional arts” (Mbengue, 1973 p.18). As such, national institutions, which considered that Senegalese traditional heritage had been transformed into an “airport art” under colonisation, were devoted to, on the one hand, revisiting and rehabilitating such heritage and, on the other, linking Senegal with the intellectual and cultural West. In this respect, “President Senghor was willing to finance a variety of cultural enterprises, which [was] ultimately the true test of his dedication to national cultural programming” (Snipe, 2003 p.57). Such a national cultural programming was founded upon two fundamental axes of Senghor’s *Négritude* that were the “enrooting” (“*l’enracinement*”) into the values of the Black-African civilisation and the “opening up” (“*l’ouverture*”) towards other civilisations. Soon, the Senegalese state became not only responsible and the main producer of cultural production, but also the principal client and consumer of it (Diagne, 2002 p.250).

5.3.2. Presidential patronages of cultural production

As the first artist (writer, poet and art critic) to become president in the Francophone West African ensemble, during his presidency, Senghor developed a form of cultural policy, in a quite unique way, creating legal and institutional instruments accordingly. Translating his ideological convictions into practice, the first Senegalese President initiated a real state and even presidential patronage towards cultural production, through the creation of multiple institutions and organisations with the aim of boosting the national cultural life. As such, and among the most important organisations, in 1966 a Ministry of Culture was created (one of the first in Francophone Sub-Saharan countries); and so was the Black World Festival (FESMAN) with its first edition that same year; in 1967 a Service of Cultural Archives as well as a Centre for Civilisations Studies; and, in 1972, the National Arts Institute (Delas, 2006 p.2). This presidential patronage was directly addressed to the artists themselves, especially through the President Senghor's project of the "School of Dakar"⁹³ praising a Black aesthetic in visual art (painting, architecture, sculpture, graphic arts, etc.) as conceived through Senghor's *Négritude* (Benga, 2008 p.5). Indeed, through the Aid to the Artists and Development of Culture Fund (Decree 78-300 of April 12th, 1978), Senghor's government initiated a system whereby the government could directly assist and subsidise the artists for diverse projects (Delas, 2006 p.3). This Fund⁹⁴ thus permitted diverse supportive actions such as access to bank loans, the facilitation of artists' participation in international meetings and exhibitions, state acquisition of artistic

⁹³ For detailed information on "l'École de Dakar", see F. Iniesta. *À propos de l'École de Dakar. Modernité et tradition dans l'oeuvre de Cheikh Anta Diop*; I. Thioub. *L'École de Dakar et la production d'une écriture académique de l'histoire*

⁹⁴ Although it is not possible to provide any sense of the proportion of national resources (GDP) that went to the Fund, it can be noted that it benefited from a treasury account that was regularly augmented by annual State funding and allowed the State to constitute a 'private' artistic collection. In 1992, this State artistic collection included 2292 artworks. Besides, in 2011, this Fund changed from 100 million to 513 million Fcfa (see M. F. Lo. *Politique culturelle du régime de Me Wade: Une batterie de mesures pour le rayonnement du Sénégal*)

productions, individual acquisition of material equipments, organisation of cultural days and weeks, artistic prizes, and exhibitions (Sylla, 1997). For Senghor, culture was the way of putting Senegal on the map, and in this process the President-poet earned the title of *mécène d'arts*, patron of the arts (Snipe, 2003 p.58).

“Prior to Senghor’s retirement in 1980, Senegal became one of the first countries to receive structural adjustment loans from the World Bank. Structural adjustment emphasises the disengagement of the state and stresses the role of the private sector in the promotion of the economic stability and growth” (Snipe, 2003 p.58). Therefore, in 1980, when Abdou Diouf came to replace Senghor as President of Senegal, the economic and financial situation of the country implied a ‘new cultural deal’ that presumed little support for culture. Indeed, an alternative scenario to state patronage had to emerge while the country was facing a severe economic crisis and undergoing structural adjustments that forced new governmental orientations and priorities (Benga, 2008 p.5). At first sight, the major difference between the two administrations was thus the significant decrease in cultural leadership demonstrated by President Diouf, a sort of cultural modesty due to the rarefaction of resources, especially those dedicated to the cultural field (Diagne, 2002 p.254). However, some examples stress that remnants of Senghor’s perspective on cultural production still appeared under Diouf’s presidency, with budgetary allocation for culture and the arts being only slightly less than the amount under Senghor (Snipe, 2003 p.61). Indeed, Diouf established, with *La Charte Culturelle Nationale* and the *Sursaut National*, a blueprint for Senegalese cultural policy that reaffirmed its double foundation on Senghor’s axial concepts of *enraciment* and *ouverture*. Still, adopting Cheikh Anta Diop⁹⁵’s cultural approach,

⁹⁵ Cheikh Anta Diop was a Senegalese historian and Senghor’s principal intellectual rival. Diop’s cultural approach, the *Africanité*, favoured national culture and languages of the African continent

Diouf's administration hosted Dakar's Biennale of Contemporary Art, *Dak'Art*, a state-sponsored event that celebrated Senegalese and African literature. Also, in 1990, Diouf's government created presidential prizes for literature and visual arts while continuing to support filmmaking, albeit on a limited basis (Snipe, 2003 p.61).

Nevertheless, while not changing its instrumental and patronage-like perspective on cultural production, from the early 1990s, the Senegalese government, in an economic environment severed by drastic structural adjustments, modified its strategy of intervention in this field. As such, rather than orienting it from the top-down, Diouf decided to 'accompany' cultural production (Snipe, 2003 p.58). In other words, although the cultural field was still considered as state domain, and cultural production as a public good, a progressive disengagement of the state in the cultural sphere was initiated in order liberate some space (Diouf, 2002 p.270) for a diversification of cultural management. In this process, artists gained more autonomy in terms of creation and were freed from the Senghorian perspective that not only dictated a narrative version of the nationalist epic, but also imposed a vision and aesthetical grammar (Diouf, 2002 p.270). Most importantly, under Diouf's presidency, public institutions were no longer the sole intervening party in the cultural field, and people of creation, rather than the state, began producing culture. Indeed, non-governmental actors emerged in the field of cultural production⁹⁶ and cultural initiatives started to multiply. Key support was provided by the intervention of foreign cultural cooperation

(rather than a Black/*Négritude* identity). In 1987, Diouf's government renamed the Université de Dakar, Université Cheikh Anta Diop in memory of this eminent scholar.

⁹⁶ In 2000, these emerging non-governmental actors involved in the field of cultural production were explicitly recognised as crucial intermediaries between artists, cultural production and consumption, in Cotonou Agreements signed between European Commission and the ACP (African-Caribbean-Pacific) countries. See A. Mensah. *Les cultures africaines sont-elles à vendre? Éléments sur la situation du secteur culturel en Afrique*

services, such as the Cultural and Technical Cooperation Agency⁹⁷ of the Francophone ensemble and the Support Programmes for Cultural Initiatives (PSIC) of the European Commission⁹⁸ that offered new sources of funding for cultural projects (Sylla, 1997). However, such a cultural cooperation performed more to the benefit of creators than to the structuring of Francophone West African creation (Tebib, 2009 p.88). As such, the funding of artistic and cultural productions became increasingly reliant on individual initiatives, and people involved in the cultural field were turning towards alternative patronage, while relying on transnational networks of their relative disciples (Benga, 2008 p.7). This dynamic was evident in the development of contemporary Senegalese music (Diagne, 2002 p.255).

With the election of Abdoulaye Wade to the Presidency of Senegal in 2000, the idea of the cultural field standing as a national endeavour whose responsibility is borne solely and exclusively by the state was revalorised and another presidential patronage reinforced. Borrowing from his predecessors, President Wade insisted on a re-appropriation of the concept of “African Renaissance” and consequently dedicated considerable state funds to the realisation of what has come to be known as the “President’s Main Cultural Projects”⁹⁹. Among them was the organisation of the third edition of the FESMAN, an event centred on the theme of “African Renaissance” that took place, after having been postponed several times¹⁰⁰, from December 10th to 31st

⁹⁷ The Technical and Cultural Cooperation Agency (ACCT) was an intergovernmental agency in charge of the intensification of cooperation between Francophone countries that was created in 1970. France is one of the countries that has actively supported the actions of the ACCT which was renamed in 1995 the International Organisation for Francophonía (OIF).

⁹⁸ See I. Bosman. *Politiques Culturelles Africaines et Coopération Culturelle Européenne: Le Manuel du Secrétariat ACP*

⁹⁹ For detailed information on “Les Grands Projets Culturels du Chef de l’État”, see: <http://www.culture.gouv.sn> or www.primature.sn/grandsprojets/index.html

¹⁰⁰ When I conducted fieldwork in Dakar in December 2008, the FESMAN had already been postponed once (presumably for its lack of consultation with cultural workers as I was explained by several of my informants) and it was supposed to take place in December 2009. As mentioned, it finally took place a year later.

2010 in Dakar. Interestingly, one of the two General Delegates¹⁰¹ of this event was Sindjély Wade, the President's daughter, unknown by the participants of the cultural field up to her nomination. The organisation of the FESMAN required the renovation of several cultural infrastructures such as the Cultural House Douta Seck, the Cultural Centre Blaise Senghor and the Theatre Daniel Sorano, but its exorbitant budget has been heavily criticised, as it lacks transparency in its management and has considerably indebted the country¹⁰². Moreover, the other cultural projects decided by the Senegalese presidency included the construction of 1) a Black Civilisation Museum (idea initially formulated by Senghor in 1971); 2) a Place of African Memory (already realised); 3) a Monument of African Renaissance (already realised with a budget of 15 billion Francs CFA that created the popular anger); 4) a National Art School (another one!) which would be located in a same building as 5) a second National Theatre¹⁰³.

As the example of the FESMAN rightly illustrates, besides translating a very old notion of culture as heritage and artefacts rather than living and productive, Wade's "main cultural projects" were and still are the objects of intense polemic as far as their governance and accountability of their management are concerned (Diop, 2006). As such, the first four years of the Wade's administration witnessed the succession of seven Ministries of Culture (Niang, 2008 p.97). These successive nominations not only demonstrate the complexity of creating any sustainability in the management of

¹⁰¹ The other General Delegate was Abdoul Aziz Sow, former Ministry of Information and Communication.

¹⁰² For detailed information, see

http://www.lequotidien.sn/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=458:financement-du-fesman--wade-samuse-les-senegalais-casquent-sindiely-au-bord-des-larmes-lors-dune-reunion-sur-les-difficultes-financieres-finalement-la-sgbs-et-la-bis-pretent-15-milliards-de-francs-cfa&catid=74:fesman&Itemid=77 or

http://www.lequotidien.sn/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=519:budget-et-dependes-du-fesman--plus-de-48-milliards-pour-les-folies-de-sindiely-wade&catid=74:fesman&Itemid=77

¹⁰³ This last construction involving the national school and theatre is being developed in partnership with the Chinese government.

cultural affairs, but also the omnipresence and constant intervention of the presidential cabinet in this field. Now more than ever, this governmental exclusive competency on cultural production faces many controversies from the population, but especially from cultural workers who feel that this state domain is not translated into practice with a pragmatic efficiency.

5.3.3. 'Politics of culture' as cultural policy

Through this brief incursion into three successive presidential patronages of cultural production in Senegal, I argue that a 'politics of culture' rather than an effective 'cultural policy' has been regularly put in place. A 'politics of culture' stands as another form of instrumentalisation of cultural production, i.e. a politics of nationalism and representation of the state. From such a perspective, cultural productions are functional public goods serving the consolidation of a national identity or whichever governmental project. Such an instrumental reading of cultural production that was initially at stake under Senghor's administration, a period that has been rightly named by Achille Mbembe as a "state theatre" ("*théâtre d'État*") (Diagne, 2002 p.253) with cultural patronage that focused solely on supporting creation and the circulation of artists. Indeed, as many other Francophone West African governments at that time, Senghor's administration was concerned with culture and its production but not from a comprehensive economic perspective (Bosman, 2007).

To recap, in order to further develop the various forms of national culture, Senghor set up, between 1964 and 1966, three institutions of cultural action producing Senegalese cultural products that aimed to be massively commercialised, distributed and consumed. These were the National manufacture of tapestry, the National Theatre

Daniel Sorano with its Ballet, its traditional lyrical Ensemble and its Theatre Company, and the New African Editions (in collaboration with the Ivorian and Togolese governments). However, these institutions, financially dependent on the state subsidies, never managed to acquire a financial autonomy through the commercialisation and distribution of their cultural products and failed to make up for their financial deficits once governmental assistance ceased (Sylla, 1997). Indeed, with the state culturalist approach justified by a proactive voluntarism in the national construction, the conception of ‘cultural policy’ was mainly understood as *politics* with the latter concept itself reduced to the simple institutional action of the state (Diagne, 2002 p.253). In other words, Senghor’s “globalizing culturalist philosophy” stood at the core of his political project, a tautological and pragmatically undefined formulation, barely offering a state “*poïesis*” as cultural policy (Diagne, 2002 p.246).

Moreover, and as the previous section has highlighted, both successors to the Senegalese presidency inherited from Senghor’s political practices by also conceiving and using culture in an instrumental way. Therefore, the successive Senegalese state patronage, ambitiously referred to as ‘cultural policy’, never thought nor governed the different modes and politics of intervention of the different participants who invested and continue to invest in this field. First, presumably the structural adjustments and donor aid acted as a strong economic cage that prevented Diouf’s administration from developing any prospective vision and restricted its action and policy in the cultural sphere. Second, in his anxious quest to mark his time, Wade has been singled out by political opponents for his hegemonic construction of Senegal and his tendency to monarchism that consequently impacted on his intervention in the cultural field (Diop, 2006 p.113-4). As such, the respective short-term perspectives conceiving culture as an instrument of national identity or prestige did not take into consideration the

comprehensive production process of cultural goods nor the other intermediaries involved in cultural production. Put differently, while the state stepped in to provide cultural productions to maintain the public good (national identity and prestige), in practice, it separated arts and culture from their commercial dimension and economic potential (Pratt, 2007 : 170).

I thus distance Senegalese successive ‘politics of culture’ from an actual and effective ‘cultural policy’ and I argue that there remains in Senegal an urgent need for the invention of a new “art of governing” (Diop, 2006 p.126) cultural fields. Indeed, a comprehensive and integrated ‘cultural policy’ with the necessary sustainability in its empirical formulations has never really existed in Senegal. A ‘cultural policy’ acknowledges the plurality and flexibility of this field and effectively supports the diverse cultural practices. It is informed by the reality of the moving, multiple participants in this productive community and offers an appropriate framework for their enterprises to develop. On the contrary, ‘politics of culture’ that considers cultural expressions and forms as public goods necessarily displays a precarious sustainability as far as certain cultural fields are concerned. In Senegal, the promotion of a national culture, “living and authentic”, insisted on the traditional forms of expressions that included theatre, plastic arts and literature, (Mbengue, 1973 p.36) but not popular music. As such, Senegalese *mbalax* as a contemporary popular urban music was never raised and thus supported to the status of national cultural production for having contributed to the construction of the citizen’s identity.

The state monopolistic ‘politics of culture’ implied that a “politicised and idiosyncratic definition of which cultural forms and practices ‘deserve’ support” has become inevitable (Pratt, 2007 p.169). As the examples of Senegalese presidential patronage

again demonstrate, such an appreciation of cultural production tends to “a very staid, or conservative, view of culture that is backward looking, reverential and not dynamic” (Pratt, 2007 p.170). Interestingly, during the UNESCO Conference on cultural policies held in Venice in 1970, several delegates representing European countries already put forward their worries regarding the prominent role played by West African states in the conception and application of their national cultural policies (Mbengue, 1973 p.20). I maintain that as far as the music sector is concerned, these worries were justified, while this cultural field never benefited from an appropriate institutional space or a legal framework promoting its development.

“We perfectly know the potential contribution to the country’s economy that music represents if only one takes care of it. Because it has never really been taking care of in terms of state policy, a conscious policy, which would be elaborated with objectives to be reached. But here, music has developed itself on its own, like a street child, an abandoned child; but despite of this, it has produced marvels. In our minds, if we take care of music, it can become extraordinary!” **(Interview #21; Music maker and worker, Dakar)**

Surely, and as this quote stresses, the most compelling example of the absence of an integrated cultural policy stands in the musical sector that has never been understood as “a form of populist culture which could also help revise the local economy” (Cloonan, 2007 p.7). Indeed, in Senegal a coherent policy for popular music has never developed, contrary to Western countries, such as the U.K. for instance, where since the 1990s, the government began to fund popular music, while helping the market itself and thus promoting this cultural production as a business (Cloonan, 2007 p.38-39). Similarly, in Burkina Faso, while other cultural sectors have benefited from considerable state support in terms of their production and promotion such as cinema (with its most famous realisation being the FESPACO), the music field has remained

for a long time the ‘poor parent’ of public cultural administration (Kaboret and Kabore, 2004 p.96). To illustrate my point, both in Dakar and Ouagadougou, the only regular music programming of African artists are those organised by foreign cultural centres such as the French Cultural Centres (CCF)¹⁰⁴ or the Goethe Institutes (Arnaud, 2007). Senegalese popular musicians who are nowadays internationally renowned thus manage to access to the global music market and to inscribe themselves in the ‘world music’ trend, but have done so without the institutional action of the state (Diagne, 2002 p.255). Indeed, while the state has failed to capture the potential benefits of this ‘world music’ moment, the whole contemporary musical production has never been recognised by public officials as a key economic force. As such, Senegalese political economy of cultural production has let the musical productive community emerge and develop on the margins of the state ‘politics of culture’.

5.4. POPULAR MUSIC: THE “STREET CHILD” OF ‘POLITICS OF CULTURE’

Despite the institutional perspective that disregards the commercial dimension of the musical production and its potential sustainability as an economy, market dynamics have emerged and have been thriving since the early 1990s in the Senegalese popular music scene. Indeed, in Senegal, cultural workers active in the musical scene evolved without the support of the official authorities: how they do so, i.e. what their actual entrepreneurial practices are, will be the object of Chapter 6. However, and for now, this section explores the way ‘politics of culture’ consequently impacts on musical makers and workers in their practices. As previously argued, such a politics considers

¹⁰⁴ With their coordinated programming policy, CCFs stand as a unique regional network of musical diffusion throughout Francophone West Africa. As will be demonstrated in Chapter 7, hip hop festivals challenge such a ‘unique’ position while they offer another alternative network for West African (mostly hip hop and urban music) artists to perform throughout their regional ensemble.

culture as an instrument of ‘public good’ that is by definition distanced from any ‘private merchandise’. As such, one of the main implications of this political economic position of public authorities regarding the cultural sphere is that, to be a musical entrepreneur is to be placed in opposition to the state and its view of culture. Interestingly, this has occurred despite the fact that in economic terms these cultural workers may be offering shining examples of neo-liberalism that seek to maximise the role of the private sector in determining the political and economic priorities of the state. Therefore, this section focuses on the critical political economic formation displayed by cultural workers who are involved in the music field as a means to grasp the complexity of how culture frames action in contradictory ways in the Francophone West African ensemble.

5.4.1. Legal invisibility of musical makers and workers

As we have seen, ‘politics of culture’ understands cultural production as a public good necessarily taken care of by the state. Such an approach implicitly recognises cultural production as a market failure, rendering the possible existence of ‘cultural enterprises’ as non sense. Put differently, cultural productions are public and this understanding evacuates any notion of private development in this field. As such, the evacuation of a commercial and private dimension of cultural production in the political imaginary of the successive Senegalese governments has consequently been translated in their practice. One of the most illustrative examples stands in the non-distinctive treatment of cultural enterprises as commercial enterprises, with musical producers, for instance, being considered as simple merchants (Soumaré, 2008 p.147). Moreover, this lack of distinction has led to the excessive taxation of the majority of cultural imports (such as musical instruments, technical material for recording studios, etc.) as luxury goods.

Similarly, in Burkina Faso, one of my informants¹⁰⁵ highlights the fact that there is no specific nomenclature for cultural products that are also considered as luxury goods. In this respect, and as an example, blank cassettes are taxed at the same rate as those already published. Besides, in Senegal, although exonerations do exist when accredited by the national Support Agency for Investment and Major Works (APIX), the legal invisibility of musical enterprises prevent them from accessing to these benefits, as Interviewee #19 complains.

“Whenever a musical enterprise goes to APIX (Support Agency to Investment and Big Works), it cannot get a accreditation unless it declares that it is exercising in audiovisual activities. Nowadays, a music studio cannot get any exoneration: we have to play with the words and use the term “audiovisual” in order to import material that is not audiovisual. An enterprise of musical production is not recognised in their procedures!” (Interview #19; Music maker and worker, Dakar)

Supporting cultural production can certainly be considered as a national imperative for the identity dimension it holds, but also for the potential economic boost it can bring. However, such public support should not necessarily resonate with state or even presidential patronage, as it has been the habit until now in Senegal. Indeed, and as one of my informants puts it, the *“state should fund some things not by giving money directly but by reducing for instance, the taxes that the cultural actors have to pay”¹⁰⁶*. Indeed, creating a supportive framework for the practices of musical workers remains within the competency of the state, as the sole entity capable of legally recognising the specificity of their professions and relative activities.

¹⁰⁵ This informant does not have a particular reference code as this person was identified as being part of the ‘institutional network’ in Ouagadougou. This individual is an historical member of the Burkinabè Ministry of Culture; under the interviewee’s request, the interview has not been recorded but notes were authorised and duly taken.

¹⁰⁶ Interview #22; Music worker, Dakar

“An advantageous tax system and a regulation of the sector [are needed]. We need to know who is event promoter, who is producer, and who is artist because nowadays whoever wants to organise a show, can! [...] And the state should help the organisations that are organised. They need to stop helping people on an individual basis and start to help the enterprises! (Interview #24; Music worker, Dakar)

The critique emphasised in this quote expressly reminds us of the limits of state assistance intervening on an individual basis (based on its ideological affinities as previously seen), rather than with the systemic perspective of a sector composed of professional organisations. Certainly, the recurrent cultural patronage of the Senegalese governments, which favoured individual contributions over a market structure, represents a constraint for professionals who strive to invest in this sector. In this respect, the Burkinabè cultural administration offers a contrasting perspective as it created in 1999 a National Centre of Performing and Audiovisual Arts (CENASA)¹⁰⁷. Indeed, the CENASA is a unique state-owned complex that combines a recording studio, outdoor and indoor PA systems as well as light systems in a cultural space dedicated to the performing arts that participates in the promotion of national cultural productions and that can be used by Burkinabè musical workers and makers at preferential rates. As such, the CENASA stands as a public component that participates in the structuring of the local music economy and that was created and is managed by the state.

The comment of Interviewee #24 also points out that non-recognition of the specificities of cultural enterprises is correlative of the legal invisibility of its professionals. As such, in 2003, Burkina Faso undertook institutional steps in order to legislate on the organisation and the promotion of musical performances. Indeed, a licence for cultural entrepreneurs was then created (Ministerial Decision no 2003-

¹⁰⁷ For more details, see <http://www.cenasa.bf/presentation.htm>

241/MCAT/CAB) with the aim of regulating – by official authorisation and accreditation – the cultural work of musical promotion (Kaboret and Kabore, 2004 p.108). Based on evidence provided by one of my informants¹⁰⁸, this decision still severely lacks enforcement in its concrete application. Meanwhile, in Senegal, such proactive step towards the regulation of cultural work has not occurred and in the absence of legal visibility and clarity of musical professions as well as their respective activities, there is still an urgent need to develop a favourable framework for investment in cultural enterprises (Soumaré, 2008 p.150).

“Yesterday, I was again reading in the newspaper that a very famous artist of the Sorano theatre was very ill and people were wondering how come artists still do not have social protection. But it is simply because they still do not have a social status! [...] Rather than talking about piracy and helping the artists, one should normalise their work and allow them to make a living out of their arts!”
(Interview #19; music maker and worker, Dakar)

“Nowadays, I have no status so if I am ill and I haven’t saved money previously, I die! [...] One should not be able to organise an event without a licence. In Guinea, a smaller country, one cannot, nor in Niger, this country with only a desert! And the biggest country in terms of reference in Africa cannot manage to impose that!”
(Interview #26; Music worker, Dakar)

As these comments of my informants put forward, music makers and workers in Senegal clearly suffer from a legal invisibility. Indeed, the various professions¹⁰⁹ related to the field of music simply do not exist in the juridical reality (Soumaré, 2008 p.144). The recognition of a profession in Senegal is based on the reunion of different

¹⁰⁸ Interview #1; Music worker, Ouagadougou

¹⁰⁹ Among the musical makers we can identify the artist-musician, instrumentalists (disappearing compared to the early days of ‘modern’ musical practices), the artistic director (nonexistent in Senegal), the lyric writer and the composer; among the music workers, we can identify, the producer (live and phonographic – disappearing), the editor (nonexistent in Senegal and Burkina Faso) the recording studio engineer, the arranger (mixing), the mastering studio engineer (those three later – professionally competent – are in shortage in the West African ensemble) and the consumer electronics organisations (extremely rare in the ensemble – musical makers and workers usually buy their material in Europe – mostly France – and then have it repatriated); but also the event organiser, the promoter, the manager and the distributor as cultural workers.

criteria: 1) the professionalisation with a publicly authorised training centre; 2) the payment of public taxes; and 3) the existence of a career and retirement plan (Soumaré, 2008 p.144). The comments of the following Interviewees remind us of this recurrent complains of musical makers and workers regarding one of these criteria notably delimiting professional activity: the existence of professional training.

“In France, a person who aspires to be a music arranger has to take an exam at SACEM in order to check if he knows how to read and write music. Other professions, like chemist or doctor, are regulated and the same should apply to musical professions. It is only in the cultural industry that every and anything is done!” (Interview #25; Music maker and worker, Dakar)

“Here a producer is simply someone who has money to invest in a product [...] but artistic expressions need to be exploited based on norms and these norms do not exist! These norms are not applied because people are not trained appropriately and because there is no formation organisations that would respond to the actual needs of the sector. Training is needed as a response to the demand [...]; the actual needs of the sector need to be responded to!” (Interview #19; Music maker and worker, Dakar)

As these two quotes suggest, the public music school that was created in the late 60s did not adapt to new realities of contemporary musical production. Indeed, it offers neither technical training linked to the new ICTs nor cultural management training¹¹⁰. Similarly, in Burkina Faso, the National Institute of Artistic and Cultural Training (INAFAC)¹¹¹ created in 1985 does not offer management nor technical trainings as far as new methods of musical production are concerned (Kaboret and Kabore, 2004 p.97). As such, professionally competent arrangers and sound engineers as well as

¹¹⁰ As far as cultural management training is concerned, it is useful to note that in Ouagadougou, since 2005, the AGAC Master (in Arts, Cultural Management and Administration, formerly the Master in Arts and Communication) has opened its doors at the University of Ouagadougou offering the opportunity for some cultural workers to access a formal education. However, most of my informants did not follow this formation, as they were either already practicing in their field before the creation of the programme or were not in Ouagadougou at that time. Besides, this Master does not include technical training linked to new ICTs. Such a kind of Master does not exist in Dakar.

¹¹¹ For more details, see:

http://www.culture.gov.bf/Site_Ministere/textes/etablisements/etablisements_inafac.htm

producers and managers are severely lacking in both music fields of the ensemble. Meanwhile, until the upgrading of national music schools to the “*actual needs of the sector*” as Interviewee #19 puts it, a multiplication of short term training seminars initiated by professional associations or musical promoters during their festivals, have been developing. These ‘private’ initiatives however do not deliver any publicly authorised diploma certifying the professional status of their participants.

The absence of a certified and appropriate musical training illustrates the fact that the professional criteria of ‘work’ are not clearly defined in the Senegalese musical field where, moreover, there is not a collective convention nor professional syndicate¹¹² of music makers and workers. Here again, the Burkinabè experience provides a contrasting perspective as in 1995 a National Syndicate of Artists-Musicians (SYNAM) was created in order to fight for musicians’ interests and working conditions beyond the limited actions of the different associations (Kaboret and Kabore, 2004 p.66). Although the SYNAM managed to acquire more satisfactory artist fees for musicians during local cultural manifestations¹¹³, it did not productively extend its actions towards the creation of a comprehensive nomenclature defining the diverse professions involved in the music field. As such, since its creation, this syndicate has slowly lost its efficiency and impact on cultural policy-makers and workers. However, both the collective convention and the professional syndicate stand as two essential conditions in order for an individual professional to be legally visible and recognised as a worker in front of the law. A collective convention establishes the

¹¹² There are few professional organisations that exist in the Senegalese musical field such as the Association of Music Professions in Senegal (AMS) or the Inter-professional Coalition of Phonographic Producers and Editors in Senegal (CIPEPS). However, these organisations stemmed from the music makers and/or workers’ initiative and are still not supported by the public authorities in their actions.

¹¹³ This acquisition stands as a considerable progress as most of political or cultural manifestations hiring musicians tended to favour foreign artists (with important fees) to the detriment of local artists who were hired at best for the first part of the event and with ridiculous fees (see A. F. Kaboret and O. Kabore. *Histoire de la musique moderne du Burkina Faso* p.78 for more details)

minimal rules that constitute the nomenclature defining the music professions, and a professional syndicate stands as the recognised dialogue partner for public powers, authorised and capable of defending the interests of the professions (Soumaré, 2008 p.145). In Senegal, music makers and workers are therefore not recognised as ‘professional workers’, i.e. professionals who are, based on the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948), legally entitled to social benefits (social security, retirement plan, social protection, etc.) and obligations (taxes payment, working contracts, etc.).

“On the societal level, up to now, artists have no status, even the producers are not recognised as real workers. But, I work at the international level and realise that there is a lot of money that disappears in the social charges in Europe. This is a direct shortfall if we consider that a French artist who come and play in Dakar will do so while paying charges to the French state; but a Senegalese artist, who goes and plays in France, is forced to pay charges to the French state and his visa will purposely depend on him paying the charges. And these charges are spectacles leaves, retirement savings, things that the African artist will never see!” **(Interview #29; Music worker, Dakar)**

“Working at the international, I was sometimes asked for a document that simply does not exist in Senegal [...] because the artist is not considered as a worker in this country! Any Senegalese artist who go and perform in France, if he cannot prove that he is a Senegalese resident paying taxes in Senegal, he will have a tax withholding of 33.3%! If only one could calculate what an artist can bring to the state in terms of tax deductions...!” **(Interview #19; Music maker and worker, Dakar)**

As these two quotes describe, music makers’ lack of recognition constitutes an important financial loss for the state. Certainly, as with any legally recognised profession, music makers and workers could significantly contribute to the national economy and its finances through the principle of tax perception. And, as stressed by my informants, this shortfall is considerable and could only be counterbalanced by a necessary double recognition: musical productions both drain an economy and are

inscribed into a market, and music professionals are legal workers entitled to rights as well as duties. Nevertheless, until to now¹¹⁴ Senegal and Burkina Faso are still marked by the absence of a normalising and effective legislation that would conform and govern the types of activities music makers and workers do, which leaves their enterprises informal and unregulated.

5.4.2. Individualisation of musical practices

“If we go on the way things are done, we are just committing a suicide and everybody knows it, and no one says anything and people keep on focusing on their little activity and do not think about the forthcoming generation whom nothing will be left to and this will be dramatic for them!” (Interview #19; Music maker and worker, Dakar)

This introductory quote highlights one of the main consequences of the legal invisibility of music makers and workers and their activities, which is the absence of cohesion amongst the musical productive community. Indeed, it has been argued that the way the popular musical field has developed in Senegal has not favoured unity, but rather, and because of economic and social imperatives, it has encouraged conflictive relationships among the various participants active in this cultural field (Ndour, 2008 p.40). As previously described, while in Burkina Faso, the local popular music scene is dominated by Ivorian music such as *coupé décalé*, on the Senegalese national territory, the scene is dominated by *mbalax*. The Senegalese population mainly appreciates this musical genre and recognises itself in *mbalax*'s musical and dancing performances.

¹¹⁴ Senegal is a pioneer on the African continent as far as copyright is concerned: in 1973, it created its own copyright law, Law 73-52. However, since then, this law fell into destitution by not taking into consideration the neighbouring rights protecting the producers and interprets, the various technological progress (as consigned in WIPO “Internet Treaties”) nor the new kinds of remuneration (private copy and fairness). Only at the beginning of 2008 did Senegal transpose into its laws the Rome Convention (regarding phonographic producers and interprets) and WIPO treaties. At the time of this thesis, a new Senegalese law on copyright and neighbouring rights still hasn't any application decree (allowing its effective activation!). For further details, see Y. Soumaré. *Dimension juridique de l'industrie musicale*

However, the success of *mbalax* makers and workers is conditional, as any popular music addressed to a national public, to a local consumption that is considerably restricted in each country of the West African ensemble (Kaboret and Kabore, 2004 p.80). Indeed, musical consumption is marked on the one hand, by a tiny market (the national one), which does not allow the total absorption of the multiple musical productions released, and on the other, by the weak buying power of the population. Interviewees #21 and #29 assess these economic and social imperatives that significantly constrain the popular music sector:

“Nowadays, Africa suffers too much from its divisions inherited from the colonisation: each little state, with its small territory and its little flag! This implies that there are only tiny markets; and a quality product, which is released in Senegal, will be released in very few other African countries; you can count them on the fingers of one hand. If one wants to get the last album of a famous artist in a neighbouring country, it is often easier to get it from Paris than in the country!” (Interview #21; Music maker and worker, Dakar)

“Instead of going to a show, people know that these 1000Fcfa may well serve to buy a breakfast the morning after. One needs to be really fan to go and see the show of Youssou or Omar Pène and to agree on not eating the following day and pay instead for go to their show. And again, it will be once a year for Tabaski or Korité¹¹⁵.” (Interview #29; Music worker, Dakar)

Therefore, a situation of perpetual rivalry remains among music makers and workers competing for scarce resources. Indeed, and as in other West African musical fields such as Burkina Faso, the restrictions on local cultural consumption are combined with the scarcity of musical producers, sponsors¹¹⁶ and other arts patrons (Kaboret and Kabore, 2004 p.63). As such, music makers and workers continually and extensively

¹¹⁵ *Tabaski* and *Korité* are traditional Muslim celebrations that are very popular among the Senegalese population.

¹¹⁶ For a long time, the sponsors came mainly from tobacco companies; now they mostly come from telephone companies (two or three per country, reducing the number of opportunities for cultural activities to be sponsored).

compete for few existing resources as far as cultural production and consumption are concerned. Such a situation is common to any economy where resources are scarce, but it has been exacerbated in the West African music economy. Indeed, in a music sector scarred by legal invisibility of both its participants as well as their activities, a sector where any and everybody can and do improvise as ‘music professionals’, a certain individualistic attitude has dominated. As the following quotes put forward, in the absence of regulation and formalisation of their enterprises, music makers and workers have not been successful in uniting and mobilising around the defence of their collective interests.

“People do not take decision in the collective sense. It is very individualistic! Take the example of [name the most important music enterprise in Burkina Faso]. I offered them my services to press records and I am less expensive than people in Tunisia but [this enterprise] still went to make its records press in Tunisia. There is a logic by which people do not want to work with such or such person because they don’t want this person to develop his enterprise”
(Interview #25; Music maker and worker, Dakar)

“There is no logic of coordination of the various training offered on the different festival. [...] In Senegal, if two people happen to organise a concert at the same date, they won’t even call each other. Both will know [about the conflicting time of their events] and even if they call each other, they will maintain their initial date. This forces the public to choose whereas if the events were organised at two weeks of interval, the public would be able to attend both events”
(Interview #26; Music worker, Dakar)

As previously suggested, such an internal division of the musical productive community is not the exclusivity of the Senegalese popular music scene. Indeed, I also noticed this attitude in Burkina Faso, where music makers and workers also adopt a particularly individualistic behaviour, searching for short-term benefits for their own person rather than long-term benefits for the advancement of the whole sector. These

kinds of deeds are often characterised as *gomboïst*¹¹⁷, borrowing the metaphor used for quick and easy money from the *gombo*. Also called ‘okra’ in English-speaking world, the *gombo* is a resourceful vegetable that grows everywhere and very rapidly, without much human effort. Applied to the musical field, it implies the search for ease, to the detriment of quality in musical production, resulting in work that is technically superficial, poorly polished and whose composition lacks originality (Kaboret and Kabore, 2004 p.90-2). An example of a *gomboïst* attitude can thus be the systematic practice of music makers using playback rather than hiring instrumentalists with whom (s)he would have to share the artist fees, which leads to the consequent progressive disappearance of these kinds of music makers¹¹⁸. Extending throughout the productive chain of musical production, a *gomboïst* attitude can also be identified among consumers who, “*until the day of a show, will think of how they can trick the system to attend the event for free*¹¹⁹”. Indeed, in most Francophone West African countries, the concept of presales, whereby people buy a ticket in advance for a show, does not exist, although such a practice secures some return on the initial investment beforehand.

As such, and as one of my informants summarises, “*there is an important share of responsibility that goes to the state but there is also a share of responsibility that goes to the actors*¹²⁰” who seemingly haven’t managed to develop a form of collective organisation and harmonisation in order to counterbalance the official non-regulation of their sector. Indeed, both the legal invisibility of the musical field and the individualistic attitudes of its participants, two estimated consequences of the Senegalese and by extension West African ‘politics of culture’, considerably constrain

¹¹⁷ I am here indebted to Interviewee #5, Music worker, Ouagadougou, who reminded me this expression extensively used in the music sector.

¹¹⁸ This situation can interestingly be compared to the one of 1960-80s when musical artists first got into this field by practicing an instrument.

¹¹⁹ Interviewee #19; Music maker and worker, Dakar

¹²⁰ Interview #24; Music worker, Dakar

the sustainability of musical production as a field of entrepreneurial practice. In this respect, one of the most salient illustrations of an individualistic approach stands in the behaviour of the (public as well as private) radio animators who economise their participative efforts by not filling in the forms indicating which music they play during their shows. Taking into consideration the privileged popularity this media enjoys in West African musical landscapes, the recurrence of this specific practice greatly contributes in dramatising the consequences of an already poor management of music copyright, a final issue I now turn to.

5.4.3. Nationalist and state copyright system

Through the notion of ‘economy of retribution’ I touched upon in the beginning of this chapter, I have suggested that a form of intellectual property rights already exists, in traditional West African societies. Contrary to contemporary Western copyright systems, where the individual rises above the community, the active presence of both the community as moral corporative persona and the individual as the exploiter of this collective good has traditionally ensured a juridical equilibrium (McNee, 1998 p.6). In this sense, traditional West African society suggests a social space that favours the collective over the individual, and where individual success is rarely celebrated (Ndour, 2008 p.41). Such a conception thus applied to early forms of copyright and its management. However, the incursion of these cultural productions into the political economy and its impact on the situating of music makers and workers highlights the tendency of individual participants to rise above (and often to the detriment) of their community of practice. As such, the previous sections have demonstrated that the current legal invisibility of musical workers and their individualistic practices are the result of being placed in actual opposition to a prominent state monopolistic patronage

as far as cultural production is concerned. Illuminating the conflicting political economic formations of West African cultural spheres that destabilise national economies, this section extends the critical analysis of the impact of state ‘politics of culture’ on cultural practices to the management and regulation of copyright.

While copyright legislation in France is a result of the authors struggle, in West Africa, it has generally been a simple transposition of the French system without any consequent implications of the main assignees. Until the accession to independence of Francophone West African states, and just after, the management, the protection and dissemination of intellectual properties were guaranteed by a foreign agency, namely the African Copyright Bureau (Mbengue, 1973 p.33). Indeed, the African Copyright Bureau was created in 1943 through a French Ordinance authorising its copyright law to be applied in the territories of its colonies. The African Copyright Bureau was therefore an antenna of the SACEM, the French copyright collective management agency, and was active in Senegal until 1972, when the Senegalese Copyright Bureau was created, with in 1973 a revision of the 1963 Senegalese law on copyright (Bachelier, 2000 p.1). As such, Senegal was one of the first in the Francophone West African ensemble to have its own national text on copyright which later on inspired other national copyright laws, for instance in Mali (1977), Ivory Coast (1978) and Burkina Faso (1983) (Ngombé, 2007 p.765).

“The Senegalese Copyright Bureau. [...] It is a state process. [...] One has to understand the post-independence context where socialism was very fashionable [...] and implied the establishment of state control of the means of production, a nationalisation of the means of production. There was a very developed logic of state interventionism. [...] For the moment, it the state that nominates the committee board, the direction board, and the beneficiaries have nothing to say.” (Interview #21; Music maker and worker, Dakar)

As Interviewee #21 highlights, in the process of affirming their national autonomy, each Francophone West African country put in place its own system of copyright management and created national Copyright Bureaux whose committees and direction boards were (and for many still are) nominated by the state. Nevertheless, such a bureaucratic approach to the collective management of the main revenues of cultural practices that reaffirmed cultural production as an exclusive competency of the state was not without risk. Some of the contemporary impacts of such a political economy that implied a state approach to the management of copyright can indeed be observed, notably regarding the widespread piracy ravaging the system. Indeed, such a nationalist process has had very little power over transnational phenomena such as ‘piracy’, i.e. reproduction and circulation of illegal copies of a given cultural product. Operating through the borders, ‘musical pirates’ have benefitted from the inherited ‘balkanisation’ of the Francophone West African region following the national independence. Considering the cultural superficiality of West African national borders, but also the common economic space (ECOWAS) shared by most countries of the region that struggle with this plague, a regional harmonisation of the regulation and management of copyright should be possible. However, the persistent nationalistic ‘politics of culture’ that has never managed to frame the music field in a proper cultural policy has prevented the effective consideration of a coordinated collaboration among policy-makers of the ensemble in charge of copyright regulation.

“Each bureau works in its country without enough harmonisation. [...] In countries that have initiated the hologram system in order to identify the licit products, there is no harmonisation: people can buy some licit products in a country with the required hologram but once they bring these products in another country, they are asked to buy a second time local holograms. This is a non-sense as we are in a specific economic space, ECOWAS, so one should pay the hologram only once! These anomalies are not complicated to solve but the state need to organise consultations, to listen to the actors who are

on the ground instead of writing laws and texts from their offices only.” (Interview #21; Music maker and worker, Dakar)

Besides, as a system managed and regulated by the state, copyright often suffers from the deficiencies of the general political administration. Indeed, corruption – whether discreet or massive – is still heavily present in the civil service as a way to compensate for miserable salaries in the public sector, whether education, health or also culture. As such, the form of ‘piracy’ that is greatly denounced by the cultural makers and workers is, as previously mentioned, the one incited by the public media whom, because of their privileged position as public servants, are rarely held accountable for their respective royalties payments. Worse, still this impunity regarding the effective application of a copyright system by public radio media also extends to the private media as Interviewee #21 explains:

“The same thing applies to public and private radios as well as TVs. The reality is that public media do not show the example. They pay only a little, on an irregular basis and what they pay is not the result of a negotiation but it is determined unilaterally” (Interview #21; Music maker and worker, Dakar)

Copyright and the royalties they supposedly generate for the creators are essential in an ‘economy of reproduction’ that recognises the intellectual property of creative workers. And these cultural workers not only involve the artists themselves but also, and as far as the music economy is concerned, musical producers and publishers, these respective ‘investors’ in and ‘agents’ of musical creations. As one of my informants says, *“officially the sales have decreased but unofficially CDs are still circulating, but they are all pirated CDs. The problem is that only pirated CDs circulate¹²¹”*. As a result, phonographic producers can no longer recover their investments on the musical productions they realise, with official sales being limited to a total situated between

¹²¹ Interview #20; Music maker and worker, Dakar

1000 and 2500 copies for the most famous artists. Similarly, musical publishers – that actually cannot perform and, as such, have never really existed in the Francophone West African context – are prevented from working effectively in an environment where they are incapable of earning enough to make a living, because copyright related to radio diffusion does not function properly.

“There is a lot of money missed out because of a lack of structuring: copyright is a good example. If copyright was collected as it is in France, an artist would earn the double with his copyright than with his artist fees.” (Interview #29; Music worker, Dakar)

As Interviewee #29 states, “*there is a lot of money missed out*”, knowing that nowadays, more than a third of the revenues of western artists-musicians come from the royalties they receive from the various media disseminating their creations. But again, the institutional perspective that disregards the commercial dimension of musical production has considerably limited the power of a nationalist and state copyright system that has thus proved to be ineffective for the main assignees. In the long run, such a situation clearly seems unsustainable, which explains the newly voted law on copyright regulation in Senegal, that urges for the recognition of the investing assignees and the transformation of the Copyright Bureau into civil society. This original law could once again expose Senegal as a pioneer in terms of copyright management in the region, however, it will remain a beautifully fantasist text as long as no decree of application is made to enforce it. In turn, such a decree would imply on the one hand, an official recognition of the limits of the state ‘politics of culture’ that has failed to appreciate and govern the economic dimensions of cultural production, and on the other, it would call for an effective institutional consideration of critical political economic formations deployed by cultural makers and workers.

5.5. CONCLUSION

Throughout this chapter, a rationale for defining ‘Francophone West African ensemble’ as an analytical category has been reinforced, while alternating scalar perspectives between nation-state, society, and productive community. The regional adjective is here justified by the fact that Francophone countries located in West Africa share, because of their historical heritage of French colonialism, salient commonality in terms of their respective approaches towards cultural production. As such, I have situated cultural production in a complex network of counter productive forces in the Francophone West African ensemble that give it a local complexion which may look different elsewhere. While both Chapter 5 and Chapter 6 stand as a socio-economic contextualisation of my inquiry into hip hop entrepreneurship in the West African music economy, the specific objective of this chapter has been to situate this music economy in time and space, in order to prepare for the detailed commentary on cultural practices I develop later on.

Therefore, I have suggested an initial incursion into the socio-economic history of musical production that puts forward the traditional performance of *griots* and the contemporary development of popular musical practices. Indeed, my argument is that musical productions in Francophone West Africa, have emerged from a double heritage, one traditional African and another French colonial. While the traditional West African musical production highlights the social function occupied by the *griot*, I stress that since colonisation, these situated musical practices have been popularised through three main phases of development that responded and then challenged the colonial musical productions. The contemporary emergence of West African musical production has illuminated the popularity of urban music, especially dancing or

'*ambiance* music' (such as *mbalax* in Senegal or *coupé-décalé* in Burkina Faso) and hip hop music. I have argued that these two genres of popular music display new musical practices, each of them with their respective audience, instrumentality and intentionality. Nowadays, traditional and modern (let's say contemporary) musical performances coexist in the Francophone West African ensemble, along with their respective economies of retribution, representation and reproduction.

As I have suggested, there is a danger in opposing the 'traditional' with the 'modern', as these two notions co-exist naturally and dialectically, in a productive complicity and complementary fashion (Huchard, 2008 p.xii). However, the analysis of the Senegalese political economy reveals a West African worry of (involvement with) a modernity expressed mainly through a time frame: one which addresses the past and present while being oriented towards the future; one which deals with the traditional and confronts it with modern practices of cultural production. As such, based on a common West African legacy of the French colonial approach towards cultural production, the Senegalese successive governments initiated what I have called a 'politics of culture'. This 'politics of culture' translates into a modernist approach, inscribed in time rather than in space, and exhibited through the persistent practice of presidential patronage. Expressed through the confronting terms of 'traditional' and 'modern', while affirming national identity and prestige, states' temporal approach towards cultural production thus distanced itself from the reality of the field practiced, among others, by music makers and workers. As such, the nationalistic approach of these states has not permitted the conception of an effective 'cultural policy' that could translate into a constant dialogue between a political economy and a productive community. This is what Interviewee #19 explains:

“Politicians won’t be able to do anything without the artists and it has been years they have kept on doing things in a political way. Any cultural policy needs to take into account the cultural actors in a serious way, to involve them at the decision stage. Cultural actors need to be listened to, and whenever they suggest solutions, the practicality of their application should be thought of: only this would stand as a mutual exchange between the policy-makers and the actors of the cultural sector of this country in order to pretend to a beginning of change!” (Interview #19; Music maker and worker, Dakar)

While focusing on the impacts of the ‘politics of culture’ on the field of musical production and its productive community, I have thus highlighted another dimension of primal importance, i.e. a spatial perspective that locates in practice such an ideological ‘politics of culture’. As such, some of the participants in this field of practice refer to a “*prostitution of music*¹²²” whereby people make and work in the music sector, as in another underground sector, i.e. with no formal regulation at all. Participants in the field of popular music, i.e. this “street child” of ‘politics of culture’, remain confronted with their legal invisibility as well as that of their enterprises, the individualisation of their musical practices as well as the destabilising consequences of a nationalist and state management of their copyright system. Nevertheless, these music makers and workers have been striving to reconcile something what the public officials have continued to ignore: the duality of a cultural production and its consumption, of an economy and its market. In doing so, they have pointed towards the limits of the modernist state approach to cultural production in itself, while offering a critical political economic formation through performing in the musical field.

Such a critical political economic formation of music makers and workers eventually allows me to argue for the notion of a ‘music economy’ rather than ‘music industry’ in Senegal as well as in Francophone West Africa. Indeed, and as this chapter has

¹²² Interviewee #24; Music worker, Dakar

established, a 'music economy' recognises the various scales of intervention in the cultural field (whether the society, the state, the nation, the region, or the productive community). A 'music economy' also acknowledges the dualities of cultural production and consumption, as well as the inherent dual dimensions of identity and merchandise it involves. Besides, contrary to a 'music industry' that sounds 'massive' and static, a 'music economy' is plural, mobile, flexible and evolves in-between interstices of various sizes, powers, and potentials. Certainly, through the example of popular music, this chapter has demonstrated that there are now at least two conflicting ways of conceiving and practicing cultural production in these territories: an official and a productive one. As such, the official conception and practice of cultural production in the Francophone West African ensemble has been the focus of this chapter, as its comprehensive situating is crucial to frame the practices of musical entrepreneurship. I now turn to the productive dimension of this lesson that music makers and workers expose to their governments in Chapter 6. How they actually develop and sustain their entrepreneurial practices and initiatives in the margins of the state 'politics of culture'.

CHAPTER 6

WEST AFRICAN PRACTICES OF MUSICAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP

6.1. INTRODUCTION

This chapter explores the practices of Francophone West African musical entrepreneurs based on how those interviewed in the two case study units reflect on their individual and institutional motivations, interpretations, intentions and actions in the particular cultural enterprises in which they are involved. As argued in Chapter 2, entrepreneurial processes are diverse and multi-faceted, while the role of the entrepreneur is historically, geographically and industry-specifically permeable, and evolves based on the changing patterns of economic life, which is itself socially and culturally embedded. There are thus different ways of exploring new ideas and leveraging resources for growth (Wilson and Stokes, 2005) and different interpretative knowledge offer various relative additional value to situated music economies. As such, while Chapter 5 offered a contextual situating of a Francophone West African music economy on broader social, political and economic terms, this chapter focuses on the productive dimension of its entrepreneurial dynamics. Indeed, and as previously mentioned, concerning cultural entrepreneurship, what is of concern is the interaction of a situated identity and a located practice (Chapter 2).

Chapter 2 highlighted the fact that the gap in the operationalisation of a conceptual framework for West African musical entrepreneurship is less a matter of theoretical sophistication than of engagement with practice. Indeed, as far as these cultural entrepreneurs are concerned, “networks unfold in a contextualised process” (Steyaert and Landstrom, 2011 p.125); and their individual situations and responses vary. As

such, I have considered West African musical entrepreneurs as cultural workers standing as intermediaries between demand and supply in this specifically situated cultural economy¹²³. In fact, I will argue that they react according to their interpretations of their field of practice, while being self-reflective and thus they offer a mediation as well as a translation of ideas and information (Pratt and Jeffcutt, 2009 p.268). I have attempted to provide a critical response to often simplistic accounts of current economic and psychological analysis on entrepreneurial practices of cultural workers. In doing so, I emphasise that these musical entrepreneurs can be seen as an example of a particular local formation of a “community of practice” (“CoP”)(Wenger, 1998); in other words, my approach considers West African musical entrepreneurship as a particular instance of a specific “CoP”.

To be sure, drawing upon the conception developed by Wenger (1998), my approach understands that there is a profound connection between identity and practice, and that the specificity of this “CoP” performing in Francophone West African music economies is linked to and embedded in its spaces of emergence. As such, this specifically situated “CoP” can be analysed by engaging with the duality of its ‘doing’ and ‘thinking’ processes. Indeed, this chapter focuses on the interplay between two processes (cognitive and pragmatic) that both require and enable each other as analytical perspectives of a dynamic phenomenon (cultural entrepreneurship in the West African music economy). Based on such a duality, conceiving of musical entrepreneurs as a “CoP” can be manifested in two ways: its ability to give rise to a meaningful experience; and conversely, to hold its members hostage to that experience (Wenger, 1998 p.85). This chapter thus explores *in situ* processes and practices that locate this community inside the constellation of cultural entrepreneurship, by focusing

¹²³ Other works on cultural entrepreneurship have adopted such a stance, such as M. Banks, A. Lovatt, J. O'Connor and C. Raffo. *Risk and trust in the cultural industries*

on the duality of its identity and practices, its cognitive and pragmatic spaces. What does it mean to be a cultural entrepreneur in the Francophone West African music economy? What are the ‘thinking’ and ‘doing’ processes of cultural entrepreneurs in this specifically embedded environment? How do these cognitive and pragmatic spaces of cultural entrepreneurship develop and inscribe themselves in local as well as global music economies?

6.2. CONTEXTUALISED PROCESSES OF AN INTERMEDIATING COMMUNITY

The ideal-typology of West African musical entrepreneurs developed in Chapter 2 highlighted the reliance of this community of practice on ‘local knowledge’. Indeed, the provided empirical material confirms the “need for entrepreneurs to be both immersed in the culture of the activity system but also, with the help of significant others, to have the opportunity to reflect both critically and individually on what they are doing” (Raffo et al., 2000 p.219). As such, focusing on the contextualised processes of this specific community of practice calls for an inquiry into the production and reproduction of *in situ* knowledge involved in West African music fields. It has been claimed that such an information and communication ecology “is important in maintaining a circulation of market knowledge in the industry” (Pratt et al., 2007 p.936).

The productive practices of this situated community involved in Francophone West African music economies have not yet been investigated. Following the analysis provided in Chapter 5 which underlined the dissatisfaction of this community with the existing organisation and conditions of production, the following section provides

evidence on how this community of practice acts to change things, through a mediated and contextualised knowledge. As such, it illuminates how the creation of such knowledge is on the one hand encouraged by spatial proximity, and on the other, involves socio-economic relations and places extending beyond the local urban sphere. In this respect, West African participants evolve in a ‘relational space’ from which their situated knowledge develops. As will be argued, such a space reflects the co-constitution of nodes and flows (Latour, 1997) or, more precisely, the “co-constitution of places in relation to one another or between socio-economic relations and places” (Pratt et al., 2007 p.925-6).

6.2.1. Spatial proximity of the community

Exploring the cognitive and pragmatic spaces of this “CoP” calls for an acute attention to the situated or “tacit” knowledge created and developed among its participants. “Tacit knowledge” refers to Michael Polanyi’s famous phrase in his classic work *The Tacit Dimension* that “we can know more than we can tell” (1966 p.4). “Tacit knowledge is usually encompassed by a range of learning by doing, learning by watching, and simply learning by ‘being there’”. By implication, this is situated; you have to be co-present to engage in it” (Pratt, 2002 p.40). Understood through spatial proximity, this concept is of foremost relevance with regards to cultural and creative economies and their communities of practice, which rest on a symbolic knowledge base (Asheim et al., 2007 p.664). Tacit knowledge emerges in ‘doing’ and is acquired through experiences of interactions and collaborations of individuals situated in a shared context of cognition and action (Gertler, 2003 p.80). Indeed, it is a dynamic process which is appropriated through social relations surrounding production, and that are characterised by close and deep engagement. Proceeding through face-to-face

interactions (multidimensional deliberate knowledge exchange) and/or buzz (non deliberate knowledge exchange), such a situated knowledge stands as a social process that calls for an ability of participants in this community of practice to auto-reflexively read their field of action.

In Senegal as well as in Burkina Faso, participants in this “CoP” are mainly concentrated in one city, the capital-metropolis, which in Dakar can include its immediate peripheries, for instance. This physical proximity is relevant as it allows the community to socially interact, whether formally or informally, to exchange information in an explicit as well as implicit ways; in other words, to work and perform effectively in its locales. In Chapter 2, I stressed that West African musical entrepreneurship is not a static subject but “the very process of being engaged in, and participating in developing, an ongoing practice” (Wenger, 1998 p.93) from its situated location. As such, participants in this “CoP” develop and use, both in their cognitive and pragmatic spaces, a situated local knowledge based on their working experiences. Indeed, the cognitive spaces of musical entrepreneurs imply the individual propensity of these entrepreneurs to develop an auto-reflexive knowledge and analysis of their practices. The pragmatic spaces of these participants, in turn, involve their capacity to use this reflexive knowledge in order to come up with useful and productive practices. This local knowledge is thus linked to, developed and challenged by the entrepreneurs’ participation in their community. In this respect, a systematic motivation among West African participants to initiate a project or create an organisation is to do with responding to a perceived need, whether artistic, operational or institutional and satisfying it with the suggestion of empirical solutions. In other words, the co-presence of these participants feeds a situated and reflexive knowledge that allows them not only to posit themselves but also to react accordingly. The two following comments of

my informants illustrate this participative process through which musical entrepreneurs perceive and respond to the deficiencies of their field of practice.

“We created [name of organisation] that offered IT trainings, knowing that in 1997, computers were really rare and expensive in Burkina Faso and that no association could have afforded one. Cultural operators could then use the four computers available and receive an initial training as they had never touched a computer previously and could also use the two meeting rooms created without having to seat at the French Cultural Centre for their professional appointments.” (Interview #12; Music worker, Ouagadougou)

“[...] I realised that there was an urgent need, as most of the studios that were in Ouagadougou were not specialised in Hip Hop and the arrangements were also sounding like world music or African variety music. People from these studios did not understand this music.” (Interview #2; Music maker and worker, Ouagadougou)

As mentioned in Chapter 2, even though West African musical entrepreneurship as a practice does not transcend nor transform institutional conditions, it nonetheless responds to constantly changing conditions call for a permanent reinvention of practice. As such, interacting with the locale in a spontaneous and fluid manner, through the co-presence and co-location with peers, consumers and partners, becomes essential for this “CoP” in terms of deciding what can and what cannot be done as far as the musical economy is concerned. Through this process, participants are capable of assembling the necessary resources in an innovative way in order to exploit their skills and ideas. Indeed, using this reflexive knowledge to respond to a perceived need allows participants to discover innovative ways of initiating enterprises embedded in their environment. As the comment of Interviewee #28 illustrates, such an *in situ* knowledge of both the imperative of local production and cultural consumption permits the development of an “*appropriate formula*”, i.e. an innovative concept such as “*entrance fee plus CD*” to boost the recording sales:

“Two weeks ago, I organised a concert with an entrance fee of 2000Fcfa plus CD. And we sold almost 600 of them: which is already good¹²⁴! [...] This is a way of gaining back on one’s investment because otherwise people don’t really buy. [...] [Things are] possible but one needs to find the appropriate formula!”
(Interview #28; Music maker and worker, Dakar)

Such a situated, local knowledge thus stands as ‘know-how’ (as well as a ‘know-who’ as we shall see later) which both defines and is defined by social context (Gertler, 2003 p.78). Indeed, *in situ* knowledge highlights the fact that innovation and creativity are effects of their contextuality, of their socially embedded character in time and place as well as in field. To be sure, it “arguably brings innovation closer to the traditional value qualification of creativity, and [...] brings production closer to consumption” (Pratt and Jeffcutt, 2009 p.267). As such, engaging in close social relations, interacting and communicating with consumers for knowledge creation can also allow participants to reconsider and restructure their structural as well as individual organisation. Such a restructuring symbolises palliative strategies whereby participants decide to reorient their practices based on the realities of their working environment. In this respect, restructuring may involve what has been termed, in commercial strategies, a ‘zero-risk’ practice, increasingly common among African entrepreneurs in general, whichever the field of action (Spring and McDade, 1998; Gachuruzi, 1999). Indeed, this practice stands as a way of selecting the less risky way of doing one’s practice in a given field, and as far as West African music economies are concerned, producers and distributors have especially favoured this strategy in order to maintain their activities as sustainable as possible. A distributor from Burkina Faso and a producer from Senegal explain:

¹²⁴ Nowadays, because of the consequent decrease in terms of sales compared to the 1990’s in Senegal, the initial duplication of a musical product is limited to 200 to 300 units with the capacity only for high profile artists such as Youssou N’Dour to duplicate 1500 units from the first duplication. (See “Entreprises musicales au Sénégal” realised by A.A. Dieng, A. Koundoul, L. Gomis & J.F. Mbaye for Culture & Développement, Feb. 2009) Therefore being able to sell 600 units of a musical product at once is indeed considerably satisfactory.

“We favour commission sale or return rather than proper distribution; simply because if an artist’s release is successful, the producers, the artists and ourselves win but if it is not successful then, the producer and the artist only have problem to recover their investments. This strategy allows us to be out of danger!” (Interview #3; Music worker, Ouagadougou)

“Now we are focusing on what we can do best without risk. We will stop producing, which is risky in the choice of the artists, as well as distributing and organising live performances. We’ll focus on the duplication, the rental of the PA system and the recording studio.” (Interview# 18; Music worker, Ouagadougou)

Spatial proximity thus encourages a situated knowledge that allows participants to develop a certain understanding about the local processes of musical production as well as inform their specific practices in the context of this cultural economy. However, such *in situ* knowledge is not strictly spatialised in the locales of their practice, but constantly interacts with other knowledge of similar “CoP” performing in different locales. Indeed, West African participants ‘know’ their practices not only through local buzz and face-to-face communication, but also through their translocal connections and interactions with the outward “CoP”, which transfer some elements of one practice to another. In doing so, I have argued that they are ‘cultural brokers’ (Chapter 2) informed by a situated knowledge of musical production “[...] fashioned through situated socio-temporal-techno-spatial networks” (Pratt, 2002 p.37). Such an understanding of participants’ practices as being informed as much by the ‘inside’ as the ‘outside’ reminds us that in the spaces of this community “[...] not only are local and global co-joined and co-constituted, but [...] the action of making both is situated in the ongoing everyday and its webs of interaction” (Pratt, 2002 p.33). As such, West African production of situated knowledge is not a locally locked-in process but, rather, proceeds through external linkages and translocal interactions developed through institutional proximity.

6.2.2. Institutional proximity of the intermediation

While *in situ* knowledge of West African musical entrepreneurs highlights the micro-level learning processes of this “CoP”, its contextuality should not be overlooked and, as such, its institutional foundations need to be inquired (Gertler, 2003 p.89). Indeed, the situated knowledge of this community is elaborated through local practices combined with an informed understanding of the global processes of other similar “CoP”, while the locale in which its participants perform constantly interacts with other locales. This “CoP” thus produces knowledge while being inscribed in a more extensive interstitial social and economic network that lies outside of the local organisation that sustains it. As such, macro-level societal institutions shape the situated knowledge of West African participants in this cultural economy.

As far as the music economy is concerned, these macro institutional arrangements are, for instance, perceived through the established tradition and global working practices of transnational record companies (Negus, 1993 p.303). Indeed, business practices and promotional techniques derived from models developed in the U.K. and United States dominated the institutional contextuality of the music economy for a long time. Such institutional features of the music economy’s context have been shifted and translated into European contexts through interventions of previously alienated Continental European countries, with a series of commercial market/nation-state/civil society relationships and initiatives (Negus, 1993 p.310). On the contrary, and as I have suggested (Chapter 2), West African musical entrepreneurs stand as a “CoP” that is marginally positioned in the broader constellation of musical entrepreneurship, and participates only peripherally in its economy. Nevertheless, this community still develops a practice characterised by these “longer-lived connections” (Wenger, 1998

p.104) as a response to the institutional design preventing its participants from full participation. Indeed, the Anglo-Saxon and European global strategies are part of the institutional contextuality of West African participants' knowledge creation. As such, these participants produce a situated knowledge and develop their respective practices through a constitutive duality, combining local knowledge and establishing "translocal pipelines" (Bathelt, 2005 p.111).

"Ask any random Senegalese to name just two Mauritanian artists and he won't be able to. [...] This person will not know a single Mauritanian nor Guinean Bissau artist; he will know a Malian one but simply because this Malian artist is known in Paris. Paris is the capital of music!" **(Interview #21; Music maker and worker, Dakar)**

"In Africa, there is potential. People organise huge salons in foreign countries; it would be good to organise an African music Salon and that the professionals from over there take a place to see the reality over here, There is a lot of African music which is been offered but from Europe just as the Europeans want to see it and want to buy it. But if they come at the roots to see what we are doing and what we are capable of doing, it will make an eureka to the European producers, booking agencies, etc.; otherwise we keep on doing some folklore which do not go anywhere and stay in our borders." **(Interview #13; Music worker, Ouagadougou)**

While the comments of Interviewees #21 and #13 recall the persistent expatriated dimension of the West African music economy addressed in Chapter 1, the second quote also emphasises the complexity of "tapping into external markets and [engaging] in trans-local interactions" although these latter are "at the core of individual and collective competitiveness" (Bathelt, 2005 p.110). Indeed, situating knowledge through these trans-local interactions, or what Bathlet terms "translocal pipelines", does not result from the spontaneous meeting of actors who share a context of cognition and action. Rather than occurring automatically, these externally-oriented pipelines are quite risky and require particular investments for the creation of new

linkages (Bathelt, 2005 p.111). These investments thus require West African participants to actively link and connect their practices of music production with translocal as well as global productions. They critically analyse and identify possible room for actions and investment in their field, by making cultural projects relevant to both local and global, proximate as well as de-territorially close consumers and partners. As such, these forms of translocal interaction translate into a complex “brokering” that “involves processes of translation, coordination, and alignment between perspectives” (Wenger, 1998 p.109). To restate, West African musical entrepreneurs stand as ‘intermediaries’ (UNCTAD and UNDP, 2008), mediators, or as Wenger’s calls them, “brokers” who use their multimembership to transfer some elements of one practice into another; and as such, they “are able to make new connections across communities of practice, enable coordination and [...] open new possibilities of meaning” (Wenger, 1998 p.109). Interviewees #17 and #1 illustrate this community of practice’s investment in creating new linkages through its capacity to translate and appropriate knowledge in order to situate and inform their practices.

“I offered them an outdoor show, ‘Operation 17 000 people’. The university counted 17 000 people at that time and the largest show room in France, Bercy, can welcome 17 000 people; and yet, the dream of any artist is to fill up Bercy. As I did not have the means to realise this dream in France, I could realise this dream here in Ouaga [...]. And then, the artists could use that as an image to vend to potential booking agents or promoters in foreign countries in order to demonstrate that the group had an aura in their home country.” (Interview #17; Music worker, Ouagadougou)

“What is interesting is that before in order to be known in Europe, one had to go through the majors but now we do not need all that. I can stay in my little office in Burkina Faso and make my artist known in the whole world, in Brazil, Canada or South Africa. The digital is very positive for the local cultural operators. We can now do things using all the digital supports that exist like facebook, youtube, etc and we are no more dependent on the majors!” (Interview #1; Music worker, Ouagadougou)

From this perspective, “*Bercy*” and “digital supports” stand as “boundary objects” (Wenger, 1998 p.106-8) that both connect and disconnect “CoP”, as they enable coordination but do so without actually creating a bridge between the perspectives and meanings of various constituencies. Indeed, while developing their practice and negotiating its meaning, West African participants thus create ways of participating in musical entrepreneurship as a practice, and in the very process, contribute to make that practice what it is (Wenger, 1998 p.96). For instance, they do recognise the changing dynamics of the global music market – in terms of ICT (such as the practices of download, mp3, popularity of ringtones, etc.) and in terms of changing tendencies (the culture of singles, decrease of air-waved musical diversity; predominance of live performance over recorded products). Aware of global processes as well as technical and structural requirements of music production, this community is alert to the local weaknesses of its field and the limits of its practices in terms of global competitiveness. As such, this community creates *in situ* knowledge through practices that are maintained and developed through a constant interaction between the local and global dynamics of the music economy. As Interviewees #19 and #18 highlight, this community critically senses the deficiencies of its field of practice as well as the need for its participants to develop some ‘global formats’ of professional activity.

“We need norms! [...] We are not at the format: it is not a question of people not knowing how to play. We have excellent instrumentalists, very good vocalists but it is an ensemble of things, which mean that we are not in the format. We are out the format!”
(Interview #19; Music maker and worker, Dakar)

“Today, in Europe, the promotion budget is higher than the production budget. We have not reached that level in Burkina Faso because of the mentality of artists and producers who prioritise mostly the realisation of the master and feel relieved when the master is done. But this is not a good appreciation of the circuit of

music production because once you have the master finished, the real work begins!” (Interview #18; Music worker, Ouagadougou)

Therefore, West African participants know and attest to the importance of their activities and skills, service-provisions and projects, ideas and conceptions to be known and recognised by partners situated in global urban music centres. Indeed, such connections are crucial, especially in a “deregulated environment” marked, as demonstrated in Chapter 5, by the absence of professional and occupational infrastructure (Christopherson, 2002 p.2010). As such, this community expresses a strong desire to develop privileged relations with participants outside their locale of practice. Actually, its participants thrive in building and maintaining translocal relationships and connections. As the two following quotes illustrate, being acknowledged and recognised by a wider community of practice is a process in which West African musical entrepreneurs are intensively and constantly involved.

“It is not that easy to export oneself. Bil Aka Kora is here for more than eight years, fourth album coming; he went to France, Spain, Belgium, Canada. But it is not enough. One needs to get into a network. My staff needs to professionalise themselves in order to have access to this network. [...] Just one article in a newspaper in France can bring an artist very far. But the operators need to have the possibility to take a plane, and go to the festivals and meet the booking agencies [...] For the WOMEX, it is the BEMA¹²⁵ that invited me although I represent and manage two important Burkinabe artists. If tomorrow I can’t go back again, I will loose all the contact I made there. I can talk to people through Internet but at one point they want to meet me, to know that I am present on the different salons and that I am serious! [...] The way this sector works is that people need to see you repeatedly on the different points of meeting of the networks, which are the music salons, in order to remember you and effectively work with you!” (Interview #13; Music worker, Ouagadougou)

¹²⁵ Export Bureau of African Music (BEMA): this organisation has existed since 2007 and is based on the Circul’A network, which puts together cultural professionals from Ivory Coast, Mali, Senegal, Benin, Burkina Faso, and Guinea who involved in African music. The Circul’A network has been developed through the professional meetings organised since 2005 by Africa Fête during its annual festival taking place in Dakar. For detailed information, see <http://www.circulabema.com/>

“Artistically, Senegalese music has already proven that it could export itself through important artists like Ismaël Lô, Baaba Maal, Omar Pène, Positive Black Soul, Daara J, Pee Froiss, Youssou N’Dour etc. These artists demonstrated that music could be exportable but under certain conditions. [...] This is a professional lobbying. The example of Alioune Mbaye Nder¹²⁶ who went to London fifty times and toured in Europe a lot but people there will still ask who is he? It is not because one went to tour several times in Europe that people know him; but if one manages to get noticed by these media, this professional circuit, the latter can be very influential [...] simply because they are in this sphere. And in order for the African music to enter this sphere, it needs to be normalised at its roots otherwise it will not be capable of inscribing itself in this market. [...] It is not clearly stated nor formulated but one needs to enter in this sphere to succeed throughout the globe.” (Interview #19; Music maker and worker, Dakar)

A relational approach, such as the one highlighted by Bathelt through his notion of “translocal pipelines” (Bathelt, 2005), can be helpful in the context of this research, as it conceives of economic actors as being situated in context of social and institutional relations. Indeed, it supports my approach of using a micro perspective to understand economic structures and processes, while focusing on individuals and collective agents, such as community of practice, involved in the governance of economic action. West African participants offer an image of a community that deals with interdependencies (Steyaert and Landstrom, 2011 p.127) dually informed by both spatial and institutional proximity. Similarly, it has been argued that clusters and networks co-constitute each other at all times in the particular spaces of aesthetic production. “Clusters, in other words, are dependent on networks for their emergence and development, but networks also rely on clusters for their own reproduction and transformation” (Van Heur, 2009 p.106). As I have previously argued (Chapter 2), “an important aspect of the work of any community of practice is to create a picture of the broader context in which its practice is located. In this process, much local energy is directed at global issue and relationships” (Wenger, 1998 p.161).

¹²⁶ Alioune Mbaye Nder is a Senegalese mbalax artist as famous and popular as Youssou N’Dour in Senegal

A relational approach thus permits us to learn about West African participants' practices while understanding them as a response to their contextualisation. As such, while inscribed within a constellation of communities of practice, these participants are a community especially concerned with the practice of intermediation. Drawing on recent (Northern) research which concludes that "music production is best understood as shaped by the intertwinement of spatially concentrated clusters and spatially distributed creative networks" (Van Heur, 2009 p.115), I thus argue that West African *in situ* knowledge highlights the complex self-organisational and trans-scalar dynamics of musical production. In this respect, it goes beyond "pipelines" and "buzz", and it is the intertwinement of these that enables non-economic impulses to shape the very formation and characteristics of West African spaces of musical production (Van Heur, 2009 p.106). I now turn to how such an *in situ* knowledge is reflected in the situated practices of participants in this community of practice.

6.3. SITUATED PRACTICES OF MUSICAL ENTREPRENEURS

A relational approach that highlights the distinctive expression of its *in situ* knowledge is useful when considering West African musical entrepreneurship as a particular instance of a specific "CoP". Indeed, it permits us to inquire into the identity of these participants (who they are) and their practice (how they work), which informs us in a more comprehensive way, of the broader social context in which they inscribe themselves. In this respect, a Northern investigation of the process of clustering in new media activities concludes that the practices of participants working in a similar communities differ from one another (Pratt et al., 2007). Indeed, despite the use of similar technical skills, different patterns of location and interaction as well as different institutional and operational forms occur. In this sense, and as introduced in

Chapter 2, West African participants display distinctive situated practices while they actively create and produce entrepreneurial spaces in their own image through complex networks and relationships. As such, I have argued that West African *in situ* knowledge highlights the complex self-organisational and trans-scalar dynamics of musical production, beyond “pipelines” and “buzz”. Focusing on its various assemblages, the following sections address the productive coherence of this specific community through its situated working practices. Drawing on Wenger’s approach of “CoP” addressed in Chapter 2, it focuses on the specific practices of West African participants and inquires into their “mutual engagement”, “joint enterprise” as well as “shared repertoire”.

6.3.1. Mutual engagement: beyond immaterial and passionate work

As noted in Chapter 2, the literature on cultural and creative entrepreneurship stands in clear “contrast to the image of entrepreneurship as an intentionally planned and dramatically staged activity that characterises rationalistic approached to entrepreneurship” while it acknowledges the existence of emotional rationalities that are linked to the participants’ identity and thus their practice (Johannisson, 2011 p.136). Indeed, “one of the most consistent findings of research on work within the cultural industries is that it is experienced by most who are involved with it as profoundly satisfying and intensely pleasurable (at least some of the time)” (Gill and Pratt, 2008 p.15). Being part of what has been termed the ‘immaterial labour’, where labour produces immaterial good and where labourers rely on their creativity, skills, ingenuity and imagination (Gill and Pratt, 2008), cultural workers are distinguished by the experiential bond that relates them to their practice, which can be described as affective, emotional, passionate. There are, in other words, social and aesthetic

dimensions of cultural entrepreneurship that are irreducible to economic innovation and that often constitute the very reasons for participating in cultural production in the first place. As such, participants often cite the extraordinary passion and enthusiasm for their work rather than money as a key attraction to their field of practice (Gill, 2007 p.13-5) while, “not being paid (enough), [...] also reflects a fundamental refusal on the part of actors to approach creative labour as a ‘normal’ job” (Van Heur, 2009 p.115). In this respect, Northern contemporary research (Leadbeater and Oakley, 1999; Gill and Pratt, 2008) hail cultural and creative workers as ‘model entrepreneurs’ claiming that they present an alternative model of work that may be relevant to other sectors of the economy in the future.

While the literature on cultural workers usually considers these participants as cultural makers, i.e. entrepreneurial artists, the profiling of West African musical entrepreneurship suggested in Chapter 2 reveals participants who do not practice any artistic occupation. Indeed, among West African participants, some of them are not in the ‘traditional cultural and creative logic’ of self-promotion and of sustaining an artistic/creative activity. Such an observation reminds us that cultural work is a social practice that needs to be contextualised, localised and situated by drawing upon and empirically grounding such concepts as networks and local communities (Steyaert and Landstrom, 2011 p.124). As for the latter, Wenger’s “CoP” are partly defined by the mutuality of engagement existing between its members, i.e. the relationships they establish among each other and the ways in which this mutuality is the basis for an identity of participation (Wenger, 1998 p.73). Mutual engagement requires interactions through which information flows, and geographical proximity, i.e. both spatial and institutional, can help. However, and beyond these, a “CoP” is sustained by dense relations of mutual engagement organised around what its participants are there to do

(Wenger, 1998 p.74). From this perspective, I argue that, as far as West African participants are concerned, their mutual engagement translates, beyond the immateriality and passion of their work, into the political economy of cultural production described in Chapter 5 in which they inscribe themselves, as well as their practices. Indeed, while implicitly recognising cultural production as a market failure rendering the possible existence of ‘cultural enterprises’ as non sense, the absence of legal visibility and clarity of its professions have informed the practices of this community. As such, West African participants embody distinctive tensions between the affective and rational/calculative realms that are manifest in their practices.

As highlighted in Chapter 5, West African participants are confronted with the absence of a normalising and effective legislation that would conform and govern the practices of music makers and workers. As such, their practices are inscribed in a framework that is still unfavourable to investment in cultural enterprises (Soumaré, 2008 p.150). Although slowly changing, this community of practice has thus often been considered to have ‘ended’ there, because of an educational failure. Put differently, its participants cannot be understood as having seriously and purposely chosen this field of practice, but rather as having terminated there, out of a lack of any other possibilities. Therefore, similarly to Northern cultural workers, rather than a rational calculation, an emotional attraction to such a field appears as a common trait among West African participants. Passion for their work, even sometimes described as a form of madness¹²⁷, rather than a rationally calculated economic opportunity, stands as a similarity that West African participants share with other Northern “CoP” active in cultural fields. As such, their alternative model of work, where an emotional bond

¹²⁷ I am here making reference to a comment made by Interviewee #10; Music worker, Ouagadougou, who confessed that “being a cultural operator in Burkina Faso is a challenge; people need to be mad to do that; we are all animated by passion!”

rather than a financial justification has encouraged their participation, does resonate with the reality of this West African community whose practice clearly implies social as well as financial hardship. While the lack of legal regulation of their practices amplifies their perception of a working environment that is unreliable, unprofessional and insecure (see section 6.3.2 though for nuanced discussion), akin to Northern cultural workers, and as Interviewee #3 puts it, it is their “*love*” for their practice rather than “*money*” that has motivated these participants to perform in this field.

“Production is a fish that you buy in the water: you can catch it or it can get away! [...] I thus started music production out of passion and love for what I was doing. I was not making money out of it.”
(Interview #3; Music worker, Ouagadougou)

“I did not come to culture in order to beg but because I could realise things in this field [...]. There is a lot of potential as demonstrated by the dynamism of the operators of the field who are always trying to initiate new projects and bring some changes. Also the actors are convinced of the relevance of what they want to do which is important.”
(Interview #15; Music worker, Ouagadougou)

However, and as Interviewee #15 suggests, West African participants are not only passionate about their practice, but believe that they can productively participate in the promotion and development of its field. Indeed, beyond such a “*love*” for their practice, they feel responsible for it, which in turn further motivates their desire to participate in and to contribute to this community’s field through the pursuit of a cultural enterprise. In fact, in a working environment scarred by the legal invisibility and non-regulation of this community and its practices, participants thrive whenever possible to palliate to the deficiencies of their locales by finding alternatives to the *status quo* and, sometimes by even performing in the name of the general interest. As such, in this situated community of practice, making a contribution does not necessarily resonate with making a lucrative input but can rather imply making a

valuable one, a worthy one, not necessarily for one's own sake, but sometimes for some sort of general good as well. As the comments from Interviewees #12 and #21 illustrate, although like Northern cultural workers an emotional bond informs their practices, West African participants also display a form of calculated rationality while their participation can be justified in terms of contributing to the deficient field of their practice.

“I do not come from the cultural sector but came into it by passion. I had the opportunity to meet artists and work with them while waiting for my work at the public administration. I realised how important was the role of accompanying the creation in order for this latter to get an appropriate economic value as artists themselves cannot organise themselves nor sell themselves.” **(Interview #12; Music worker, Ouagadougou)**

“[Name of organisation] was created in 1999 out of the desire to make things move. At that time, there was a lot of effervescence in the music sector but many problems also and the actors were then considered as a complaining sector in the public opinion. They were complaining a lot and [name of organisation] was a response to that: a way of saying let's stop complaining and let's try to act on our destiny [...] see what could represent a general interest. The leitmotiv [...] was to organise the general interest, and give to the general interest in the music sector an organised form. So I started to organise meetings in Dakar but also in the regions [...] in order to try to respond to the question: ‘What are we getting together for?’” **(Interview #21; Music maker and worker, Dakar)**

Therefore, West African participants believe that, through their respective practices, they can make an original and singular contribution to their field of practice. In this respect, participants express a strong desire of ‘making a difference’ compared to other products and services, through a practice that is their own. Indeed, they want to be recognised for the originality of their contribution to the field of practice they participate in, as well as for the quality of their input into this community involved in musical production. As such, and akin to Northern cultural workers, these participants

mutually value the independence and ownership of their practices. They are inscribed in a regime of intellectual property rights in which the notion of “originality” nourishes the ambition of participants for authorship and ownership (Leadbeater and Oakley, 1999 p.22). Indeed, the practices of such communities are developed around the skills and imagination of their participants, who actively value both independence and autonomy of their working practices, as a certain freedom of action and expression. As Interviewee #13 comments, for some of West African participants, this aspiration is revealed after a working experience under the direction of a hierarchic superior, which then motivated the creation of their personal organisation.

“[...] Working for myself, I could express my ideas more freely than with a hierarchic superior who always has the last word at the end of the day. Often my ideas were not considered so I felt a certain frustration. It was not out of a financial motive but rather because I had things to give and needed to be freer in order to realise them.”
(Interview #13; Music worker, Ouagadougou)

Again, beyond the traditional tension addressed between affective labour, passion and its economic dimension, West African participants especially value the freedom of action and expression as a calculated capacity of making their own contribution, of letting their distinctive creativity emerge and be recognised. Actually, the benefits they find in creating their own organisation compared to previous working experiences as an employee for instance, translates into a situation of perpetual rivalry and a consequent absence of cohesion among the participants in this community, whose practices have become increasingly individualised (Chapter 5). As the quotes from Interviewees #24 and #9 underline, their practices are embedded in a specifically situated community whose rules and norms aim to ‘leave a footprint’ and be recognised for ‘quality products’.

“For me, it is not a question of doing something just to make money but to leave a trace, a footprint for people to recognise it.” (Interview #24; Music worker, Dakar)

“Our first worry is not financial but whenever a track is released from our studio, we need people to say that it is a quality product because the image of the studio is at stake!” (Interview #9; Music worker, Ouagadougou)

What the mutual engagement of West African participants has demonstrated is that there is a local way of doing things in this community, which participants cannot disregard if they want to be successful in their practices in any way. It highlights that cultural entrepreneurship, as any economic action, is always embedded in a particular community of practice. For its West African participants, it implies both emotional passion and calculated rationality in dynamic and situated practices, while their contribution illuminates novel dimensions to the traditional tensions between affective labour, love of work and economic rationality. I now turn to how this community accounts for such distinctive tensions between the affective and rational/calculative realms that are manifest in its practices.

6.3.2. Joint enterprise: beyond precariousness and insecurity

While the mutuality of engagement demonstrates that there is a local way of practicing, which illuminates novel dimensions to the traditional tensions between affective labour, love of work and economic rationality, this section highlights the “joint enterprise” (Wenger, 1998 p.77) that motivates such practices. For West African participants, their negotiation of a joint enterprise involves developing and sustaining their practices and initiatives on the margins of state ‘politics of culture’, i.e. in a context where cultural enterprises are synonymous with (market) failure and economic

non sense. As such, to keep their “CoP” together, these participants collectively negotiate a response to their situation “in spite of all the forces and influences that are beyond their control” (Wenger, 1998 p.78), creating by the same token relations of mutual accountability among themselves. In doing so, they make their locales habitable for their community and its practices.

Drawing on Beck’s political tactic of the “brazilianisation” of the West (Beck, 2000 p.2), this section investigates to what extent a Northern model of cultural work can be applied to West African participants. Indeed, Northern studies on cultural and creative economies have highlighted a considerable change in working practices whose defining feature has become insecurity, contingency, flexibility, in a word, “precariousness” (Gill and Pratt, 2008 p.4). From this perspective, the following section focuses on insecure and discontinuous forms of employment that characterise West African participants and their specifically situated way of dealing with and managing such insecurity and precariousness. The latter, as I will highlight, is not only inherent to cultural and creative economies and ‘new’ knowledge societies, but also to developing economies in general.

In the Global North, precarious labour is directly linked to the shifts in capitalism, but it has been specifically related to cultural and creative economies, where a large and growing share of employment is accounted for by the self-employed, freelancers and micro-businesses. Indeed, the shock to the Fordist model of work has been intensely illustrated by the working practices of cultural workers, who move between different work statuses, both over time and at the same time (Gill, 2007 p.12-3) illuminating what has been termed “boundaryless career” (Arthur and Rousseau, 1996). Directly linked to the desired autonomy and satisfaction of cultural workers with regards to

their working conditions, such a multiplication of professions implies the constant pressure of an endless workload demand (Gill, 2007 p.18). In this process, immaterial labour has revealed a “brave new world of work” (Beck, 2000) in which risks and responsibility related to working practices are borne solely by the individual (Gill and Pratt, 2008 p.3). In fact, the individualisation of risk attached to the new model of work implies a constant tension between self-exploitation and over-commitment for cultural workers, as they generally work without access to benefits, insurance and pension schemes and surely without any paid holidays (Gill, 2007 p.17).

Such a transition in working models has been well documented by “portfolio career” researchers who have focused on self-employment as a labour market category which reflects a growing sense of entrepreneurialism in society, in times of economic turbulence in both public and private organisational employment (Mallon, 1998; Cohen and Mallon, 1999; Fraser and Gold, 2001; Clinton et al., 2006). A “portfolio career” suggests the self-management of work as well as the independent generation of work and income of the self-employed, who realise a variety of work for a number of clients and employers (Clinton et al., 2006 p.186). Although the link between desired autonomy and self-employment are well explored in the portfolio literature, workers with multiple professions have been generally overlooked in organisational research as well as in the consideration of portfolio career as a concept and a practice (Clinton et al., 2006 p.181). However, focusing on career moves from being an employee in an organisation to self-employment, studies on portfolio career have highlighted a defiance of traditional employment assumptions as well as the ambivalent nature of the autonomy, independence and control enjoyed by workers.

While such analyses have emerged in the context of post-industrial societies, their significance in inquiring into the working practices of West Africans participants in the music economy can rightly be questioned. Indeed, the latter are inscribed in the “patchwork quilt of the South, characterised by diversity, unclarity and insecurity in people’s work and life” (Beck, 2000 p.1). In this context, the ‘stable and secure’ Fordist model of work has never been dominant, while “those who depend upon wage or salary in full-time work represent a minority of the economically active population; the majority earn their living in more precarious conditions” (Beck, 2000 p.2). Put differently, in a society where workers are generally forced to bear all the risks associated with their employment, evolving in precarious and insecure careers historically is a common practice. As such, these workers display a form of “nomadic multi-activity” while they “offer all kinds of personal service, or shuttle back and forth between different fields of activity, forms of employment and training” (Beck, 2000 p.3). Self-employment and “me & Co” (Beck, 2000 p.3) are recurrent and persistent, rather than new phenomena in the realities of West African participants. In fact, and in the words of one of my informants, often in creating one’s enterprise, whichever its juridical status¹²⁸, “*the mission is at first to create a job for [one] self*”¹²⁹. Besides, in the West African context, the diversification of economic activities, whichever the field of practice, is regarded as “rational investment strategy” against risks that are common in the economic climates of these countries (Spring and McDade, 1998 p.7). Therefore, workers tend to accumulate ‘professional hats’ combining several other activities within their initial enterprise in order to multiply and diversify their sources of revenue, rather than specialise into a core practice.

¹²⁸ The institutional arrangements, at this stage, may impact considerably on the choice made by the entrepreneurs regarding which status is more appropriate for the development of their activities. In Dakar, for instance, musical enterprises are more and more constituted as individual enterprise, i.e. limited liable company or even economic interest grouping, whereas in Ouagadougou there are much less numerous. Rather, in Ouagadougou, cultural entrepreneurs more often declare their organisation under the associative status when formalising their activities.

¹²⁹ Interview #1; Music worker, Ouagadougou

“Today, you need to merge the role of the producer with the one of the manager in order to make it out. Actually, at one point either the function of the manager is not sustainable and stops or you have to produce in order to manage!” **(Interview #17; Music worker, Ouagadougou)**

“I reviewed the organisation internally and now exploit other sectors. [...] We invested other part of the sector we did not used to invest but felt capable of doing. So I went for live performance [...]; we opened a boutique for the promotion of our products – even if we sell only one CD per day. We also created a multimedia department because there stands the future of music. We diversified our activities for the music to go on, for the creativity not to die!” **(Interview #24; Music worker, Dakar)**

However, and as the comments from Interviewees #17 and #24 emphasise, the individualised practices of their community has been dramatised by the political economy of cultural production described in Chapter 5. Indeed, the strategy of diversification and the consequent restructuring of their practices are a way for West African participants to compensate for the unfavourable framework in which neither a producer nor a manager can work productively. Put differently, the ‘politics of culture’ that distances cultural production from its commercial dimension, whether through its national management of copyright or its absence of legal regulation of cultural professions, implies that this community needs to diversify its practices in order for it to remain productive. As such, West African participants not only strive to be autonomous and independent through self-employment and diversification strategies, but also in order to ensure that the all required components of their chain of production are present for maintaining their practice. In doing so, they work out other ramifications of their core practice, which they may not have had previously considered, and are directly linked to their primary enterprise. From this perspective, the ‘360 degree’ service, which has become popular among Northern large cultural companies in order to position themselves “in a more profitable and sustainable market

place” (Pratt et al., 2007 p.930), takes a relatively different connotation. Indeed, as Interviewee #13 illustrates, it becomes a survival strategy for individual producers.

“Before producers were limited to the selling of the K7, but thanks to that new [360 degrees] contract, I can get a percentage on the live performances. The producer becomes also manager and booking agent. This contract then allows the producer to have share on the records, on the concerts, on the publishing.” **(Interview #13; Music worker, Ouagadougou)**

Therefore, this community can be characterised by the heavy personal investment its practices require from its participants as they have to pay the costs in time and money for their own ongoing development (Gill, 2007 p.22). Contrary to other professions that are officially recognised and legally regulated in their locales, musical participants have to obtain training and professional recognition at their own expenses. As previously mentioned, their practices are embedded in a specifically situated community whose rules and norms aim to productively ‘leave a footprint’ and be recognised for ‘quality products’ by both spatially and institutionally proximate participants. As such, professionalising oneself is an important process in keeping up with the rhythm of this community. However, while some associative organisations may have benefited from financial support of international cooperation programmes, most of these participants are auto-financed, without the support of traditional financial institutions. Accordingly, as Interviewees #2 and 27 explain, they are usually forced to initially work from home with basic means, and try to save progressively in order to buy material required for the future activity they want to develop. In other words, they have to gather their initial capital, out of personal savings and by informally developing activities in order to generate benefits that could be later invested in their practice.

“[...] The banker treats your project and deals with your request as he would do with whatever project, i.e. considering it to be valuable only if one has some estate properties. Here, the guarantees are enormous sometimes reaching 300% to 400% more than the real value of the project!” **(Interview #2; Music maker and worker; Ouagadougou)**

“ [...] It was not easy [...] as I had no financial means to create my enterprise so I started to do some video clips, some advertising video, organising some shows in order to collect the necessary capital to create my own organisation.” **(Interview #27; Music maker and worker, Dakar)**

West African participants are thus totally immersed in and devoted to their work in order to productively maintain their practice, and invest in diversification strategies. As such, akin to Northern cultural workers, they cumulate long working hours and display a ‘bulimic’ dimension in their working patterns (Pratt, 2000 p.434; Gill, 2007 p.19; Gill and Pratt, 2008 p.17). Such patterns imply that these participants regularly work through the nights in order to finish projects, while finding themselves without work in other periods. My two experiences of participant observations confirmed such working patterns. During the week of the flagship event of the Burkinabè organisation I worked for, we did not sleep more than four hours per night. After the event, I had enough time to conduct all the interviews I had planned. Similarly, in Senegal, the organisation I joined was mandated an important research; the two nights before handing in the final report were sleepless ones, supported by intense caffeine absorption¹³⁰!

¹³⁰ As has been argued, such working rhythms can constrain the participation of women in the cultural and creative workforce especially in a region where traditional gender stereotypes are still alive. Indeed, there are only a few women who participate in the community of musical entrepreneurs. They are either expatriates (i.e. not ‘submitted’ to the traditional morals) or close family members (either wife or sister). I had myself to face harsh disapprobation from my family circle who could not understand my working schedule at ‘non-normal hours’; but also, I enjoyed special treatments from my male colleagues who always insisted for me to go home and ‘rest’ at ‘reasonable’ time, even suggesting to drive me back home (though I had my own car!) while the whole team continued to work.

“I can’t say that everybody can make a living out of (music-related activities) because in our field one has to be among the best! [...] Some people are afraid to get totally involved at 100% in this work because they find it too risky. But every job is risky! [...] It is a job one needs to do with all the passion and desire.” **(Interview #13; Music worker, Ouagadougou)**

“It is just a matter of personal investment: only the best will be able to make a living out of it. There is always work for those who work well. We can make a living out of music, event organisation, mechanics or shoe polishing: we can make a living out of anything as long as it is done properly!” **(Interview #11; Music worker, Ouagadougou)**

As the comments of Interviewees #13 and #11 suggest, their community deploys a practice, which resembles on many aspects the precarious and insecure careers of other West African workers who are forced to bear all the risks associated with their employment. Key requirements are to be “*totally involved at 100%*” and “*personal investment*”, whether through self-employment or diversification strategies. However, for these participants, such a “*personal investment*” is also conditioned by their joint enterprise, i.e. the development and sustenance of their practices and initiatives in a context where cultural enterprises are synonymous with (market) failure and economic non sense. In other words, this community imposes supplementary obligations to its participants, as its ‘way of doing things’ requires that they be “*the best*” in their practices. In order to work “*well and properly*” as per the terms of their community, West African participants produce resources that have become part of their practices. Such a “shared repertoire” (Wenger, 1998 p.82), as Wenger put it, is the focus of the next section.

6.3.3. Shared repertoire: beyond informality and trust

The development of a “shared repertoire” arises as a third dimension (besides “mutual engagement” and “joint enterprise”) by which Wenger defines practice as a source of coherence for a community (Wenger, 1998 p.72). Sharing a repertoire involves ways of doing that a community has produced or adopted in the course of its existence, which have become part of its practice. As previously highlighted, the political economy of cultural production demonstrates a lack of basic social and institutional infrastructures, which have been translated in the practices of West African participants. Therefore, the strength, importance and significance of their particularly situated “CoP” are its capacity of producing alternative resources that allow for participants to “*work well and properly*” despite the formal constraints of their locales. Indeed, a “shared repertoire” is characterised by resources that gain their coherence not in and of themselves as specific activities, but from the fact that “they belong to the practice of a community pursuing an enterprise” (Wenger, 1998 p.82). As such, this section explores two main resources that constitute the shared repertoire of West African participants: the networking and learning practices of their community.

As previously suggested, despite local specificities that call for a differentiated appreciation of the rational/emotional bond as well as the insecurity and precariousness related to their work, West African participants share some similarities with their Northern counterparts. Their working practices are inscribed in a regime of intellectual property rights and are thus developed around the skills and imagination of participants, who actively value authorship, ownership, independence and autonomy (Leadbeater and Oakley, 1999). Moreover, being totally immersed and devoted to their practices, participants cumulate long working hours and display a ‘bulimic’ dimension

in their working patterns, as their workload typically varies depending on the market demand and opportunities. Akin to other cultural workers, West African participants usually function from small, micro-business inscribed in a project-based economy, which comprises a minimal permanent team (Gill, 2007; Pratt et al., 2007). The usual size of a permanent team varies between one to a grand maximum of five people for the most stable and well-established musical enterprises. Such a reduced size allows for participants to deal effectively with bulimic working practices, while regularly contracting temporary labour depending on the work demand and season. As Interviewee #27 explains, the core minimal team can be consequently increased to twice and even three times its usual size in times of intense work. On such occasions, participants are often required to call for an extended network of people, capable of joining the efforts of the reduced permanent team. They are usually used to work on a temporary basis with people who respond to the required skills for the upcoming work.

“We are three permanent, myself, an operations chief and an accountant. However, we work a lot with temporary workers, i.e. a temporary team of twelve, thirteen people we contract each time we have a project.” (Interview 27; Music maker and worker, Dakar)

Therefore, akin to Northern cultural workers, West African participants evolve in a project-based economy, in which networking is a core working practice, which allows participants to recruit potential collaborators required for the realisation of specific projects. In this respect, and as far as Northern cultural workers are concerned, it has been argued that informality is the ‘new black’ while informal connections have become the lifeblood of their works (Gill, 2007 p.25-6). The shock to the traditional Fordist model mentioned earlier is here illustrated by an economy that encourages cultural workers to call for supplementary labour among people they know and with

whom they share some affinities, contrary to formal recruiting methods of previous systems that were based on qualifications and/or merits (Pratt et al., 2007 p.8). These ‘new’ working practices of post-industrial societies emphasise an economy, not only marked by insecurity and precariousness as previously described, but also by generic informality where “it’s all down to who you know” (Gill, 2007 p.25). In the ‘social fabric’, “compulsory sociality” has become the new defining feature of the economy (Gill, 2007 p.26; Gill and Pratt, 2008 p.18). In this novel context, one can never really switch off nor relax and one is never totally away from work, while the boundaries between work and non-work, professional and personal spheres have become increasingly blurred. These are, in fact, the ways Northern cultural workers have been negotiating a sense of ontological security through “characteristic forms of risk management and trust development identified as central to social transformation in the late modern period” (Banks et al., 2000 p.454-5).

However, while this analysis grows from the context of post-industrial societies, its significance in inquiring into the working practices of West African participants in the music economy can again be questioned. Indeed, in a context where the ‘stable and secure’ Fordist model of work has never been dominant, workers have regularly intermingled their professional and personal networks, while intensively involving and relying on their family and friends in order to pursue professional objectives. As has been argued, “African entrepreneurs usually cannot select their workers from a large skilled labour force, so they secure and train personnel through apprenticeships, tutelage arrangements, family members and acquaintances [...] [and] raise start-up and operating capital from community resources” (Spring and McDade, 1998 p.7). Therefore, informal networks have been part of the shared repertoire of most West African “CoP” whichever their working field is. Such a reliance on informal networks

that blur the boundaries between work and non-work spheres can be explained by two characteristics of the traditional social relations: a distinctive conception of the family and the particular notion of ‘trust’ it implies.

“[...] *economising on trust* is not as generalisable a strategy as it might first appear, and that, if it is risky to bank on trust, it is just as risky to fail to understand how it works, what forces other than successful cooperation bring it about, and how it relates to the conditions of cooperation¹³¹.” (Gambetta, 1988 p.230)

In West African societies, there is an extended conception of family that involves relationships fostered beyond the immediate family ties of nuclear group. For instance, the *Wolof* family traditionally was a rural one and stood not only as a living framework but also as a socio-economic organisation, i.e. a production and consumption cell in an agricultural economy of subsistence (Diop, 1985 p.245). As such, it put together several ‘nuclear families’ that were organised around two principles: “solidarity” and “hierarchy”. While the former constitutes the survival condition of the familial group, the latter, which implies pre-eminence of men over women, and eldest over youngest, involves the mobilisation of the means required to satisfy the family’s essential needs (Diop, 1985 p.153). With the entrance of *Wolof* (and other West African) society into a monetary economy and the development of production techniques, the dimensions of the family have been sensibly reduced and its logic adapted to contemporary realities. In fact, its interpersonal system, which includes far away relatives as well as people whose kinship relations were sometimes even absent in the ‘solidarity circle’, has remained (Diop, 1985 p.149). In this respect, West African traditional social arrangements have constitutively impacted on the ways people trust and cooperate with each other.

¹³¹ Italics in original text

For West African participants, while the social pressure implied by the traditional principles of ‘solidarity’ and hierarchy’ is commonly shared and this fact is known on both sides, “cooperation is motivated and trust itself is increased as a result” (Gambetta, 1988 p.226). Such a ‘social contract’, as Rousseau could have put it, “do not altogether rule out certain actions, but simply make them more costly” (Gambetta, 1988 p.221) as the negation or refusal of cooperation between members of this familial network is traditionally frowned upon. Indeed, the principle of solidarity, even referred to as “communautarism”, presupposes an economic manifestation of “reciprocity” that sustains the solidarity between the different group’s members (Diop, 1985 p.153) In this context, the relevance of trust in determining action is a matter not just of feasible alternative, but also of *interest* as it engages both the reputation and commitment of participants, means by which the family is ensured of the effectiveness of its pressure. Therefore, participants trust their informal network out of *choice*, as this practice maintains familial cooperation. Contrary to Northern cultural workers who deal with risks involved in their economic actions through trust development mechanisms (Banks et al., 2000 p.453), West African participants have “set their sights on cooperation rather than trust” (Gambetta, 1988 p.229). Accordingly, as the quotes from Interviewees #18 and 22 illustrate, this specifically situated community has constantly benefitted, through the traditional informality of their working network, from a flexible system of cooperation.

“It is more an exchange of services. For instance, another person that myself will may be have to pay some monetary compensation for such provision, but I would not. It is a network, and informal one.”
(Interview #18; Music worker, Ouagadougou)

“We penetrate networks which are not used ordinarily. I have friends who have sewing shops and drop CD there as there are

people going in these places regularly.” (Interview #22; Music worker, Dakar)

West African participants know and are known by the people they call for cooperation as they are part of a ‘familial’ network, either directly or indirectly¹³². As Interviewee #20 states, “*networks are what makes people live*¹³³”; and, as such, the social and community networks of West African participants allow for them to compensate the lack of formal institutions in economic or labour market of their community. Indeed, their constant activation (and extension) of such informal networks is especially relevant for a community performing in total absence of legal regulation of its professional practices. In this respect, the informal net-working practices of this community, especially noticeable through the informal management of its teams (permanent as well as temporary), can be paralleled with Northern cultural workers’ economy where “it’s all down to who you know” (Gill, 2007 p.25). Written work contracts, which specify stipulated conditions and responsibilities, are generally absent in the working practices of West African participants. Moreover, whenever a project required supplementary participants, I was asked to call a certain number of people whose contacts were given by my colleagues, but not to place an ad in a journal. Similarly, once, one of my informants mentioned that he had to find some work. His job search implied spending a day circulating throughout the city, in order to go and visit, ‘salute’ and see what “*his people*¹³⁴”, as he put it, were up¹³⁵. This informant came back at the end of the day with new work opportunities. As Interviewee #26 illustrates with his comment, akin to Northern cultural workers, there are also unfair

¹³² Being ‘indirectly’ part of a ‘familial’ network implies that a participant has been previously introduced to and worked with a member of this informal network. As mentioned in Chapter 4 (section 4.4), West African participants give a lot of importance in knowing someone from a member of their networks; it stands as a kind of informal guarantee that motivates cooperation and increases trust and permit people to then become part of an ‘extended ‘familial’ network.

¹³³ Music maker and worker, Dakar

¹³⁴ My translation of “*mes gars*”

¹³⁵ Information collected through an informal discussion with Interviewee #8; Music maker and worker, Ouagadougou

consequences with “know-who” practices (Gill, 2007). However, the informality of this cooperation is not novel for West African participants. Besides, in-depth interviews, as well as a participative involvement focused on practice and agency, were the only way to grasp the dynamics of such networks. A simple quantitative survey could not have helped to perceive the complexity involved in the informal networking practices of West African participants.

“Whenever [name of a telephony company] has a budget, one just needs a friend inside to let him know about it and then send an application. But if there was a license, people would be forced to do a call for tender. People would then apply and the best application would be selected. And this would push people to work, as there would be a loyal competition. Nowadays, if one gets a sponsor, it is not because one has a good project but because one knows someone in the company.” (Interview #26, music worker, Dakar)

While in the Global North cultural workers demonstrate new understandings and practices of both risk and trust (Banks et al., 2000 p.454), West Africans participants base their informal networking strategies on a traditional interpersonal system of familial relations. Such a persisting form of cooperation is especially relevant when looking at learning trajectories of participants who generally initiated their practices thanks to the support of traditional members of this ‘familial network’. As mentioned in Chapter 2, most of the participants in this community come to their practice as autodidacts. Through informal experiences in the field of practice, they learn on the job, instinctively trying out and self-training themselves. In this process of self-exploring the field and informally developing an experience of their practice, traditional members of the extended familial network, like the ‘*corro*’ (Burkina) or ‘*sama grand*’ (Senegal), have usually played a crucial role. Indeed, this ‘older brother’, more experienced in working practices, intervenes in advising and assisting participants in their formative experience. This assistance, whether financial, material

or moral, encouraged the aspiring participant to informally experience the chosen field of practice. However, the ‘*corro*’ does not necessarily belong to the community of cultural/musical practice and his relations with participants are less ones of apprenticeship than ones of cooperation (still framed in a hierarchical way). As such, based on the ‘familial contract’ of cooperation, the ‘*corro*’ offers a supportive ‘steppingstone’ to a younger member, while this latter is exploring the contours of his future participation. As Interviewee #1 states, it was first because he “*was close to [his] cousin*” (familial cooperation) and then, because “*[his] cousin trusted*” him (active trust) that he began his practice in the community.

“I was always interested in the organisational aspects and one of my cousins was the president of [name of cultural organisation] and, as he was living in France, he needed someone to direct his festival. Because I was very close to my cousin, and because he trusted me, he gave me the direction of the festival until I quitted in 2006 to take care only of my own organisation.” (Interview #1; Music worker, Ouagadougou)

Nevertheless, West African participants do not only rely on this traditional figure of their familial network to learn about practices of their community. Indeed, they are also attentive to and self-reflexive about other institutionally proximate participants. As Wenger reminds us, “CoP” “are only part of the broader constellations in which learning is relevant. In the process of organising learning, a community must have access to other practices” (Wenger, 1998 p.234). Diversifying informal experiences and knowledge of their practice involves learning about global processes of musical production and diffusion, as well as specific *praxis* of other participants in the music economy. As the quote from Interviewee #20 highlights, in this process, the new technologies of information and communication have been a precious tool to access

online tutorials on the Internet and grasp information on ‘institutional’ concepts and practices.

“[...] When we started our career, we had to go to London, Paris or the USA in order to record and mix. Nowadays, we can do all this from Dakar; we only need to make the people who have the knowledge to come and give workshops; we just need to go on Internet to download the tutorials. We just need to learn and today we can decrease this knowledge gap simply by looking on Internet at the various experiences that happen throughout the world!”
(Interview #20; Music maker and worker, Dakar)

Moreover, such learning practices do not necessarily occur via the intermediary of a media but also take place through personal experiences of travel. Some West African music makers, who have an international career, are able to informally learn the requirements of a quality musical product, after having been exposed to the different technicalities of musical production and global formats of recording, mixing or mastering of musical creation. The consumption of such ‘institutional proximities’ thus participates in informal learning practices of participants, and fosters the development of new practices inside their own community. In the absence of certified and appropriate training organisations, this community learns its practices mostly informally, whether through traditional networks, new ICTs or direct encounters, striving to be recognised by spatially and institutionally proximate participants. In this respect, it is worthwhile to refer to the comment of Interviewee #13 in its full length.

“For a long time, my enterprise did not have a bank account: I collected the money and put it in a bag and took it out when things needed payment. Then I was told that I could not work like that, that I needed to be structured. I was not even able to do a balance sheet! So I opened a bank account, hired an accountant who come from time to time, I started to do receipts and invoices, signed and sealed. I did not know all that but I had to conform in order to aspire to the professionalisation of my activity. I thus followed a formation of managers offered by [local cultural organisation]. I came to the

profession as an autodidact so there are a lot of things I know from the practice but the method or the management is something I do not know though it is extremely important.” (Interview #13; Music worker, Ouagadougou)

This comment demonstrates that, despite the productive accumulation of such informal learning practices, West African participants still aspire to formal training in order to signify the ‘professional’ dimension of their practices¹³⁶. This attitude of participants towards learning practices can interestingly be paralleled with those of Northern cultural workers. Indeed, research conducted in the Global North often emphasise that the education workers receive prior entering their profession, is considered, if not inappropriate, at least of little help to their actual practice (Raffo et al., 2000; Rae, 2004; Gill, 2007). In fact, these workers usually feel unprepared for business, that is for its legal and financial aspects, and find their training to be largely out of date and irrelevant to them (Gill, 2007 p.29). Accordingly, Northern cultural workers express a strong preference for informal learning on the job. Interestingly, West African participants perceive formal learning and training, as a way to accredit and professionalise their informal experiences in order to further legitimise their practices. From their point of view, formal learning stands as a ‘post-practice’, required once they feel the limits of informally learning their working practice. As such, the formal educative training they opt for (whether through punctual formations locally or through a formative curriculum abroad, after having saved some money) seems not only expressly specific to their practice (either technical or managerial), but also extremely relevant to their ongoing participation. Although a direct consequence of a lack of basic social and institutional infrastructures, compared to Northern educational system, such formal trainings as ‘post-informal learning’ thus emerge as differentiated

¹³⁶ For a long time, (and in both fields) the French Cultural Centres (CCF), which seem a more formal environment, were (and still often are) regularly used as meeting place by West African participants who bring there their potential clients and partners. Despite the lack of affordable work places, this community thus find compromises in order to ‘formalise’, ‘professionalise’ its practices.

learning strategies for cultural workers. In this respect, the “shared repertoire” of West African participants displays an alternative informality of networking and learning strategies, and suggests the capacity, as well as the legitimacy of these participants to make the history of cultural work newly meaningful.

6.4. CONCLUSION

Following an incursion into the broader social, political and economic situating of the West African music economy (Chapter 5), this chapter has focused on the productive dimension of the entrepreneurial dynamics at play in this specifically situated cultural economy. As such, the first part of this chapter has been established a new conceptual position, while recognising the creation of a value network among West African participants that dually intermingles spatial and institutional proximity. Starting from the premise that these participants react according to their interpretations of the field in order to mediate and translate cognitive and pragmatic information (Pratt and Jeffcutt, 2009 p.268), the contextualised processes of their community have been explored through the production and reproduction of its participants’ *in situ* knowledge. I thus implicitly drew on the “culturalisation” thesis and reclaimed this term. On the one hand, I have reassessed the necessary contextualisation and embeddedness of cultural entrepreneurship; and on the other, I have multiplied the latter concept into a more developed multiparadigmatic field, while relying on an alternative qualitative approach of the phenomenon. Accordingly, I have adopted a relational approach that permitted us to perceive the practices of West African participants as a response to their contextualisation. I have also argued that their “CoP” creates *in situ* knowledge through practices, maintained and developed via a constant interaction between local and global dynamics of the music economy.

The second part of this chapter has been a ‘stress-test’ of this conceptual framework, using my interviews (as well as other qualitative) material to explore the situated practices of this specifically situated community. Drawing on Wenger’s approach, this section has focused on the various assemblages of such *in situ* knowledge, while investigating the practices of West African participants through their “mutual engagement”, “joint enterprise”, as well as “shared repertoire” (Wenger, 1998 p.72). As has been emphasised, the literature on cultural entrepreneurship acknowledges the existence of emotional rationalities, linked to the participants’ identity and practices (Johannisson, 2011 p.136). Akin to Northern cultural workers, an emotional bond informs West African practices. However, I have demonstrated that these participants highlight novel dimensions to the traditional tensions between affective labour, love of work and economic rationality. Moreover, I have stressed the ways in which notions of ‘insecurity’ and ‘precariousness’, usually associated with cultural economies and their participants, require a differentiated appreciation in a society where precarious and insecure careers historically are common. Concerning West African participants, their community deploys a practice, which resembles, on many aspects, the precarious and insecure careers of other West African workers, forced to bear all the risks associated with their work. Nevertheless, the development and sustenance of their practices and initiatives imply that this community entails supplementary obligations to its participants. As such, I have argued that the strength, importance and significance of this community are its capacity to produce alternative resources, which allows for its participants to pursue their working practices despite the formal constraints of their locales. In this respect, beyond informality and trust, this “CoP” provides networking and learning strategies, informed by a distinctive conception and practice of ‘familial cooperation’.

Inquiring into the specifically situated practices of West African participants, this chapter has been critical of traditional economic and organisation work in the continuation of Chapter 2, while interrogating notions such as “precariat” (Gill, 2007; Gill and Pratt, 2008), often associated with cultural workers. While drawing on Wenger’s work, I have framed participants in the West African music economy as a community situated in a broader constellation of cultural entrepreneurship, and I have highlighted what has perhaps been invisible to Northern eyes, and ignored by economic perspectives. I demonstrated how traditional models of cultural (and creative) entrepreneurship can be weak, and suffer from a Northern bias when confronted to the realities of this situated community of practice. While not dismissing the insights offered by “precariat”, I emphasised how its own situatedness in Northern social norms, calls for a translated appreciation into the context of West African social relationships. As far as West African musical entrepreneurs are concerned, an original formation of precarity emerges, one that dually expresses processes that Northern cultural work reveals and those in which West African workers commonly evolve.

The initial conceptual framing of the thesis (Chapter 2) suggested an ideal-typology of West African musical entrepreneurs, and thus concluded on a useful and productive ‘breakdown’ of this “CoP”. Such a typological framing has pointed to the fact that, despite the theoretically informed empirical basis offered by Wenger for situating cultural entrepreneurship in the context of the West African music economy, a more varied discursive repertoire was required in order to inquire into the political and aesthetic dimensions of an entrepreneurial identity, and hence practice. In this respect, the conceptual framework deployed in Chapter 3 acknowledged the imperative of politically and aesthetically contextualising the productive practices of specific West African musical entrepreneurs, and introduced the transcultural dimension of Hip Hop.

Pursuing this line of argument, the final empirical chapter (Chapter 7) further addresses the original form of cultural entrepreneurship developed by West African hip hop participants, and demonstrates how their political actions interact with and impact on the economic production of their musical expression.

PART FOUR

**SPATIALISING HIP HOP ENTREPRENEURSHIP
IN FRANCOPHONE WEST AFRICA**

CHAPTER 7

RADICAL HIP HOP MUSIC ECONOMY

7.1. INTRODUCTION

This chapter introduces the emergence of West African hip hop music production system while contextualising hip hop music as a cultural production of both hip hop transcultural politics and the ‘hip hop music economy’. In Chapter 3, I stated that Hip Hop is a transculture that articulates a ‘borderline sociality’ as well as a singular ‘and’ communal, i.e. ‘métis’, “writing of the voice” for West African youth. From this perspective, I framed these hip hop participants as a ‘biopolity’ whose constitutive actions weaken the distinctions between economic, social, and cultural dimensions. This chapter thus investigates how such political productions influence and inform the entrepreneurial practices of West African hip hop participants, while addressing the practical, political and economic dualities of their musical production. Rather than a consumption perspective of a particular subculture defining itself through elements of mass cultural industries¹³⁷, I want to highlight and argue for a ‘hip hop music economy’ or a ‘hip hop culturalisation’ of the West African music economy which combines both individual and collective imperatives in the entrepreneurial agenda. Hence, I challenge the individualist agendas and consumption-related flaws of previous work on musical production. I illustrate how this specifically situated economy allies both material and textual elements through its network of cultural value-making.

¹³⁷ Or what has also been referred to as “auto-production of culture” in the productionist perspectives’ latest efforts to humanise agency (and practice) in cultural industries (R. A. Peterson and N. Anand. *The Production of Culture Perspective*)

In this respect, I refer to the entire process of the productive chain, from the supply to the demand of hip hop music, and the very way it has been developed by West African hip hop entrepreneurs. Such a network of cultural making thus includes the music-making process, which comprises the musical creation, production and conception of recorded as well as live products; but also the musical dissemination/diffusion both of live and recorded products through live exhibition and performances, distribution as well as media promotion. While music-making usually puts more accent on the individual and musical diffusion in the community, it will be argued that these two entities are interacting throughout the hip hop cultural-making continuum and its creative network. This approach implies not only reconciling production and consumption perspectives in hip hop entrepreneurship, but, and going a step further, it makes a case for the radical ‘hip hop culturalisation’ of the West African music economy. As will be further argued in the concluding chapter of this thesis (Chapter 8), it hopes necessary understanding and inclusion of such processes can go towards another conception of West African cultural economies. Indeed, through the example of this hip hop music economy, I highlight the duality of material and textual elements in its network of cultural value making; a dual perspective that promises an alternative approach towards cultural economies in the Francophone West African ensemble. As my informants suggest:

“The reality is that artists themselves possess the solutions. [...] The cultural problem to be solved stands as a generation struggle; myself as an individual could not start and finish it but I truly hope to be part of the generation which will start it, conscientiously, not through revolt but through revolution.” **(Interview #19; Music maker and worker, Dakar)**

“Hip Hop is also a philosophy. One needs to look for quality and not be happy with little. One needs to question oneself! [...] And what is interesting with Hip Hop is that is also a positive competition; this is

what I like in this culture! [...] This ethic is still important to be defended as it is about making things change and evolve.”
(Interview #8; Music maker and worker, Ouagadougou)

As such, these two introductory quotes stress essential conclusions that this chapter aims to draw. First, and as Chapter 5 has already suggested, a shift in the conception as well as the practice of cultural production in Francophone West Africa is possible, and this transformation will genuinely be informed by the experiences of cultural makers and workers. Second, and in correlation to the first point, such a shift calls for radically new ways of enterprising from all participants in the cultural fields: indeed, as this chapter will demonstrate, solidarity as an ethical principle has become the necessary *motto* of an alternative music economy.

7.2. TEXTUAL MUSIC-MAKING: ON HIP HOP ETHICAL ECONOMY

While there is not a fixed doctrine relative to Hip Hop and its cultural as well as aesthetic practices, there are some recurrent cultural codes, ‘transcultural elements’ I should say, from which each and every emergences of Hip Hop initially spring. As mentioned in Chapter 3, I conceive of Hip Hop as a ‘transculture’, which implies that there is ‘something’ that is translated in different practices and politics around the world, and that this ‘something’ binds together a community of practice. The hip hop community. As such, Hip Hop as a text, as a philosophy calls for specific material practices of its participants. It is first about learning to be the best, wherever you are, from what you have; in other words, it is about challenging oneself in a positively competitive way. Second, it is about returning and dedicating the benefits of this positive competition to the community of practice, i.e. the hip hop community and its participants. I thus argue that each participant in the music-making process inscribes

him/herself in the community through his/her own interpretation of this ‘hip hop text’. In doing so, these individuals contribute in creating, through their own translation, a participatory framework for their creations, or, more precisely, what I refer to as an ‘hip hop ethical economy’.

The “ethical economy” (Arvidsson et al., 2008) framed in the current crisis of value has been extensively developed by peer-to-peer researchers and theorists to explain situations that are mainly coordinated through non-monetary incentives. As such, the hip hop economy is first and foremost an “ethical economy”, regulated by affective affinities that go beyond simple monetary considerations. More precisely, the hip hop music economy incorporates the traditional rational capitalist economy of an individual. This affectivity, which is relative to the collective, the community, the ‘emotional site’ (Chapter 3), is deployed around two principles of *praxis*: ‘representing’ and ‘proving’. These two principles stand as hip hop ‘transcultural codes’ and reflect on the one hand, a notion of original “writing” as well as individual challenge (‘proving’), and on the other, an attachment to the ‘emotional site’ (‘representing’)¹³⁸. Hip hop music-making thus calls for the capacity of its participants to create in an autonomous fashion, and to do so inside their community, i.e. to ‘prove’ or ‘demonstrate’ their aptitude to be the most singular and original in their practices. It also calls for them to give back and give value, i.e. to ‘represent’ through their political and economic practices, their ‘emotional site’. As such, hip hop economy stands as an ethical economy of music-making that involves affinity and politics beyond the

¹³⁸ In this respect, Thomas draws a list of these codes (*keeping it real, speak truth to power, change the game, represent the hood, self-expression*) in A. Thomas. *The Spirit and Philosophy of Hip Hop* while Mitchell defines more generally an “ethos” that reflects an independent lifestyle that involves both “raising the bar” and an attachment to the territory through a political and social engagement; see T. Mitchell. *The DIY Habitus of Australian Hip Hop*

traditional network of cultural production, and whose textual dimension is based on two principles: ‘proving’ and ‘representing’.

7.2.1. Demonstrating a networked individuality

The ethical economy of hip hop music-making involves at first the capacity for the participants to create autonomously inside the community. Indeed, in order to ‘demonstrate’ or ‘prove’ themselves through a networked individuality, hip hop participants have to be the best and the most original in their individual practice by expressing with *brio* their own singularity in terms of style, flow, lyrics and/or sound¹³⁹ (Salaam, 1995 p.305). They have to make their potential contribution to the community of practice obvious in terms of their expertise and the activities they initiate, in order to gain the recognition of other participants. An implicit knowledge economy is thus constructed here, while only the autonomous self-proving of these participants allows them to join their community. The following quote of one of my (*beatmaker*) informants expressly illustrates this point, as he was ignored (perhaps despised) by local participants in his hip hop community until he autonomously initiated his own contribution to the network.

“I wanted to record some hip hop groups for free in order to start working, but it was not easy as people did not know me. So I did one track myself [...] and distributed this demo to the different radios stations and immediately after it had a resonance in the sector, guys then came to the studio.” **(Interview #2; Music maker and worker, Ouagadougou)**

¹³⁹ The lyrics refer to the subject matter and the written construction of the song; the style refers both to the tonal quality and the level of originality in presentation and delivery; the flow describes a sense of rhythm and timing; the sound refers to both physical (technical) and metaphysical fingerprint of the participant. For detailed information, see M. Y. Salaam. *The Aesthetics of Rap* p.305-6

As argued in Chapter 6, West African musical entrepreneurs work and learn through networks, whether familial, virtual or involving spatially and/or institutionally proximate participants in their community of practice. However, this practice of working and learning through networks cannot be taken for granted, nor is it a matter of simple connection: it is transformation (beyond pipelines and buzz) that involves a specific value network and its situated knowledge. As such, in the hip hop community, participants have to first prove themselves in order to gain the recognition of potential peers and consequent collaboration. Previous chapters (Chapters 3 and 5) highlighted the fact that this new generation of West African music makers are autodidacts rather than formally trained musicians, and as such, rarely play 'real' instruments (Rose, 1994 p.80). However, making virtue out of necessity, this very lack of training has incited a particular modality of creativity and innovation, whether it be on aesthetic or organisational terms. Indeed, and as will be argued further in this chapter (see section 7.4.1 for detailed discussion), the entry barriers are potentially low, requiring just a voice, an idea and/or some ambition. This applies especially at the creation stage of the musical product, where individuals need to challenge their capacity to the fullest by themselves, self-learning to create what they are looking for. Hip hop musical creation thus stands as an individual challenge that one has to undergo in order to posit oneself in this community of practice. Put differently, hip hop music-making as a process rests on an elaborated social infrastructure that is informal and critical to anyone being successful in their participation. In such a process, the peer network still plays a part at the creative level. However, it is more a guiding and advising role than a teaching one. As interviewee #2 illustrates, it is about showing the direction one has to achieve an individual self-expression in the musical production.

“I started to work with a friend of mine from Togo who was doing musical programming and arrangements as he was trained as a guitarist initially. But sometimes, I had difficulties to make him understand what I wanted in terms of sound as he was more oriented towards world music and folk. So, my friend suggested that I try to do my own arrangements. [...] So I bought an ATARI and a Roland keyboard and I started to work on arrangements. [...] But I needed time because I never did musical programming before and had therefore a lot to learn!” (Interview #2; Music maker and worker, Ouagadougou)

As previously emphasised, hip hop music as an aesthetic form predicated on an open access to anyone who wishes to inscribe their own individuality (Chapter 3). Combining the open access of hip hop aesthetics with the autodidact impetus allows us to read the music-making process of hip hop participants as an autonomous creative learning inside their community of practice. Through its ‘transcultural codes’ of *praxis*, the hip hop community nurtures a context that permits ‘learning and growth’. In this process of singular narrative and individual challenge in the creation of hip hop musical products, the new technologies of information and communication (ICTs) have proved to be particularly enabling (Chapters 3 and 5). Indeed, hip hop music production has always moved in conjunction with technological advances evidenced in its popularity and reliance on the sample, followed by the drum machine, to the present-day usage of computerised music production (Johnson, 2008). The collaborative effort of music production present within other popular music is here replaced by a solitary moment experienced either by the MC or the DJ. This is illustrated by one of my informants.

“I learnt a lot about how to make sound through Internet. The Internet is a gold mine! Also, I had a kind of mentor who was an about 45 years old excellent guitarist based in Paris and who was already making a lot of sound. [...] I met him by chance while I was giving some DJing classes and I went to work with him in Paris in his underground analogue home studio. He really trained me on how to make sound, how to feel the recording, the mix; a real work on the

sound in order to feel the material.” (Interview #8; Music maker and worker, Ouagadougou)

As this last quote describes, the individual participant had to first demonstrate his capacity of initiating DJ classes in order to gain recognition from other participants in the network. Having individually proved himself, this participant was then noticed by a more experienced participant capable of enhancing his knowledge. In an hip hop economy that rests on such an elaborated, though informal, social infrastructure, this is indeed the only process to allow differentiation as no ‘formal’ qualification exists. As such, hip hop participants can benefit from peer networks of their community only once they have demonstrated, through their initial practice, a potential contribution to their community.

7.2.2. Representing an emotional community

The hip hop economy can thus be understood as a form of ‘reputation economy’¹⁴⁰ that is translated into both ‘proving oneself’ and ‘representing’ one’s community as guiding principles that inspire the entrepreneurial practices of its participants. Indeed, such an ethical economy not only involves the autonomous self-proving of its participants but also the ‘giving back’ and ‘representing’ dimensions for their community. While ‘demonstrating’ or ‘proving’ incites hip hop participants to originally and autonomously create and innovate inside their community of practice, ‘representing’ requires that through their performances, they give value to their ‘emotional site’ of belonging. Put differently, for West African participants, it implies developing an awareness and a consciousness of themselves as the new generation of

¹⁴⁰ Such a ‘reputation economy’ resonates with a process that has been identified as “peer regard” (see A. C. Pratt. *Advertising and creativity, a governance approach: a case study of creative agencies in London*) which includes reputation and reflection in the work of other participants in one’s field of practice.

cultural entrepreneurs active in their locale. As such, they interpret this role through the responsibility of contributing to the development of their field of practice and are animated by a desire of structuring the music economy they participate in. As my informant explains, it is about creating a self-sustaining social entity that delivers value to its participants.

“We really want to train young people in all these professions (audiovisual, sound, light, etc.) because this is what would allow, in the future, the whole sector to be professional. And only then, there would be professional stages capable of increasing the level for the public and for the sponsors. [...] And if these young people are trained in these professions, they will not be out of work! There is so much work in Senegal which is not exploited and I know that all I am developing will not be restricted to Hip Hop.” **(Interview #23; Music maker and worker, Dakar)**

Such ‘transcultural ethics’ thus accompanies and directs the economic practices of West African hip hop entrepreneurs. Indeed, the material dimension of these musical entrepreneurs’ contribution to the local music economy is mediated by their translation of Hip Hop’s ‘transcultural texts’ of ‘proving’ and ‘representing’. This ethical stance implies challenging the *status quo* of the local cultural economy monopolised by the state as previously seen (Chapter 5). These entrepreneurs thus maintain an ‘hip hop spirit’ keeping a particular ethical and philosophical stance, with both an individual and collective purpose. As Interviewees #2 and #8 stress, West African hip hop participants initiate material practices from the specific textuality of their community, while the latter guides the ways they use limited resources to create and maximise assets.

“My status of artist forbids me to get involved in certain things. Therefore, I cannot count on the state markets and business.” **(Interview #2; Music maker and worker, Ouagadougou)**

“If you have this passion and you understand this movement, you also have a role to play and you will have different ways of getting involved in it, different from just seeing a video clip on TV and wanting to be dressed like an American and wanting to rap because it is fashionable these days!” (Interview #8; Music maker and worker, Ouagadougou)

To recap, I consider the hip hop music economy as an ethical economy based on two principles: ‘proving’ or demonstrating oneself and ‘representing’ one’s community. The recognition of an ethical economy allows for both the location of the entrepreneurial motive beyond a market economy justified by monetary incentives (Arvidsson et al., 2008 p.10) and the authority of specific affective affinities to elaborate an informal social infrastructure. These specifically situated relations active in hip hop music-making, and how the ‘transcultural politics’ of its participants dually reflect and are reflected in their ethical economy are summarised in the diagram below (see Diagram 7.1). However, beyond musical creation, this dual process also applies to the productive dimension of music-making. As I will argue in the next section, in the case of West African hip hop participants, confronting inappropriate conditions of musical production with their alternative practices also calls for a participatory productive process that is informed by an ethical economy.

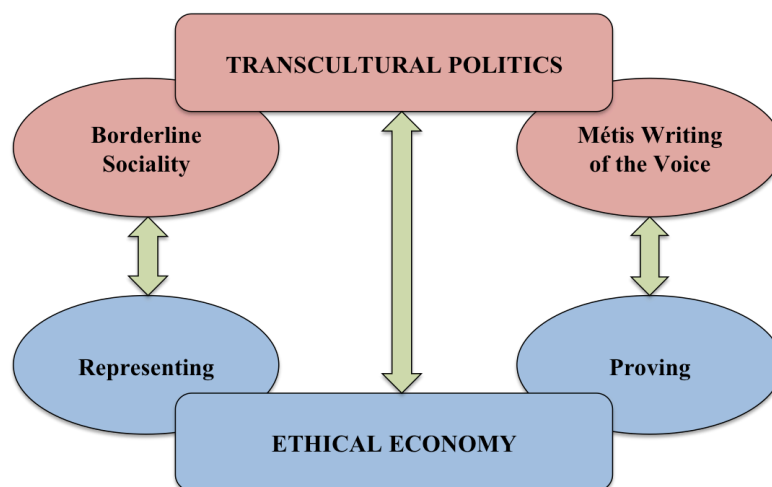


Diagram 7.1: On hip hop textual music-making

7.3. PEER MUSICAL PRODUCTION: ON A DISTRIBUTED AUTONOMY

Relying on the approach of peer production (Bauwens, 2009), in the following sections, I show how the productive process of West African hip hop music-making displays practices that reconcile both individual and collective interests. As seen in the previous section, the ethical principles of ‘proving’ and ‘representing’ are especially salient in the creation process. These dimensions of hip hop ethical economy are however also pronounced in the production process. They are concretised both in terms of gaining autonomy through the ownership of the material conditions of production, and through creating a dynamic business ecology in order to ensure the survival and the continuing development of the musical genre. As such, the production process highlights the investment of hip hop participants in the realisation and conception of recorded and live products. Indeed, this process puts forward the desire of autonomy, which the entrepreneurs express through the phenomena of home studio development, self-production, and diversification of activities. In the US context, it has been argued that an hip hop ‘aesthetics of entrepreneurship’ has emerged (Muhammad, 1999) with artists’ growing awareness of the importance of the entrepreneurial dynamic in hip hop culture and industry. From the perspective of an ethical economy, I apply this understanding of an ‘aesthetics of entrepreneurship’ to the contextualised and situated practices of West African hip hop participants, while making some contrasting inferences with U.S. entrepreneurial practices in the hip hop music economy.

7.3.1. From an ethnic enclave to a peer productive perspective

In the USA, rap music and hip hop culture have spawned a multibillion dollar enterprise (Brown, 2003). Contrary to previous African Americans in the entertainment world, hip hop musical entrepreneurs in the USA have been perceived as an ethnic enclave economic structure, whose participants capitalise on their access to this creative niche for economic rewards beyond it (Basu and Werbner, 2001). Using systematic planning and organisation to develop businesses aside of their musical production, these hip hop entrepreneurs have developed quite a complex economic portfolio, packaging their musical productions as commodity and networking through aesthetics and business collaborations to find employment, set up secondary businesses and professional services centred around hip hop culture and music. Using cross-marketing strategies, whereby each release is used to promote other artists and products, keep expenses low and profit margins high, hip hop entrepreneurs in the USA have indeed been able to wrestle more favourable deals from the 'Big Four' Record companies and distributors (Universal Music Group, Sony Music Entertainment, Warner Music Group, EMI Group) (Muhammad, 1999).

As in most cultural economies, portfolio management in the music industry has been a notable strategy developed by corporate enterprises in order to deal with the uncertainties of the sector (Negus, 1998). Under such strategies, different musical genres have assumed relative positions in the company portfolio and in the USA, 'black music' or 'urban music' divisions (under which hip hop music has been commonly classified) lack straightforward corporate investment (Negus, 1998 p.375). Indeed, the opening of a 'black music division' stands as a response to both commercial opportunity, social and political pressure as well as cultural changes; but

hip hop culture, with its practices and its people, have never been brought into the industry, contrary to the 60s and 70s rock scene for example (Negus, 1998 p.369). Rather, major music corporations have tended to maintain a sharp border between Hip Hop and the day-to-day music industry business practice. In other words, hip hop music, just like other musical genres such as Latin music, has been discursively, geographically and economically located on the margins of the music industry by corporate companies (Negus, 1998 p.373).

Nevertheless, despite such resistance and suspicion from the corporate recording industry towards this musical genre, 'black and urban music' has become the dominant popular music and the fastest-rising genre in major markets (Basu, 2005 p.260). It is thus interesting to note that hip hop music in the USA continues to grow and, partly out of necessity, manages to "generate alternative resources through which the genre has continually re-invented itself in those spaces and places designated as [...] 'underground'" (Negus, 1999 p.504). Despite the marginalisation of their musical genre by the main music corporations, American hip hop entrepreneurs have learnt how the entertainment business works and have emulated it (Hughes, 2002). As such, they have leveraged the marketing muscle of their music in order to make inroads in other activities early, opting for a diversification strategy spanning music, film, clothing, sports management, real estates, toy merchandising, as palliative strategies deployed in the risky and unpredictable environment of trend-based urban music (Muhammad, 1999).

Nowadays, many celebrate hip hop moguls who emerged on the USA market. However, these entrepreneurs always have a link with majors, either under pressing and distribution deals or joint ventures. Accordingly, major music corporations are still

in power, as the final battleground in the music business is still the distribution, which is the very competitive advantage of major records in the USA (Muhammad, 1999). Therefore, despite their networking and diversification strategies, American hip hop entrepreneurs and their labels still act as intermediaries within the production of music, without any control or power over the distribution: in simple terms, they still need to be part of a major's label network (Basu, 2005 p.267). Returning to the argument of an "ethnic enclave" economic structure (Basu and Werbner, 2001) as far as American hip hop entrepreneurs are concerned, I maintain that the emphasis placed on 'ethnicity' does little in explaining the (non-)interactive nature of the relationships of its participants. This notion of "ethnic enclave economy" springs from (though somehow challenging) a literature on ethnic entrepreneurship that stresses how "self-employment [provided] an avenue towards social mobility and wealth for immigrants who begin with few or no economic or symbolic resources [...] through their ability to monopolize specialized cultural goods" (Basu and Werbner, 2001 p.239). As already highlighted in Chapter 3, I distance myself from any ethnical or racial affiliation in the hip hop community. Hence, what is of interest in terms of this ethnic enclave perspective is less its racialised dimension, than its economic aspect.

As such, I do retain the "enclave logic" (Basu and Werbner, 2001) whereby a community which shares identities and practices, organises itself internally in order to respond to its production as well as consumption needs. Such an endogenous system implies the internal organisation and coordination of the enclave as a key element in comprehending the dynamics of participants' enterprises. While in the case of the USA, an individualistic approach to the entrepreneurial initiatives of the enclave appears to be at stake – with the success of only few moguls – in the West African experience, the enclave perspective reveals a cooperative, community-based as well as

community-oriented form of entrepreneurship. Indeed, while the entrepreneurial initiatives developed by American hip hop moguls aimed at increasing their respective market shares in direct competition with the music corporations, in Francophone West Africa, the strategic rationale of hip hop entrepreneurs has been different. Rather than increasing one's shares on a given market, it is about creating this very market in a locale that is, as previously mentioned (Chapter 1), deserted by the global music corporations. Indeed, West African participants are aware that, contrary to US or European music, their musical production rarely get out of the country, let alone the region, and consequently they strive, in order to develop an alternative terrain for a productive music-making in their locales.

7.3.2. Ownership of the means of production as condition of peer production

With their strategic rationale of creating a market for their musical creations, West African hip hop entrepreneurs endeavour to autonomously produce for the sharing benefit of their community. The desire of being autonomous in terms of music production is firstly expressed through the capacity of these participants to own the initial recording device and instruments necessary to the musical creation. Clearly, in Senegal, in the absence of publicly owned material for music-making¹⁴¹ and insufficient privately owned material (always conditional to affinity), hip hop entrepreneurs have autonomously invested in professional material. As one of my informants illustrates, such an initiative is justified not only by their own musical production, but also by making it available to other participants in their community:

¹⁴¹ As mentioned in Chapter 5, contrary to Burkina Faso for instance which has extensive publicly-owned materials for music making and dissemination with its CENASA, in Senegal, there is an acute absence of publicly-owned material that would be available for the music makers and workers.

“I am currently saving money in order to buy this professional material in order for us not to have to order it. The objective is to have in Senegal an international quality material and to be able to make it available to artists who are willing to invest in it. [...] But the fact that there is little material, we work a lot with our imagination.” (Interview #27; Music maker and worker, Dakar)

Although this informant refers to some material required for the productive promotion, investing in one’s own musical product usually starts with the ownership of the material condition of initial production, i.e. the recording studio and especially the home studio. Beyond the creation process, computerised music production is relevant in understanding how hip hop participants have used low-budget recording techniques as a politicised expression of limited economic resources, in the same vein as Northern participants in punk. Although many of the first home studios that appeared did not function as autonomous production centres, “much of the punk and early new wave music of the late 1970s, and many of the so-called “alternative” bands of the early 90s as well, made use of consumer recording equipment as the vehicle for a do-it-yourself industry of “lo-fi”, independent record production” (Théberge, 1997 p.232). As such, these developments of semi-professional and amateur studios respond to the desire of music makers to have greater control over their production and at lower costs. This dynamic is particularly relevant in times where traditional labels are less and less inclined to invest in the production of any musical product. Throughout the world, labels and executive producers have seen their practice shaken by different forms of what has been commonly called ‘piracy’, whether through peer-to-peer exchange or the circulation of illegal copies of a given musical product. As such, and as we have previously seen (Chapters 5 and 6), in the light of incredible decrease in their record sales revenues, the main producers active in the 90s Senegalese music scene have either ceased their activities, paused them temporarily, or alternatively restructured their enterprise diversifying their sources of revenue. Furthermore, based on evidence

provided by empirical material, among those who continued to produce musical creations, none of them are able to ensure a continuous flow of their production activities. This state of affairs has played a considerable role in encouraging music makers to develop alternatives, such as those described by Interviewee #20, for continued creation and realisation of musical production.

“The computer-assisted music has democratised a lot! With a computer, one can do his music, can duplicate; with a printer, one does his jacket. It has become possible to do one’s product from home, with a home studio: and it does not cost much with the cracked programmes that we all share!” **(Interview #20; Music maker and worker, Dakar)**

This ‘democratisation’ has therefore entailed the multiplication of ownership of the means of production necessary for the materiality of musical creation, while implying a certain individualisation of the practices associated with the production process (Chapter 5 and 6). Indeed, investing in one’s product has a cost, and a growing phenomenon which has also accompanied the development of home studios is the practice of self-production, whereby music makers also assume the costs associated with the entire conception of their product, in order to ensure the continuity of their creations into the productive process. It has been argued that home studios are not only responding to the desire of music makers to have greater control over their production, but also so that they are able to realise some earnings on the rental of their equipment, becoming by the same token music workers as well (Théberge, 1997). Surely, the productive process is dependent on the development of the technology as well as on the falling costs and imports. As such, in Senegal, contrary to other popular genres such as *mbalax* whose participants were generally late to inquire into the possibilities offered by digital reproduction devices, hip hop participants have *systematised* the

imperative of investing in the whole chain of production of their musical creativity.

Interviewee #19 explains:

“We have contributed and boosted the cultural economy. [...] The majority of studios are hip hop studios, not mbalax; and these studios are [...] managed by hip hop artists who invest not only in music but also in graphic design, in video production, etc. [...] and I cannot name ten mbalax artists who got studios!” **(Interview #19; Music maker and worker, Dakar)**

It “is a well known fact that many artists do not or cannot work full-time at their chosen profession [and consequently] [...] undertake work beyond their immediate creative practice” (Throsby and Hollister, 2003 p.37). Certainly, throughout the world, artists regularly face financial problems due to a lack of return from their creative practice, and they generally prefer taking on work that is closely related to their principal artistic occupation. This choice has been referred to as “all art work” (Throsby and Hollister, 2003 p.36-38). Similarly, understanding the compromises that artists have to make in order to continue their creative practices, hip hop entrepreneurs have balanced their desired activities with lucrative activities in order to ensure autonomy and independence in their musical creation’s chain of production. However, I contend that rather than aiming at controlling the whole chain of production in a competitive way, the ownership of the material of production by these participants has aimed to ensure their capacity for musical production. The latter being itself dependent on falling costs, an ecology of entrepreneurial businesses soon emerges to support the peer productive process.

7.3.3. Dynamic business ecology in support to peer production

Since 2006, there has been a real boom of new organisations created by hip hop music makers motivated by the desire to be locally autonomous in terms of musical production. Penetrating new areas of expertise, these entrepreneurial initiatives of hip hop participants have spread from the development of recording studios, to their specialisation in graphic design and video production as well as to the creation of duplication plants¹⁴² and fully-equipped rehearsal rooms¹⁴³. Therefore, a vertical integration and interconnectedness between different parts of the music production is here at stake. Although hip hop entrepreneurs are not the initiators of this standard practice of musical entrepreneurship in their locale – having been preceded by some, though rare, successful ‘world music’ artists – I argue that they are the ones who have systematised this practice, while aligning it with an understanding of their social responsibility as a new generation of cultural entrepreneurs in their locale.

As such, West African hip hop music makers, while investing in the ownership of the means of musical production, have initially found the rental of their recording equipment to be the most natural and new sources of revenue. Becoming increasingly sophisticated, the services offered by the organisations of musical productions set up by these entrepreneurs now turning to commercial work, have started to be truly competitive in terms of their offers in local music scenes. Here I want to reassess the aforementioned concept of “enclave-system” (Basu and Werbner, 2001). Indeed, in practice, such logic is viable only if the internal organisation of the enclave, once

¹⁴² On the total units of duplication identified on the whole Senegalese territory, a quarter belongs to hip hop entrepreneurs (three out of twelve). One should note however, that in Senegal, these units mostly correspond to artisanal burning units (allowed by NICT) rather than proper industrial duplication plants.

¹⁴³ Being an essential component for the realisation of a musical performance, fully-equipped rehearsal rooms are however poorly present on the Senegalese musical scene. Throughout the country, there are only thirteen (13) of them including publicly as well as privately owned ones; and, two of them are owned by hip hop participants.

effective, reconnects with the exterior world. Put differently, an enclave-economy, such as hip hop economy that is initially performed endogenously among participants who share identities and practices, eventually incorporates itself in the larger music economy in order for its community to expand and grow. In this respect, the home recording studios of Senegalese hip hop entrepreneurs now stand as a viable alternative to the professional studios owned by the major producers of the 90s.

However, the proliferation of home studios also means that competition has become even more intense, and that therefore, very few of them function continuously, while their owners face great difficulties in making a return on their investment. In order to sustain their enterprises, hip hop entrepreneurs have thus developed portfolio practices that diversify and expand their activities to external markets and other communities of practice alike. Pursuing this diversification logic and offering a complete service in terms of musical production has implied investing in the actual recording, but also in the realisation and conception of the recorded product as well as on promotion. Indeed, hip hop participants were quick to understand the limits of home studio rental, and as Interviewee #20 highlights, they soon reacted by appropriating and investing in other facets of the musical production while still relying on their ‘technological dexterity’.

“However this state of affairs does not kill the creativity of MCs, and people are starting to organise themselves differently. For instance, people who have studios also do video production and not only for Hip Hop; they do CD duplication and not only for Hip Hop and then they reinvest it in Hip Hop: this is beautiful. This crisis does not only concern Hip Hop but it is global; and the hip hop actors get inspired from the crisis; they are very imaginative and creative. They have been shaken by it but it has opened for them new paths!” **(Interview #20; Music maker and worker, Dakar)**

In this respect, promotion stands as another example that emphasises the social sources of flexibility only enabled by the digital reproduction and its correlative technologies, where hip hop participants have created new social spaces of interaction. Indeed, these entrepreneurs, thanks to their aforementioned technological dexterity, have now developed enterprises that are specialised in graphic design and video production, proposing professional provisions in a field until recently dominated by amateurism. Such forms of communication and information devices are however essential in promoting musical products on the market. Moreover, promotional materials are not limited to video clips, and hip hop strategies of promotion have also involved alternative media, such as the merchandising still initiated through a community-spirit. Many hip hop entrepreneurs regularly collaborate with graffiti artists to produce unique and original promotional material, such as T-shirts with distinctive graffiti designs. Such an extension of the music economy, embracing and valorising different artistic practices active inside the hip hop community has become a recurrent tool in the promotion of musical productions. Some hip hop music makers have even invested themselves in this parallel activity by creating their own street-wear design brands. Such promotional investment is especially relevant in a context where, in the absence of reliable distribution networks and proper distributors, few retailers have monopolistic and exclusive agreements with wholesalers. Investing in a product's promotion thus tends to guarantee that retailers will accept to take on musical products, because wholesalers themselves would ask for it.

With the increasing practice of self-production and the gradual disappearance of labels and executive producers, music makers have generally become increasingly in charge of their products' dissemination alongside their music-making activities. In the Global North, this state of affairs has been attributed to the "dis-intermediation" of the

creative value chain that refers to “the impacts of digital reproduction on artists and content producers, pointing to a crucial shift in the role and powers of intermediaries” (Media@lse, 2002 p.7-8). However, in Francophone West Africa, there has been a persistent and acute absence of essential cultural intermediaries in the value chain of popular music production, such as a formal network of distribution. Being able to bring the recorded product to the consumers is thus a considerable challenge for West African participants, who often are dependent on the good will of retailers. As such, and in order to further their autonomy, hip hop entrepreneurs have paralleled the existing informal distribution network with another informal distribution network, one that is based on their community of practice. Three of my informants comment:

“My hip hop distribution network is hand in hand during the shows but also to my network in Ouagadougou and in France. [...] If you want to distribute hip hop productions, you have to do it in a hip hop way!” **(Interview #8; Music maker and worker, Ouagadougou)**

“Just to give an example in terms of strategy: in [name of label], we are five people and each of us has to find one hundred potential buyers for any CD released by the label [...] because people will buy if it is you who bring them the product.” **(Interview #28; Music maker and worker, Dakar)**

“We have a good network, the best network. We are very dynamic actors always having new ideas for promotion, new marketing ideas. We are inspired a lot. For example, AURA is a network. If I want to release my album in Burkina Faso, I go to [name of Burkinabè AURA member] and he releases the product for me. Through each of the members and thanks to them, I exist in Ivory Coast, in Guinea, etc.” **(Interview #20; Music maker and worker, Dakar)**

Therefore, hip hop entrepreneurs, through their specifically situated productive process, have participated in changing the traditional relationships between musical producers, consumers and products in West African music economies while developing, through and for their community, alternative avenues for the production,

promotion and distribution of their musical products. Their ownership of the means of musical production as well as their extended business ecology have permitted a peer production in accordance to the ethical economy of their community. Indeed, and similarly to Northern new media production (Pratt, 2000), hip hop spaces of musical production overlap with other cultural milieus, and other production milieus (graphic design, street-wear). This continuum, developing along the lines of the value chain of musical production, is what I have referred to as a business ecology which supports to hip hop peer production. As such, while sustaining the productive process inside their community, hip hop participants have incorporated and even challenged the rest of the West African music economy by leveraging their social spaces and making the most of the technology available, combined with their imagination. I now turn to how they collectively regulate these spaces.

7.4. COMMUNAL GOVERNANCE OF THE HIP HOP PRODUCTIVE COMMUNITY

This last section addresses the governance process involved in the hip hop music economy, and comprises of the means of quality control, selection and critique central to any community of practice. Again, akin to the productive process, based upon the evidence presented, I will argue for a peer approach to the governing process of hip hop economy and its community. In doing so, I stress the reflexive self-organisation of autonomous participants in this community as an alternative to a top-down and hierarchical form of governance. Characterised by a relational paradigm, I argue that a participative process based on the principle of self-rule is applied to the productive sphere of the hip hop music economy, whereby “market competition is balanced by co-

operation, the invisible hand is combined with a visible handshake¹⁴⁴. Stemming from my understanding of hip hop ethical economy and its peer productive process previously developed, I thus highlight peer governance based on the voluntary engagement of participants (Bauwens, 2007 p.239) and on the self-regulation of the productive community by affective affinity (Arvidsson et al., 2008 p.11).

7.4.1. Equipotential participatory process

Participation in the hip hop music economy is governed by a principle of equipotentiality or ‘anti-credentialism’, considering that there is no *a priori* selection to a productive participation (Bauwens, 2005). Indeed, similarly to the conception of hip hop music as form open to any and every individuality (Chapter 3), the equipotential character of this participatory process implies that participation in hip hop economy is not pre-conditioned by an initially selective and coercive criteria. Hip hop participants evolve in an ethical economy characterised by a passionate form of production, whereby workers participate in their community of practice on the basis of an emotional bond. Understanding hip hop musical production as a passionate one, implies a voluntary engagement of its participants with no direct reward in the form of monetary compensation (but mainly indirect rewards), and where coercion is structurally eliminated. Indeed, such participatory production distinguishes itself from traditional capitalist methods of coercion such as dependence-based wage work where productivity is based on mutual self-interest (Arvidsson et al., 2008 p.239). Rather, motivation for participation is “intrinsically positive, i.e. deriving from passion rather than from ‘extrinsic positives’ (self-interest or greed, motivated by the external monetary system)” (Bauwens, 2009 p.127). The hip hop ethical principle of ‘proving’

¹⁴⁴ Retrieved from http://p2pfoundation.net/4.1.C_Peer_Governance_a_a_third_mode_of_governance

oneself should thus be read as an openness of hip hop economy to any participants, provided that they have the necessary skills to contribute to the community of practice. Put differently, there are no prerequisite credentials to participate, and the capacity to contribute is verified in the process of contribution itself (Bauwens, 2005): indeed, what counts is demonstrated ability, not prior formal proof. The popular expression in the hip hop community “*it’s not where you’re from, but where you’re at*” acknowledges such a participatory process. “It is therefore based on the goal of inclusion rather than a mechanism of exclusion” (Bauwens, 2007 p.240). Such an equipotential process whereby an individual can fully express himself and his capabilities (Bauwens, 2007 p.242), is illustrated by one of my informants referring to the creative music-making:

“I really love Hip Hop as a message music and also for its raw character which is really attractive. People have not done the conservatory. It is a very natural process whereby people says something while just dressing it up a bit [...]” **(Interview #2; Music maker and worker, Ouagadougou)**

Besides the creative music-making, such an equipotential participatory process is especially salient in the productive sphere and the hip hop music economy’s promotion strategies. As demonstrated in the previous section, the promotion of hip hop musical products is a core element of its productive process. Moreover, Chapter 6 suggested that the media participate in the construction of both a community and a market (Théberge, 1991), while they are a link not only between economic practices and their relative market but also between different cultural practices. As such, apart from their appropriation of traditional media for promotion (radio, magazines), hip hop participants have extensively conquered the Internet by initiating websites and webzines dedicated to their community and the promotion of its members’ activities.

Mostly initiated by promoters or fans, these media that promote local productions also extend well beyond their initial locale both in the content as well as in the form. In the content, webzines and websites such as Kingsize¹⁴⁵ or Rapwolof¹⁴⁶ mix Senegalese news and updates of hip hop participants and community with those of hip hop communities from other parts of the world. Moreover, these new media sites are developed by local members of the hip hop community with the support of members from other hip hop communities in the world. As such, Kingsize stems from a collective initiative between Senegalese and Norwegian hip hop entrepreneurs, with Kingsize Norway having preceded, inspired and supported the creation of Kingsize Senegal. Similarly, RapWolof has been developed by a hip hop participant of the Senegalese diaspora based in one of the bastions of Hip Hop, the Parisian *banlieue*.

These virtual spheres thus offer a promotional tool both for the local hip hop community, its trans-local affiliations as well as for individual hip hop artists and their productions, with not only a magazine, but a community page as well as a forum. Artists themselves have also adopted these new media as ideal promotional sites for both their individual productions as well as for the services they offer in terms of music-making. This trend is especially visible among the proliferation of ‘MySpace’ or ‘Facebook’ pages, social networking websites that have been increasingly adopted throughout the world by artists and musicians to promote their productions. However, what is of interest is that in these virtual spheres, any hip hop participant, whether artists, promoters or fans, can equipotentially contribute to the hip hop community in which consumers and producers intermingle. Indeed, as the examples of MySpace or Facebook demonstrate, these promotional spheres where fans, promoters and artists can become ‘friends’ with the holder of the page, promote alternatively the collective

¹⁴⁵ See www.kingsize.sn

¹⁴⁶ See www.rapwolof.com

through the individual and the individual through the collective, i.e. the community and its participants. Indeed such peer system where human intentionality is integrated with peer-to-peer dynamics, individual and collective interests converge (Bauwens, 2009 p.127). Such a ‘producers’ dynamic is illustrated by the trajectory and comment of my informant:

“Before, a lot of people were just public, part of the audience. But now many of them have become rappers themselves. It worked for me though it does not work for everybody!” **(Interview #28; Music maker and worker, Dakar)**

The fact that “*it does not work for everybody*” highlights an essential aspect of the equipotential participatory process. Indeed, equipotentiality is neither synonymous of equality nor fairness, and the hip hop system of participation, as any informal system, does display a co-production of new inequalities. To be sure, the self-aggregation and self-assignment of tasks is not done in an equalitarian framework: each participant contributes according to their abilities. This implies that such a process is not “hierarchy-less, not structure-less, but usually characterised by flexible hierarchies and structures based on merit that are used to enable participation” (Bauwens, 2005 p.4). Indeed, authority and leadership exist and derive from the participants’ input into the constitution of hip hop economy, and depends on their continued engagement in the community (Bauwens, 2005). I now turn to discuss such authoritative and leading dimensions of hip hop peer governance.

7.4.2. Meritocracy and ‘benevolent dictatorships’

Although the concept of peer governance is helpful in understanding the governing process of the hip hop community, as the inequalities created by its equipotential

participatory process demonstrate, such a perspective is not unproblematic by itself. Indeed, “[m]ost communities seem to combine a core leadership whose forms of power do not correspond to the command and control paradigm but are nevertheless influential, and which are often termed ‘benevolent dictatorships’” (Bauwens, 2009 p.124). Here the co-existence of an ethical economy alongside the capitalist system goes towards explaining such a dynamic and even points towards some limits of the participatory process as far as the West African hip hop community is concerned. Indeed, in an ethical economy, coordination is ensured through a process of “affective affinity”, whereby participants aim at accumulating respect and recognition from a chosen community (Arvidsson et al., 2008 p.11), a form of ‘reputation economy’ as previously mentioned. For the most experienced hip hop participants, such an accumulation is sometimes accompanied by a consequent credit, and its privileged monetary compensations from the global music market. As one of my informants illustrates, in such cases, their contribution to the hip hop economy has relatively increased the potential of their participation compared to other participants in the community:

“If one performs live, one needs musicians and it is very expensive to have them, to rehearse with them and not everybody has a training room or the required instruments. Also, one needs to do a real show, i.e. needs to rent a good PA system, need to advertise the event on the radio, TV, through flyers, poster. All this makes a good show but one cannot! [...] Those who have a bit of money because they travel come back and are able to organise better show because they have the means to do so.” **(Interview #20; Music maker and worker, Dakar)**

Therefore, the “meritocracy” governing the hip hop economy needs to be regarded in conjunction with the market economy, from which some of the participants’ productions get consequent monetary recognition. Indeed, although the hip hop

productive community is not governed by, nor is its participation conditional to, the purchasing power of its participants, it is intrinsically connected to physical products (whether recorded or live musical productions) that require systematic cost-recovery mechanisms (Bauwens, 2009 p.129). One of my informants explains this requirement of “*just getting enough back*” in order to cover his contribution and, that way, to go on producing:

“We think about it by getting together; when we form alliance we can do a lot. [...] These are small details: we need to get groups together and [...] form a committee, and auto-regulate ourselves, self-manage ourselves and organise podiums and shows. We need to get people used to quality production. It is just a question of coordination! [...] It is just about getting enough money back on one’s investment and reimburse yourself.” **(Interview #28; Music maker and worker, Dakar)**

Cost-recovery mechanisms are especially salient in the organisation of festivals dedicated to Hip Hop that are active in the Francophone West African ensemble¹⁴⁷. Indeed, a networking dynamic has emerged amongst these festivals that share a common thematic in terms of their productions. As such, their entrepreneurs¹⁴⁸ all know each other, being part of other cooperation networks, and regularly work with each other, being at the same time executive producers and/or managers of hip hop artists/groups in their respective locales. These festivals are not especially lucrative as they rely extensively on external funding with their organisers multiplying parallel

¹⁴⁷ Gabao Hip Hop Festival (Gabon); Waga Hip Hop Festival (Burkina Faso); Hip Hop Kankpe Festival (Benin); Assallamalekoum Festival (Mauritania); Hip Hop Awards (Senegal); Festival Festa’2H (Senegal); Togo Hip Hop Awards (Togo); Guinean Africa Rap Festival (Guinea-Conakry); Hip Hop Wassa Festival (Niger); Mali Hip Hop Awards (Mali); but also in non-Francophone countries: Big Up GB - Movimento Hip Hop Festival (Guinea-Bissao); Hi-Life Festival (Ghana); as well as in Francophone Central African countries: Ndjama Hip Hop (Tchad); Bangui Hip Hop (Central African Republic); Couleurs Urbaines (Cameroon); Woila Hip Hop (Cameroon), 5Jours de Hip Hop (Congo-Brazzaville), Air d’Ici (Democratic Republic of Congo), Lubum Hip Hop (Democratic Republic of Congo); Malabo Hip Hop (Equatorial Guinea).

¹⁴⁸ Interestingly enough, the great majority of them are not hip hop music makers themselves, but a generation of new cultural entrepreneurs who have also emerge with the booming of this musical genre. They could thus be identified, under the ideal-typology introduced in Chapter 2, as ‘local cultural entrepreneurs’ and even in some instances as ‘cosmopolitan musical entrepreneurs’.

activities in order to make a living. However, the monetary dimension involved in the organisation of such spheres of live exhibition certainly calls for some systematic cost-recovery mechanisms set up by these specific hip hop participants. Other hip hop entrepreneurs have identified these mechanisms as constraining limits, relative to their regional network, mostly in terms of an inclusion/exclusion and power structure dilemma. However, the entrepreneurs organising these festivals respond to an organisational dynamic whereby their investment needs to be recovered. As such they exemplify these forms of “benevolent dictatorship” (Bauwens, 2009 p.124) capable of specifying the terms of their contribution to the community of practice, as one of my informants illustrates:

“These organisers create networks: one cannot go in a specific country unless it has been recommended by the Senegalese organiser. These organisers agree on conditions such as they won’t accept an artist who has not been recommended; or they won’t pay excessive artists fees – maximum 300 000 Fcfa” **(Interview #27; Music maker and worker, Dakar)**

The governing process of the West African hip hop community is therefore post-democratic, as it does not rely on representation, and extends beyond the political field to penetrate other social fields, such as the economic one in the hip hop productive community. It is non-representational and non-hierarchical, though conditioned by “meritocracy” and “benevolent dictatorships”. In this sense, the latter two reflect a political economy of hip hop music that is shaped by the likely existence and possible effect of social divisions and inequalities. Indeed, while the hip hop economy has to be regarded in conjunction with a market economy, its economic politics needs to be inscribed into the dynamics of a capitalist society, where differential power relations still feed unequal mappings of political as well as economic sociability. Put differently, the political economy of hip hop music, which participates in the one of global

capitalism, also displays some local structures of domination that characterised the global capitalist order. To be sure, the hip hop peer governing process is neither equal nor fair; it is equipotential. As such, tensions arising from the authoritative and leading dimensions of this peer governance can, and sometimes do, emerge.

However, both “meritocracy” and “benevolent dictatorships” are *ad hoc* in the sense that ‘forking’ – that is the creation of new independent projects (such as new hip hop festivals for instance) – is always possible (Bauwens, 2005 p.4). Besides, hip hop governance is guaranteed by an internal self-regulation by participants of this community, through reputations systems that are used for communal validation (Bauwens, 2005 p.2). In other words, the self-aggregation and self-assignment of tasks is balanced by a necessary reflexivity, both of the participants themselves and their peers, regarding their contribution to the community. As one of my informants states, a process of “*natural selection*” is at play, whereby participants accumulate recognition based on the relative value of their contribution. In this context, as the same Interviewee then pursues: “*only the best will survive*¹⁴⁹”. Clearly, this evaluation process has even reinforced the countervailing principle of ‘holoptism’, which dictates that vertical as well as horizontal information¹⁵⁰ about other participants is made available to the rest of the community, through automatic capture of their contribution (Bauwens, 2007 p.242). As such, this hip hop productive community governs itself through a distributed network of multiple autonomous participants, interactively learning and contributing to their ethical economy.

¹⁴⁹ Interviewee #20; Music maker and worker, Dakar

¹⁵⁰ Information not in terms of privacy but in terms of the existence and contribution of other participants (horizontal) as well as in terms of the access to the aims, metrics and documentation of the hip hop economy as a whole (vertical). See M. Bauwens. *The Political Economy of Peer Production*

7.5. CONCLUSION

Throughout this chapter, I have highlighted how hip hop music stands as a cultural production of both hip hop ‘transcultural politics’ and the ‘hip hop music economy’. Such a perspective is a distinct departure from previous work, and represents a significant weaving together of cultural and economic dimensions in the practices of specifically situated West African musical entrepreneurs. Indeed, it captures the tension between transcultural politics and transnational economic flows of music production by highlighting a ‘hip hop culturalisation’ of the West African music economy. I thus revisited the traditional understanding of the culturalisation thesis applied to Northern economies that has generally implied the simple use of cultural symbols as a means of differentiation for capitalist products (Chapter 1). Instead, I have argued that hip hop music in Francophone West Africa predicates a fundamentally new type of infrastructure, expressed through distinctive production as well as governance processes inscribed in what I have referred to as an ethical economy.

Therefore, I have framed my understanding of an ethical economy through hip hop textual music-making as a participatory process, and emphasised how hip hop music offers a cooperative socio-technological platform. I have acknowledged that two ethical principles guide hip hop entrepreneurial practices: ‘proving’ and ‘representing’. Indeed, the ethical economy of hip hop music-making involves at first the capacity of participants to create autonomously inside the community. Second, it implies that these participants develop an awareness and a consciousness of themselves as the new generation of cultural entrepreneurs active in their locale. To recap, the recognition of an ethical economy allows, on the one hand, for the entrepreneurial motive to be

located beyond a market economy justified by monetary incentives, and on the other, for the affirmation of community networks as a necessary tool and purpose of hip hop economic practices.

In the second part of this chapter, I have examined the productive process of hip hop ethical economy, based on the conditions of peer production. This focused on hip hop productive endeavours which are marked by the impetus for the ownership of the means of production and a dynamic businesses ecology. As such, I looked at a complex peer productive process that aims to gain autonomy and ensure the survival as well as the continuing development of the musical genre. Striving to sustain their productive process of music-making, hip hop entrepreneurs have thus developed, through and for their community, alternative avenues for the production, promotion and distribution of their musical products. What this second part has implicitly acknowledged is the radical innovation of the hip hop music economy that acts as the translation of an available technology by an individual imagination, itself inspired by a collective imaginary, a community ethics.

In the third part, I have investigated how this specific production dynamic is complemented with a radically innovative form of governance, which is community-based and community-oriented and coordinated by distributed autonomous participants. As such, I stressed how the reflexive self-organisation of autonomous participants in the hip hop community is based on the voluntary engagement of its participants and on the self-regulation of the productive community by affective affinity. I thus further explored the informal, though critical, elaborated social infrastructure that sustains hip hop ethical economy and its 'reputation economy'. I have highlighted the equipotential dimension of hip hop participatory process and

emphasised how the co-existence of an ethical economy alongside the capitalist system goes towards explaining the formation of a “meritocracy” and ‘benevolent dictatorships’, capable of specifying the terms of their contribution to the community. In this respect, and as summarised in the diagram below (see Diagram 7.2), I suggest that ‘communal governance’ stands as hip hop governing mechanisms. Such a kind of governance is based on its own means of organisation that is emergent, community-generated and inspired by affective affinity criteria such as respect and peer recognition, i.e. reputation.

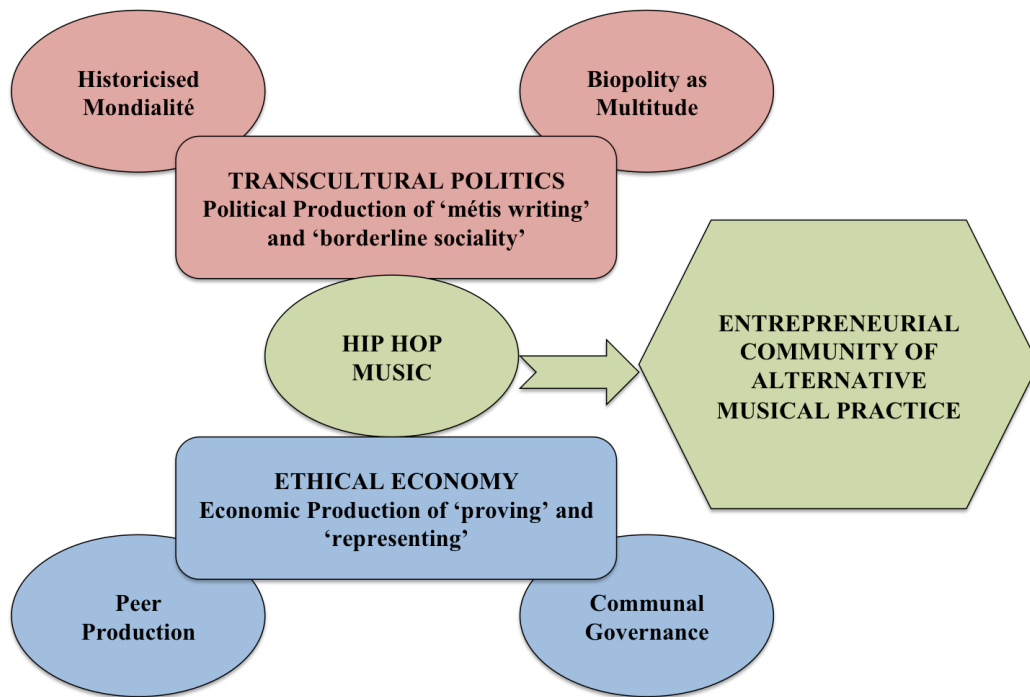


Diagram 7.2: Radical hip hop culturalisation of the West African music economy

The hip hop music economy is based on a network of distributed autonomous producers, self-regulating themselves, whose “natural priority is to increase the sphere of free cooperation within their existing society, in the context of access to the necessary material goods” (Bauwens, 2009 p.135). Indeed, dually allying their textual and material practices, hip hop participants have created an alternative economy of

musical production relying on networks pertaining to their own community of practice. In doing so, they have managed to directly organise an hip hop interface with the market while following their ethical principles (Bauwens, 2007 p.246). As such, mobilising their community not only appears as a resource for the production of their musical creations but also as the very asset for the governance of their practices. Indeed, the community – this ‘emotional site’ that is, at the same time, localised, translocal and virtual ¹⁵¹ –, becomes the dynamic producer of innovative practices.

Furthermore, the equipotentiality and affective affinity of hip hop participation have reaffirmed an ever-expanding translocality of its community and the consequent ongoing translations of its participants’ productive practices. Through the equipotential participation as governing process, participants in the Francophone West African hip hop music economy link and interact, whether physically or virtually¹⁵² – depending on their respective and accumulated skills – in order to sustain their ethical project. In doing so, the productive and governing practices of these hip hop entrepreneurs remain in constant translation, as sites where textual and material participations converge. More specifically, they illuminate the transcultural dimension of Hip Hop and its radical culturalisation of the music economy in Francophone West Africa from which an entrepreneurial community of alternative musical practice emerges.

¹⁵¹ Here I confront and deconstruct Bennett and Peterson’s trichotomic approach of the ‘music scene’ - See for an introduction A. Bennett. *Consolidating the music scenes perspective*

¹⁵² I remember being at a hip hop show in Dakar and talking with a hip hop promoter/fan who, once he knew that I was back from Ouagadougou asked me if I had met this other promoter/fan, very active and who happened to be one of my colleagues there. What I am getting at is that the Senegalese participant referred and even recommended me to the Burkinabe participant although, when I inquired, they had never met! These hip hop participants, in other words, who do not have the facility to travel, do exchange and transmit information on their respective hip hop scenes through their mastering of ICT’s.

CHAPTER 8

TOWARDS A GENERAL CONCLUSION

8.1. INTRODUCTION

This thesis began with two aims. The first was to confront a persisting Northern bias as far as theory-building and policy-making in the cultural economy and its dynamics of entrepreneurship are concerned, and to demonstrate the contribution of qualitative research in the Global South in this process. The second was to provide an alternative conception of culture and development through the lens of specifically situated cultural workers while highlighting how their identities and practices can inform social change. As such, I proceeded to an investigation of the practices characterising the cultural economy in Francophone West Africa and focused on a specific case study of hip hop musical practitioners. In this final chapter, I reflect on the extent to which each of these aims have been achieved and present the conclusions to my arguments, as well as some caveats that have emerged from my research inquiry.

In chapter 1, I stated that my research was an attempt to take up and expand upon the challenges of recognising the multiplicity of cultural economies as well as to explore a new political image of cultural entrepreneurship through Wenger's concept of "community of practice" (Wenger, 1998). The argument was made that existing research on the cultural economy and cultural entrepreneurship has suffered from a discursive approach that, first translates a complex reality into simplistic norms; second, focuses solely on consumption and disregarded the whole production chain involved in this economy; and third, that rests on structural mappings and predictions (in relation to its normative and consumption-oriented dimension) rather than on actual

processes and practices. What follows is, in part, the contributions of the thesis, highlighting how I overcame these weaknesses.

By taking a reflexive and grounded approach to the research design process and analysis, I have attempted to make as few as possible *a priori* assumptions about cultural entrepreneurship and the theoretical orientations that might apply. From this perspective, I have neither intended to discredit nor promote this entrepreneurial practice, but rather to assess how it has emerged, and how it is expressed in the context of the Senegalese hip hop music economy. In this respect, the investigated networks provided a situated perspective on musical producers (rather than a traditional emphasis on cultural consumers) and involved some degree of translocality that emphasised the complexity of the West African music economy. Furthermore, my grounded emphasis on the specificities of contextual conditions operating in the West African music economy and the recursive relationships these have with the identities and practices of cultural entrepreneurs working therein necessitated novel methodologies. As such, I relied on an ‘experiential situating’ of this specifically situated cultural economy that permitted empirical knowledge creation and acquisition.

Despite successfully addressing critiques of existing accounts of the cultural economy and cultural entrepreneurship within the framing and the design of the thesis, I have, nonetheless, implicitly recognised that my conceptual framework was not able to account for all of the aesthetic and political peculiarities of hip hop entrepreneurship in the Francophone West African music economy. This final chapter thus recaps the current state of knowledge and demonstrates how I have confronted it and pushed it further. In doing so, it revises the substantive material developed in my empirical chapters in order to respond to the questions formulated in Chapter 1. As such, this

chapter draws conclusions based on evidence presented in Chapter 7, but also presents a broader picture from the arguments and analysis deployed throughout the thesis. As this chapter reminds us, a necessary part of this process has been using novel methodologies as well as quite different theoretical imports with a resultant narrative form that is original and constitutes, I believe, new and significant contributions to existing knowledge on the cultural economy and cultural entrepreneurship.

8.2. ON THE HIP HOP ENTREPRENEURIAL COMMUNITY

To begin, I want to restate my particular usage of ‘cultural entrepreneurship’ and hence underline how useful this has been in framing my thesis. While the recent focus on cultural and creative entrepreneurship has not always implied by itself that a shift beyond an economic discourse is taken as far as these entrepreneurial practices are concerned, I have argued for contextualising entrepreneurship within the framework of Wenger’s “community of practice”. In doing so, I have not only recognised the inclusion of non-economic rationale in the discourse of cultural entrepreneurs, but also stressed huge tensions persisting between the collective and the individual in the cultural economy, and in new forms of entrepreneurial practices it implies. Furthermore, recognising that cultural practices and their related communities vary in time, place as well as in field, I have showed how this form of entrepreneurship is necessarily bound up with its ‘situated’ location. In other words, the understanding of cultural entrepreneurship and its effects on the lives of its participants appears as a collective product that is not uniform. Cultural entrepreneurship as a process of cultural intermediation emphasises how identity issues are important to the participants’ configuration, through their own negotiation and formulation of local place-based cultural practices with those of their constellation. In this respect, my

specific usage of ‘cultural entrepreneurship’ has allowed me to open a conceptual space in which I focused on *in situ* processes of musical entrepreneurship active in Francophone West Africa, while highlighting the limits of economic analysis of cultural and creative entrepreneurial practices.

Moreover, it is useful to recall very briefly the contextual cues discussed in Chapters 5 and 6, which geared my research interests in the first instance towards hip hop entrepreneurship in the West African music economy. Indeed, the research questions were directly motivated by the visibility of emerging forms of cultural entrepreneurship and ongoing debates about the political economy of musical production. As Chapter 7 demonstrated, the hip hop music economy stands as a fundamentally new type of social and organisational infrastructure expressed through specific production and governance processes inscribed in an ethical economy. As introduced in Chapter 2, hip hop entrepreneurs find their own unique identities among West African musical entrepreneurs, modifying the paradigmatic trajectories of previous artists-entrepreneurs and even rejecting the paradigmatic trajectories of ‘local cultural entrepreneurs’. In their “process of negotiating trajectories” (Wenger, 1998 p.157), they have thus indicated, rather than a continuity, a clear break with previous entrepreneurial practices in the West African music economy. Such a paradigmatic change of the musical infrastructure can be best described through the distinctive form of cultural entrepreneurship emerging from it. In this regard, the remainder of this section addresses the radical originality of entrepreneurial initiatives developed by hip hop participants. Indeed, their practices display an essential capacity to reconcile and dually mediate both individual and collective as well as social and economic interests. These, as such, have broader implications for the music economy in Francophone West Africa.

Through their principal artistic occupation, hip hop participants express their situated politics that I described in Chapter 3. Individually and autonomously, hip hop entrepreneurs explore their political agenda by inscribing it in a larger cultural framework; the hip hop community and its ‘transcultural politics’. Here, I want to recall what I emphasised in Chapter 3 regarding the individual self-creation process of a ‘mondialised’, ‘transcultural’ sociality, under the constitutive action of *métissage* displayed in hip hop music. Indeed, the “writing of the voice” of hip hop participants is necessarily singular (*métisse* singularity) and multiple (‘transcultural communality’) in practice. As such, hip hop participants collectively though autonomously, co-create the ethical hip hop economy that is emerging through peer productive as well as governing mechanisms. From this perspective, the hip hop music economy is ethical, not in the sense that it translates some form of philosophical universality but because it is situated and particular to the local practices of its community. Indeed, rather than a ‘moral’ economy¹⁵³, the hip hop music economy is ethical, as it constructs an implicit knowledge economy and elaborates a social infrastructure that is informal and critical to anyone being successful in their participation. In other words, this ethical economy allows the authority of specific affective affinities, translating into an informal social infrastructure. This ethical feature refers to the ‘transcultural dimension’ of Hip Hop that shapes its radical culturalisation of the West African music economy. In this respect, the incursion into the productive and governing processes of the hip hop economy demonstrated how these musical entrepreneurs, through their ethical practices, enhance the convergence of individual and collective interests. Indeed, the

¹⁵³ Although the difference between a moral and an ethical economy can seem somewhat arbitrary to many, there is a basic, albeit subtle difference. Indeed, while morals refers to *permanent* codes and has been usually assumed to have religious basis because of its *transcendent* feature, ethics has no necessary connection with religion in general, but stress a social system that points to *circumstantial* standards or codes of behaviour (*immanent* to its practical operations) expected by the group to which the individual belong. In this sense, contrary to a moral economy, an ethical economy is context- and other-dependent, i.e. the individual and the collective respond to each other from their specifically situated position. For detailed discussion, see: http://p2pfoundation.net/Crisis_of_Value_and_the_Ethical_Economy and A. Arvidsson and N. Peitersen. *The Ethical Economy - Chapter 1: Introduction*

hip hop music economy involves individual participation always expressed through collective production, stemming either from a local, translocal and/or virtual community. The participatory production or the productive participation of hip hop entrepreneurs thus gives rise to an alternative form of entrepreneurial practice that emerge from this constant and dynamic duality between the community and the individual. One of my informants illustrates this quite radically:

“Nowadays, [the hip hop movement] gets stabilised and people of the movement want to work together without consideration for the geographic zone each lives in or the style of hip hop one does. Today, the actors have the desire to work together as they know that it is the only way out to survive.” **(Interview #20; Music maker and worker, Dakar)**

Therefore, a singular characteristic of hip hop entrepreneurship is that its practices are located inside its community of practice. Certainly, the two ethical principles, ‘proving’ and ‘representing’, reassess the dual tensions between the individual and the collective in a field of practice dominated until now by ‘gomboïst attitudes’, individualist and short-term oriented participants, as argued in Chapter 5. Moreover, and as introduced in Chapter 2, traditionally entrepreneurial innovation has been attributed to an individual or an organisation as the economic actor. However, the entrepreneurial activities in this hip hop music economy are initiated by its very community of participants, i.e. in the distributed network of freely involved autonomous workers. As such, their peer productive and governing mechanisms mean that hip hop entrepreneurs choose to govern themselves while engaging in the production of a common resource. In this process, they remain self-reflexive and are accountable to themselves as well as to their ‘emotional site’.

“Rappers are people who know how to make bread but refuse to buy flour and an oven! There is a mastering studio in Dakar but people do not use it. [...] And then people complain that their product is not played in nightclubs but it is not played there because, there, it is in concurrence with US sounds, which are not extraordinary but which are mastered in a way to make people dance and move. And then, local tracks sound like plastic!” (Interview #27; Music maker and worker, Dakar)

Indeed, this quote stresses the dual mediation that can be found in the reflexive professionalisation of hip hop entrepreneurs and their community of practice. Thanks to the self-regulation and reflexivity of their community of practice, hip hop musical entrepreneurs know that the challenge is not just to create quantity, but quality, and to thus adopt a critical stance toward the productive dimension of their economy and the professionalisation of the practices of their community. This quote suggests that the translocal dimension of the hip hop community is of inestimable help in questioning the relative impact of one’s musical production. As such, it illustrates how the hip hop music economy calls for entrepreneurial practices that necessarily recognise the multi-scalar dimension of cultural economies. Such a recognition goes along with one of my conclusions in Chapter 5, that stressed the various scales of intervention in the cultural field of practice. Indeed, the individual, as well as the local, translocal and virtual communities, with their respective sizes, powers, and potentials, are the interacting productive elements of the hip hop music economy.

Moreover, the recognition of an entrepreneurial community that tends to increasingly divorce entrepreneurship from capitalism (Bauwens, 2007 p245), stands in line with the growing awareness of the social dimension of innovation (Bauwens, 2009 p130). Rather than an internal characteristic of for-profit institutions (whether individual or organisational), innovation is becoming the property of networks of cooperation, such as the hip hop community. In fact, hip hop entrepreneurs participate in their music

economy with the impulse to improve local conditions of musical production, while aligning their practices with their ethics. As such, the immediate social and economic implications of the communal dimension of hip hop entrepreneurship stands as its radical financial rationale. In Chapter 7, I have argued that the recognition of an ethical economy allows for the hip hop entrepreneurial motive to be located beyond a market economy justified by monetary incentives. Chapter 6 clarified that cultural workers are passionate individuals whose involvement in a specific cultural field stands as an expression of their personal affinity. These two stances highlight how hip hop entrepreneurs are not animated by the common entrepreneurial rationale of ‘making profit’ which is necessarily inscribed in a pure capitalist system based on the exploitation of a majority for the profit of a minority. Rather, and radically distancing itself from traditional entrepreneurship, hip hop entrepreneurs are motivated by the financial rationale of ‘making a living’, i.e. finding an accommodation, feeding themselves, taking care of their family, and sustaining their principal artistic occupation.

From this perspective, Chapter 7 demonstrated that ‘making a living’ does involve an interplay between hip hop ethical economy and capitalism as addressed through the governing processes of its community. Although hip hop participants do not aim to make profit through their creative practices, they still have to address some cost-recovery mechanisms. However, based on evidence provided in this thesis, I contend that thinking in terms of cost-recovery mechanisms rather than profits denotes a dynamic that divorces hip hop entrepreneurial practices from those of other cultural entrepreneurs. Indeed, it goes beyond the traditional cultural logic of self-promotion or sustaining of an individual artistic/creative activity mentioned in Chapter 2. ‘Making a living’ stands as a sustainable equilibrium between individual and collective needs, but

also social and economic issues that are coherent with the Millennium Development Goals¹⁵⁴. As has been recurrently formulated through the concept of an ethical economy, hip hop entrepreneurs are less motivated to develop a profitable enterprise, than they are to create a self-sustaining social entity that delivers value to its participants. Rather than being profit-oriented (understood in monetary terms), they are benefit-oriented, with a capacity to grow with very small amounts, if any, of capital. Consequently, the outcomes of these entrepreneurial practices are not only inscribed in a market economy but also in a social economy. Indeed, hip hop entrepreneurs primarily think and act in terms of their localised, placed and situated (though not exclusively) locale of practice. Their productive practices are first justified with the perspective of responding to a local demand, boosting a situated and emerging music economy. As two of my informants explain, responding to one of the critiques to current approaches of the cultural economy previously formulated, this is done by moving the dual angles of the production/offer and the consumption/demand:

“And it is our responsibility to do shows so powerful that it give the young people the desire to come and see. [...] Hip hop artists have to do high quality shows and people will come along. We need to come with original concepts that are revolutionary and get out with the ordinary. [...] There is a need for daring projects [...] and all projects that are a bit daring, people are attracted and come. [...] If they know that an artist will play playback, they won’t come.”
(Interview #20; Music maker and worker, Dakar)

“My logic is that there is an offer and a demand. The public formulates a demand for a live performance based on a format. But if the offer of live performances is not equating their expectations, they will go once but the second time, they will consider that it simply is not worth it as the previous time the sound was not good, they started late, there was a power cut, etc. [...] To bring back these disillusioned clients in a concert in a stadium, the show really has to be original!”
(Interview #19, Music maker and worker, Dakar)

¹⁵⁴ I am here making reference to the goal of advancing the means to a productive life.
<http://www.unmillenniumproject.org/documents/MainReportChapter1-lowres.pdf>

Resonating with the perspectives offered by these two quotes, Chapter 5 concluded that a music economy acknowledges the dualities of cultural production and consumption, as well as the inherent dual dimension of identity and merchandise it involves. As such, it underlined that there are now at least two conflicting ways of conceiving and practicing cultural production on the Senegalese, and by extension, Francophone West African territory: an official and a productive one. However, and based on evidence provided throughout Chapter 7, I argue that hip hop entrepreneurial practices, while reconciling the productive and official one, offer a ‘third’ way of conceiving and practicing cultural production on their locale. A ‘third’ way that offers an illustration of such “liminal thinking and doing” I addressed in Chapter 3. Indeed, it illustrates how hip hop ethical economy, marked by a peer production ecology and a communal form of governance, suggests a concrete application of a radically new socio-economic approach of musical production, one that reconciles private (individual and economic) as well as public (collective and social) goods. As such, it reminds us that hip hop entrepreneurial practices are a co-constitution between their political thinking and their economic doing, a phenomenon that my conceptual framework of “community of practice” pointed to.

8.3. IDEAL-TYOLOGY AND BEYOND “COMMUNITIES OF PRACTICE”

The ideal-typology formulated in Chapter 2 stands as the basis of the knowledge I created and as such, this concluding chapter returns to it in order to show how this thesis pushed forward previous contributions regarding the cultural economy and its dynamics of entrepreneurship. The ideal-typology is a way of translating the contextually embedded form of cultural entrepreneurship active in the Francophone West African music economy. As such, it offers a raw identification that aims to

accentuate the diversity and complexity of West African musical entrepreneurship, while stressing, through Wenger's "CoP", the different 'thinking' and 'doing' processes of these entrepreneurs. As we saw in Chapter 2, shared practices connect participants in way that are diverse and complex (Wenger, 1998 p.76). Such an approach thus stands in clear contrast with traditional normative perspectives on entrepreneurship, and allowed me to develop a model designed following data collection and exemplified by the information collected. Indeed, the new operationalisation offered by this conceptual framework introduced a narrative structure that departed from normative theses, and part of the radical methodology I employed insisted on a required engagement with practice. Furthermore, it permitted me to unveil the different "CoP" existing among West African musical entrepreneurs, i.e. 'local cultural entrepreneurs', 'cosmopolitan musical entrepreneurs' and 'hip hop entrepreneurs' who were the subjects of this thesis.

The framework I proposed to utilise considered West African musical entrepreneurs as a "CoP" that is marginally positioned in the broader constellation of cultural entrepreneurship, in the sense that some form of non-participation prevents them from full participation. Such an understanding of this reading of Wenger' work thus permitted me to use "CoP" to look at musical entrepreneurship in Francophone West Africa for the first time. "CoP" define themselves in part by the way they negotiate their place within the constellation they are involved in. As such, I addressed how West African musical entrepreneurs translate cultural entrepreneurship: "neither merely individual nor abstractly communal [...] this competence is experienced and manifested by members through their own engagement in practice" (Wenger, 1998 p.136). In doing so, I recognised that distinctive 'thinking' and 'doing' practices were at play. This illustrated the 'varieties of cultural entrepreneurship' suggested in

Chapter 2 as “existential venturing aiming at crafting one’s own identity” (Johannisson, 2011 p.139). Cultural entrepreneurship thus stands as a multiple category, whose different forms need to be explored in a context-dependent approach. It also refers to various social and political formations that are inscribed in different places, times, nations, markets, and economic activities. Indeed, ‘varieties of cultural entrepreneurship’ reflect these multiple intermediations, complex and diverse political stories between macro and micro perspectives.

Emphasising this ‘thinking’ (identity) and ‘doing’ (practice) duality, Wenger’s concept emerged as a useful and productive framework for exploring how the cognitive and pragmatic spaces of West African musical entrepreneurs develop and inscribe themselves in an emergent theory of cultural entrepreneurship. This conceptual framework opened the way for a differentiation of language and logic and permitted the development of an ideal-typology. Wenger’s concept allowed me to point to and touch upon the ‘varieties of emergent cultural entrepreneurship’, but not to investigate nor understand the processes involved in their relative diversity and complexity. However useful the concept of “CoP” was, it did not allow analysis to go beyond this raw identification, as Wenger has developed his concept from the perspective of a relatively homogeneous workplace. I thus needed to extend reflection on such a work and its relative contribution in complex environments. Indeed, although the author does recognise the existence of hierarchies and practice diversities, notions of power and politics constitute a major blind spot in his contribution, and open up the possibility for future work. In other words, this conceptual framework stood as an initial step towards developing a more varied discursive repertoire, nevertheless with more in-depth consideration of political and social context still missing.

Despite its considerable contribution as conceptual framework, Wenger's "CoP" displayed a consequent limit that I could not ignore and that I needed to confront, in order to inquire into the potential that hip hop entrepreneurs have for social change. Indeed, this conceptual framework did not stress enough nor provide the necessary tools for exploring and grasping the issues of power as well as the political and aesthetic forces at play in any situated cultural entrepreneurship. I implicitly recognised such a limit on the one hand, by stressing how West African musical entrepreneurs as a "CoP" require a systematic 'community breakdown' in order to recognise and include its various political and aesthetic dimensions; and, on the other, by introducing another literature that was more political and cultural in its focus regarding hip hop entrepreneurship. As such, 'Translation Studies' and 'Cultural Studies' have indicated a whole new apparatus of critical and poststructuralist approaches which further complement the diversity and richness in thinking and conceiving 'cultural entrepreneurship'. These theoretical conceptions and disciplinary anchors allowed me to move beyond the conceptual framework of "CoP" and to direct my attention to explaining the linkages between political and aesthetic dimensions of cultural entrepreneurship and the empirical context of the West African hip hop music economy. My use of critical and poststructuralist approaches permitted an in-depth examination of the dynamics and processes identified via the framework of "CoP" that are related to individual and collective actions, aspirations and motivations of musical producers in such a way as to effect social change.

8.4. ON SOCIAL CHANGE AND HIP HOP POLITICAL POTENTIAL

This section translates my reading of hip hop entrepreneurial community into a more general learning, as far as social change is concerned. In doing so, it permits my thesis

to participate in and further develop the debates in development geography that focus on the deployment of culture in challenging and reconfiguring political and economic relations. Indeed, rather than a ‘resource’ or an ‘institution’, the West African hip hop entrepreneurial community demonstrates how the productive and constitutive dimensions of its cultural identities and practices can inform social change, while exemplifying an alternative development of their field. In this respect, I reconnect my analysis of hip hop entrepreneurship to the larger theoretical discourse of cognitive capitalism and show how, between the lines, this organic community and its mediating practices can inform larger processes of social change. Indeed, Chapters 3 and 7 put emphasis upon the political potential of the particular immaterial labour force which are the participants in the West African hip hop community, pointing to “the possibility of change, of re-imagining life and labour, of creating new forms of solidarity” (Gill and Pratt, 2008 p.20). As such, I engaged with the specificities of the hip hop music economy in Francophone West Africa and attended to the meanings that hip hop entrepreneurs themselves give to their creative labour. Based on the evidence provided in these two chapters, I can state that such an emphasis has contributed to not *only understanding* but also *changing* the world (Gill and Pratt, 2008), as the hip hop entrepreneurial community displays a practice of the “multitude”, of its liberatory potential of this new “subjective” condition of labour.

Locating the entrepreneurial practices inside a community of practice is an essential contribution of this thesis to the emerging literature on cultural entrepreneurship. Indeed, it takes us beyond the traditional notion of a network of creative workers, as stressed in Chapter 6, that involves a necessary collaboration of participants in a precarious and uncertain field of practice. Rather, West African musical entrepreneurs rely on a situated assemblage of ‘modernity’ and ‘tradition’ in order to net-work and

construct “culturally embedded and empowering solutions to development problems” relative to their field of practice (Radcliffe and Laurie, 2006 p.246). Furthermore, Chapter 3 insisted how such an assemblage, *bricolage* even, is inherent to the identities and practices of hip hop participants. Based on evidence provided in Chapter 7, I thus argue that this hip hop entrepreneurial community puts forward a novel form of interaction, a voluntary coordination among participants. As mentioned in Chapter 3, rather than forming a network, they constitute a ‘biopolity’, “which intersperse spatiality, arises as a result of a feeling of *belonging*, as a function of a specific *ethic* and within a framework of a communication *network*” (Pratt, 2000 p.433). As such, hip hop entrepreneurs form a ‘biopolity’ which is reified by rituals of belonging and participation, such as ‘proving’ or demonstrating and ‘representing’ that are framed by participants’ translation into the ‘transcultural textuality’ and the ‘translocal materiality’ of their community.

Such a ‘transcultural textuality’ recognises the experience of a “multitude” that cultivates, in all its fields (political, economic, social), its differences (Negri, 2004 p.1). Indeed, the hip hop entrepreneurial community stands as an expression of the “multitude”, of this “disorganised, differential and powerful multiplicity” (Negri, 2008 p.22), as it allows for the inscription of multiple trajectories, of a diversity of individualities. Here, I refer to the *métisse* possibility of the ‘and’ and its challenge that it becomes the ‘hand’ as suggested in Chapter 3. Indeed, participants in this community do not have an instrumental function, but rather a multiplicity of roles that they can play in their professional life as well as in the various ‘emotional sites’ they participate in. Such a multiplicity of roles played through an hip hop participation can be confronted interestingly with the commonly functional and instrumental dimension given to cultural production. As such, Chapter 5 has defined the state ‘politics of

culture’ as the official ideology that instrumentalises cultural production as an essential function in the affirmation of a national identity, paralleled with the hip hop politics presented in Chapter 3. However, and contrary to this ‘politics of culture’, such a political inscription is not functional or instrumental, but correlative of the productive dimension of the musical practices of its community. As such, a sociality of multiplicity is expressed in the equipotential character of the participatory process of the hip hop community that challenges the traditional “know-who” defining cultural and creative networks. For in the framework of this hip hop entrepreneurial community, the potential contribution of multiple trajectories is facilitated in a participatory process that does not require any “know-who” as pre-condition.

Moreover, the ‘translocal materiality’ of hip hop entrepreneurial practices highlighted how informal networks are used beyond a traditional learning process involved in cultural entrepreneurship. Indeed, as stressed in Chapter 6, West African musical entrepreneurs rely extensively on translocal networks, striving to gain inspiration and get to know the practices of other similar communities, in order to enrich their own practice. However, and as the concept of “benevolent dictatorships” revealed, West African hip hop entrepreneurial community relies on its networks, not only to learn, but also in order to sustainably work, i.e. in order to coordinate and harmonise the practices of its participants. Put differently, hip hop entrepreneurs develop and use networks in order for their community to remain as such. The practices of their entrepreneurial community situate “the crumbling of the traditional frontiers between the sphere of reproduction and that of direct production, [where] the exploitation of the use value of labour power is extended to the totality of the social day” (Vercellone, 2005 p.10). They illustrate the dynamic relationships between material production and social reproduction that, under contemporary capitalism, converge, allowing new

socialities to emerge with the potential to create political relations. In doing so, this hip hop entrepreneurial community, through its ‘translocal materiality’, empirically responds to the urgent call made by the West African musical productive community for a regional harmonisation of domestic policies regarding cultural production (Chapter 5). In other words, the ‘translocal materiality’ of hip hop entrepreneurial community concretely affirms its solidarity, and creates a favourable space for social change. It does this through the creation of an alternative music economy, while paving the way for a new coordinated production and governance.

A “multitude” stands as a project of political organisation that can only be realised through political practice. Such a political conceptualisation introduced in Chapter 3 stood as a productive and useful framing of the practicalities addressed in Chapter 7. I was thus able to understand hip hop subjects from a political perspective while translating Foucault’s notion of “genealogy” (1994) as the expression of a community of practice, singular and multiple, ‘transcultural’ and ‘mondialised’. As such, drawing on this Foucauldian conception, I deconstructed the institutionalisation of scientific discourses about Hip Hop. From there, the ontological character and constitutive dynamics of the hip hop ‘biopolity’ offered an audacious act of political imagination: a process in which the subject creates new institutional and social models based on its own productive capacities (Hardt and Negri, 2004 p.354). As Chapter 7 suggested, the West African hip hop entrepreneurial community illustrates the coordination and the organisation of a “multitude”, of this movement of movements, that “rarely coalesces at an empirical level beyond the time of an event (Neilson and Rossiter, 2005 p.2-3). It offers a concretisation of productive, creative and liberatory potential that “contributes in bringing about more desirable forms of globalisation” (Coté, 2008 p.11), one that is, as I established in Chapter 3, ‘mondialised’. In doing so, the hip hop entrepreneurial

community has stressed how “liminal thinking and being” whose productive subject is a “multitude” can checkmate the system with its “lateral thinking and empowering action” (Radcliffe and Laurie, 2006 p.245).

8.5. RESEARCH IMPLICATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

This thesis aimed to suggest paths for researching music economies based on the findings of a situated form of cultural entrepreneurship. As such, and as mentioned in the introduction, one of its objectives was to extend the bodies of ‘African Studies’ literature that have been focusing on West African music. Indeed, my investigation of West African musical entrepreneurs has highlighted both the productive and constitutive dimensions of the identities as well as of the practices of these participants, beyond traditional considerations of a socio-historical or ethnomusicological ‘experience’. While this (multiple) body of work has tended to address West African music as a cultural experience of anthropological, social and historical significance, my thesis focused on the productive and economic dynamics of this specifically situated aesthetics. In this respect, my insights have provided theoretical, conceptual and empirical accounts on the situated nature of cultural entrepreneurship and the productive processes involved in this music economy that can significantly contribute to a scholarly context where research has predominantly privileged historical, anthropological and musicological perspectives.

By inquiring into particular economic geographies of the Global South, I situated a ‘Southern’ agency that has recognised and understood the role it plays in shaping networks and trajectories in the music economy. In doing so, I have revealed another version of the cultural economy and entrepreneurship that demonstrates to one of the

leading disciplines in this field of research, namely (cultural) economic geography, how a qualitative investigation can contribute significantly to both theory-building and policy-making in least advanced economies. Indeed, my carefully focused empirical investigation has unravelled the complexities of networks involved in a music economy and its participants situated in two “ordinary cities”, and has highlighted how the Global South can also be “a source of theoretical inspiration [and] as an empirical centre from which scholars can ‘theorise back’ at the Anglo-European research community” (Murphy, 2008 p.866). As such, the findings of this thesis have provided novel empirical insights as well as theoretical ideas that participate in affirming geography as a truly ‘wordly’ discipline, while situating a ‘form’ of the music economy that has remained ‘off-the-map’ of in conventional scholarship.

While carving out a space for a Francophone West African music economy and confronting (cultural) economic geographers with the clear Northern biases found in their work, I have also sent a strong message to the ‘human geography community’ in general and to (cultural) economic and development geographers in particular. Indeed, my research has challenged an implicit but persisting divide between economic and development geography, while both adding nuance to and furthering some of their most current intense debates. Namely, the ‘creative economy and its spatial manifestations’ for the former, and ‘culture as creativity in development thinking and planning’ for the latter. To address the specific economic geographies of the Global South I focused on, the culture and development paradigm was revisited, and I inquired into processes of ‘modernity’ and ‘tradition’, drawing on the insights of post-structuralism, in order to illuminate political and aesthetic dimensions of West African musical entrepreneurship. As such, by taking several theoretical and conceptual detours and relying on ‘disciplinary bridges’ between ‘Cultural Studies’,

‘Development Studies’, and ‘Translation Studies’ that emerged from my inquiry, my thesis has re-invested a research practice that has come to define human geography. It could be identified as a research practice in which new knowledge is being developed and advanced through intensive debates and critical engagement with competing theories, philosophies and perspectives, both from within and outside the ‘discipline’.

Several unexpected insights emerged from my thesis’ empirically driven framework, which have implications for theorising the emergence and articulation of cultural entrepreneurship in the West African music economy. To recap briefly, first, this process implied situating the participants while understanding both their identities and their practices in order to effectively support their community of cultural intermediaries. Second, this endeavour called for a reconsideration of the scales of cultural development based on the implications offered by hip hop entrepreneurship and its radical culturalisation of the music economy as far as social change is concerned. Based on evidence presented throughout the thesis, I can state that such a journey was about allying individual and collective, political and economic, local and global dimensions of the music economy, while singling out its political significance and critical purchase. More precisely, it was concerned with illuminating a novel form of cultural entrepreneurship, one that lies beyond individual competitive capitalism and coercively cooperative collectivism. One of the lessons taught by cultural entrepreneurs is that their economy is based on continuous learning processes; one of the lessons taught by hip hop entrepreneurs is that their politics and productive practices stem from on-going translation. From these two conclusions, a major contribution of this thesis is that musical entrepreneurship in Francophone West Africa emerges from an experiential economy.

What the hip hop music economy in particular, and cultural economies in general, show is that there is a new form of production, one that is “beyond measure”. It is a production that stands “outside quantitative measurement” as “it goes *beyond* the idea of measure itself, that is to say, it ceases in reality to be defined as a negative passing of the limits of measurement to become simply – in an absolutely affirmative and positive manner – the power of the living labour¹⁵⁵” (Negri, 2008 p.21). Indeed, the link between subjectivity and social labour under contemporary capitalism implies a “crisis of value” whereby “a lot of the actual wealth produced cannot be measured” (Arvidsson et al., 2008 p.13). As has been argued, the “main feature of this crisis is embodied by the new qualitative preponderance of *living knowledge*, incorporated and mobilised by labour, over *dead knowledge*, incorporated in fixed capital (and the firm organisation)” (Vercellone, 2005 p.6-7). Therefore, taking into account the actual experiences of productive participants that reconcile politics and practices of identity is pertinent in order to grasp the processes involved in any situated music economy. From this perspective, the West African hip hop entrepreneurial community suggests an experience of creative, immaterial labour that is lived, i.e. a lived experience that the research process needs to engage with.

The popular hip hop expression “*You don’t do Hip Hop; You are Hip Hop*”¹⁵⁶ has already pointed to the necessary ‘experiential situating’ I introduced in Chapter 4; this implied the appropriate creation and acquisition of knowledge required when researching this specific creative, living labour. Indeed, such a “living knowledge” needed to be responded to, not only at the theoretical level but at the methodological level as well. In Maffesolian terms, such an ‘experiential situating’ refers to an

¹⁵⁵ Italics in original text

¹⁵⁶ This famous expression has been attributed to one of the pioneer of US conscious hip hop, KRS-One and is extremely popular among the transcultural hip hop community.

“organic perspective”, a “*connaissance*” that integrates a perceptible dimension, a “*co(n)-naissance*” that, at the closest of its etymology, allows to “be born with”¹⁵⁷ (Maffesoli, 1988 p.46). The qualitative approach I have opted for, and detailed in Chapter 4, is justified, on the one hand, by the statistic vacuum in which this specific cultural economy is positioned, and on the other, by the strategic insights uniquely offered by an experiential methodology. In order to grasp the living knowledge of hip hop entrepreneurs I needed my understanding to be “born with” theirs, i.e. to be based on experiences, as lived and felt, by the participants in this community of practice. Put differently, the experiences of this specific creative, immaterial labour required, in order to be intelligible, an organic, or an experiential translation from the researcher that was intensively based on another rationality, i.e. one that recognises the multiplicity of *loci*. In this respect, the data collection approach developed in this thesis is founded on the notion that knowledge creation and acquisition necessarily bear the traces of the researcher who, in turn, has to acknowledge this process.

Arguing for an ‘experiential situating’ that involved participant-observer positioning, a method by which I became myself one of the research instruments, I thus demonstrated how the cyclical nature of the research process has permitted theory and method to co-evolve contingently. While my experience of getting involved in the field in two different settings did reflexively orient the objects of my inquiry and analysis, it also illuminated how my thesis focused on the Senegalese case where the productive practices of hip hop entrepreneurs were significantly identified and situated. In this process, the empirical focus for this thesis research was one Francophone West African urban locale, namely Dakar; however, the contrasting insights provided by the Burkinabè case were critical in highlighting the complexity and translocality of the

¹⁵⁷ *Connaissance* is a French term that means knowledge. However, the etymology of this term *co-nnaissance* can be translated as to « be born with » with *naissance* in French that means « birth ».

processes involved in the Francophone West African music economy. In this sense, I have stressed how the strength of this research lies in the iterative dimension of the design and application, while it also relies on a systematic reflexivity that allowed me to overcome ethical and practical challenges faced during the research process. Again, only such a situated knowledge could have highlighted the contextual, aesthetic and political dimensions impacting on West African emergences of cultural entrepreneurship. As such, this approach corresponds with my investigation into what is/signifies cultural entrepreneurship in the West African music economy rather than what should it be/represent.

Beyond these insights, however, a host of specific theoretical and applied ‘policy’ implications emerged, which warrant closer consideration. The value of this research approach is thus not its extrapolation to a generalised probability of occurrence. It is the ability to use the observed chain of events and actors’ reasoning in one situation to predict the possibility of these events and social processes occurring in other similar contexts. Indeed, the theory-building potential of a single situated study is greater than the sum of its parts, but not in the sense of falsely presuming a meta-theoretical ‘law’ of cultural entrepreneurship in all similar contexts. Rather, this type of research suggests that further situated empirical and theoretical work testing the ‘similarity’ of process and outcome in different forms of cultural entrepreneurship is necessary. As such, the findings in this thesis suggest that further research on West African musical entrepreneurship might seek to address more specifically the situated productive processes of local music economies in relation to those located in major European urban centres. Indeed, based on the findings of this research, a positive direction regarding the West African music economy has been signalled: it exists. However, as stated in the introduction, it is also very externalised. This research did not explore

such an externalisation of the West African music economy and, as such, future contributions interested in this phenomenon should focus on the interactions existing between a locally situated West African music economy and its expatriated dimensions. To begin with, further research on West African musical entrepreneurship should ask how the practices of producers of this type of music economy function in relation to others located in the Global North, and feedback to West African practices.

Underscoring these implications for further research is an emphasis on how this thesis' primary research has demonstrated the need to empirically and theoretically shift attention away from the immobile, fixed and even imaginary spaced cultural economy and 'ideal' forms of cultural entrepreneurship. Indeed, I have not attempted to be prescriptive in the sense of proposing specific policy reforms. However, this thesis 'is' normative, in that I am appealing for participants to problematise the cultural economy, as well as all forms of cultural entrepreneurship, not for what they should be but for what they are; emergences from recursive interactions of identity and practice in context, activated in the spatial and temporal specificity of their situated processes. In doing so, I am in a sense pluralising cultural entrepreneurship. To understand these processes, research needs to take practices, ideas, resources and constraints seriously – not as responses to or effects of the reality of capital and market systems alone – but as constantly active contextual forces in the patterning of social change. To be sure, such an approach needs to be reflective in design and empirically driven.

The vagueness of terms like 'cultural economy' and 'cultural entrepreneurship' makes them incredibly malleable, and subject to being bent to fit any form of development, especially if there is a social efficient incentive (i.e. economic) for it to be labelled as such. Evidently, the more the cultural economy and cultural entrepreneurship are

talked about, and the more they are reproduced and normalised; they simultaneously destabilise potentially instructive discourses of alternative visions. In Foucault's terms, I maintain that the descent and emergence of the cultural economy and its dynamics of entrepreneurship as governmental programmes need to be questioned and debated, not just accepted and reproduced. There is a need for distance from policy use of language and rhetoric inscribed in a checklist-style, and to equip policy-makers with a range of language in order to sufficiently debate alternative constructions of 'problems' and 'solutions'. In this respect, the wider impact of this thesis on broader research is that it not only signals but also indicates, both methodologically and theoretically, how the multiplicity of cultural economies can be recognised and explored. As such, this thesis directly contributes to pushing forward the normative and prescriptive limits of current policy-approaches of the cultural economy and cultural entrepreneurship.

Hip Hop first emerged in the mid-1970s, period that stands as a "site of temporal shift in capitalist organisation" (Gill and Pratt, 2008 p.7). Since this initial emergence, I have argued that an hip hop entrepreneurial community has developed in Francophone West African scenes, recognising that social and economic life is embedded in time and space, and embodied through practices (Pratt, 2011). My investigation of the West African hip hop entrepreneurial community has illustrated how aesthetic and political forces are at play in the production of entrepreneurial identities and processes (Hjorth and Steyaert, 2009 p.3). To be sure, I have insisted on the importance of the "affect", of the "subjective" in the whole social life of this hip hop entrepreneurial community through their productive as well as governing ethical practices. Indeed, through their original "form of social and political organisation that remains receptive to the local circumstances that are bound to the internal division of labour", West African hip hop entrepreneurs have succeeded in inventing "techniques of value that address the

uncertainties of economic and ontological life” (Neilson and Rossiter, 2005). In doing so, they have provided a new political image of musical entrepreneurship, one that critically challenges the taken-for-granted nature of the cultural economy, which socially and materially shapes our conceptions of cultural entrepreneurship. More importantly, and in reference to Ki-Zerbo’s introductory quote, through its constitutive identities and structuring practices, this West African entrepreneurial community has demonstrated how Hip Hop is radically more than “just passing wind” for its situated music economy.

Appendix A

Interview Schedule¹⁵⁸

Presentation and agreement (signature) of consent form

Respondent Introduction:

- 1) Name, Age

- 2) Educational background, previous employment, location desirability? / Could you tell me more about your educational background? How did you start to be on your work place?

- 3) Current Position: How come s/he occupies this position?: responsibilities? Activities? Details of current occupation? / What is the definition of your occupation/work? Could you tell me about your day-to-day work?

Research Topics:

Profiling the organisation:

- 4) Are you familiar/acquainted with the terms of creative economy and cultural industries? (if not a brief description as aforementioned will be given)

- 5) Based on that definition, do you consider yourself via your institution/organisation/association to be part of that creative economy in West Africa? If so, in what ways? If not, how come?

¹⁵⁸ The semi-structured nature of my interviews with musical entrepreneurs meant that the content, format, length, and conditions under which the interviews took place varied according to informants' preference, availability, candidness and previous interview experience. Besides, my own assumptions about an interviewee's practice 'guided', but certainly not determined, the interview process across the different participants. One caveat to the provision of this interview schedule is that the formal presentation and full sentence formation exhibited should not be interpreted as indicative of the format or nature of the interviews themselves. All the interviews were very much conversation-based, and in most instances my use of the interview prompt sheet was limited to ensuring that I had covered its key areas. Indeed, in contrast to a fully structured interview or formal questionnaire, the conversation-based interviews conducted with the various participants allowed me to work from my own basic knowledge while engaging with the interviewees' own narratives of process and outcome.

- 6) Could you describe the general mandate of your organisation as far as cultural sector in general and the musical economy in particular are concerned? (philosophy, motivations, beliefs, profit versus non-profit initiative)
- 7) How do this mandate transcribe itself in reality/concrete terms as far as the local sector of culture is concerned? And most specifically in relation to the local music industry/sector? (in terms of funding investments dedicated to this cultural sector, logistic assistance, financial assistance, etc.)
- 8) Would you consider your institution/organisation/association sustainable? Does its funding allow your institution/organisation/association to respond in an intended way to its mandate? In the past, present, and future? If so, in what ways? If not, how come?

Profiling the network:

- 9) Who would you define as being part of your working network? How would you define those occupational relationships – what do they consist of?

Prompts: partners, friends, challengers, audience, public, beneficiaries, collaborators (short term, long term project based?), formal, informal (legally framed?)

- 10) How is this network geographically distributed? Locally, nationally, regionally, internationally? How would you explain such a geographical distribution?

Prompts: Are the members of your network concentrated in a specific area? Spread across various boundaries (territorial, occupational, economic, political)? How much are urban surroundings influencing your working relationships?

- 11) How did/do you constitute this network? Is it an on-going process? Is it something pre-existing to your occupational position? Can you think of some examples of how you got to know and work with some members of your network?

Prompts: means of communication, circulation of information (word to mouth, magazine, website, previous colleagues, etc.)

12) How would you consider these networking practices specific for the country where you work?

Prompts: Have you ever encountered such practices in previous working environments? Were they similar – geographically, occupationally – to your actual working sphere?

Profiling the social individual – private / public interaction

13) Does the network previously identified conflate with your personal network? If so, in what ways? If not, how come?

14) How important would you consider your cultural/musical activity in your day-to-day life? (work-life balance? Time and financial investment? Personal investment?)

15) What are the main pull factors for you to engage in your cultural/musical activity? What are the main benefits you gain out of it? Your principal motivations?

Prompts: Does it constitute your major source of revenue? additional work? Freedom of creativity, of thought? Constantly changing environment? Stimulating, challenging? Personal well being? Financial necessity?

16) How do you perceive the position and recognition of cultural/musical workers (general material status, social conditions)? How do you conceive this state of affairs (global trend? Local specificity?)

Profiling the industrial sector

17) How would you define the key characteristics of the musical product on your metropolitan scene?

Prompts: music format (K7, CD, live performance)? Diversity of musical genre? Quality of musical products? Prices matching the offer? Popularity of musical genre? in terms of the audience, does it exist? Is it local, regional, international? Dependant of the musical genre (hip hop - popular/ traditional)?

18) In your opinion, is there any promising advantages for the development of music sector in West African societies? If so, in what ways? If not, how come?

19) What are the major obstacles for the development of local music economy?

Prompts: piracy? media support? legal framework? Hard infrastructure? Formation/education? Transport systems, circulation of people/material/equipment?

20) How would you define the processes of piracy? Major problems / inefficiencies? How could it be possible to eradicate it? Could you think of any alternative/solutions?

21) How does piracy affect you/institution/organisation/association? Are there any other obstacles for the development of the local music economy which affect you directly or indirectly?

Prompts: Credibility? Profitability? Popularity?

22) What would be the first thing(s) to change in order to improve the overall situation of the local music economy? And how come?

Prompts: Legal framework – decreasing taxes on the importation of music equipment, for e.g.

23) In your mind, who or which body should be able to influence / initiate such positive/pro-active changes on the local market of musical products?

24) What is or what could be your role in such pro-active changes on the local market of musical product?

Two questions to conclude this section on the industrial sector of music:

25) What do you think about the projects/initiatives that are connecting art/culture and market/economic approach?

26) How would you consider yourself as contributing to such initiative? Innovating in such initiatives?

Summary of the Conversation:

27) What do you feel have been the most important things that we have spoken about?

28) Is there anything else that you would like us to discuss?

29) Any questions?

I will be in Ouagadougou/Dakar until... Please feel free to contact me if you would like to add any complement of information. May I also kindly ask you who, in your mind, should I consult next? May I mention that you refer me to this person?

Thanks and close

Appendix B

Consent Form¹⁵⁹

Dear Madam/Sir,

My name is Jenny Fatou Mbaye and I am conducting an independent academic research entitled “*Hip Hop Music in West Africa: from cultural entrepreneurship to social change*” in the framework of my PhD programme in Human Geography (supervisor: Professor Andy C. Pratt) at the London School of Economics and Political Science. This research is funded by the London School of Economics, the Italian Foundation Lettera27 (www.lettera27.org) in the framework of its WikiAfrica Project and the WARC Travel Grant Awards of the West African Research Centre (<http://www.warc-croa.org/>), which is the regional partner of the Ford Foundation in West Africa.

The research consists of a series of interviews with actors engaged in the local music economy. These interviews will investigate the networks and organisations active on this specific cultural scene as well as the opinions music workers have on the situation in the sector where they work. The interview is therefore an opportunity for you to give me insights into the factual processes involved in your music-related activity as well as an opportunity for you to have a say (personal opinions and views) regarding the current situation.

All interviews will be transcribed and translated into English. A summary of the research project will be posted online once the thesis will be submitted (in 2011).

Thank you for accepting to participate in this research – your participation is of crucial importance for the success of this project. Before we start with the interview, I would like to highlight that:

- Your participation in this research is **voluntary**
- You **can refuse** to answer any of the questions

¹⁵⁹ A French translation of this consent form was submitted to the Interviewees.

- You are **free to stop interview** at any time
- Your interview will be used on an **anonymous basis** (*)

(*) All information you provide will be confidential and fully anonymised when reported. Part of the interview will be used in the final thesis, but you will not be identifiable from the text. Only the marks of occupation and place of work will be used (i.e. hip hop artist, Dakar, Senegal; international cooperation services, Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso; local producer; etc.)

Please sign this form as to show that you are acquainted with its content.

Name, First name:

Signature:

Date:

If you have any further queries about this research, do not hesitate to contact me:

Jenny Fatou Mbaye: Email: j.f.mbaye@lse.ac.uk

Tel. (U.K.): +44 7 926 257 446

Tel. (DKR):

Tel. (BKF):

Most sincere thanks in advance!

Appendix C

Primary Interviews Listings

The ‘operational’ network

Interviewee #	Entrepreneurial Ideal-Type	Cultural/Musical Status	City
1	Local cultural	Worker	Ouagadougou
2	Hip hop	Maker and worker	Ouagadougou
3	Local cultural	Worker	Ouagadougou
4	Cosmopolitan musical	Worker	Ouagadougou
5	Cosmopolitan musical	Worker	Ouagadougou
6	Identified as a member of ‘institutional network’ in the analytical process		Ouagadougou
7	Identified as a member of institutional network in the analytical process		Ouagadougou
8	Hip hop	Maker and worker	Ouagadougou
9	Cosmopolitan musical	Worker	Ouagadougou
10	Cosmopolitan musical	Maker and worker	Ouagadougou
11	Local cultural	Worker	Ouagadougou
12	Local cultural	Worker	Ouagadougou
13	Local cultural	Worker	Ouagadougou
14	Identified as a member of ‘institutional network’ in the analytical process		Ouagadougou
15	Local cultural	Worker	Ouagadougou
16	Cosmopolitan musical	Maker and worker	Ouagadougou

17	Local cultural	Worker	Ouagadougou
18	Local cultural	Worker	Ouagadougou
19	Hip hop	Maker and worker	Dakar
20	Hip hop	Maker and worker	Dakar
21	Cosmopolitan musical	Maker and worker	Dakar
22	Local cultural	Worker	Dakar
23	Hip hop	Maker and worker	Dakar
24	Local cultural	Worker	Dakar
25	Cosmopolitan musical	Maker and worker	Dakar
26	Local cultural	Worker	Dakar
27	Hip hop	Maker and worker	Dakar
28	Hip hop	Maker and worker	Dakar
29	Local cultural	Worker	Dakar

The ‘artistic’, ‘institutional’, and ‘media’ networks

Interviewee #	Network	Position	City
30	Institutional	Ministerial arts unit	Ouagadougou
31	Artistic	World music	Ouagadougou
32	Institutional	Belgian cooperation	Ouagadougou
33	Artistic	Hip hop music	Ouagadougou
34	Artistic	World music	Ouagadougou
35	Institutional	French cooperation	Ouagadougou
36	Media	TV show	Ouagadougou
37	Institutional	German cooperation	Ouagadougou
38	Institutional	European cooperation	Ouagadougou

39	Artistic	World music	Ouagadougou
40	Institutional	Ministerial cultural unit	Ouagadougou
41	Institutional	Municipal cultural unit	Ouagadougou
42	Artistic	Hip hop music	Ouagadougou
43	Artistic	Hip hop music	Ouagadougou
44	Artistic	Hip hop music	Ouagadougou
45	Institutional	Italian cooperation	Ouagadougou
46	Artistic	Hip hop music	Ouagadougou
47	Institutional	State cultural centre (managerial unit)	Ouagadougou
48	Media	Radio show	Ouagadougou
49	Media	Radio show	Ouagadougou
50	Institutional	Music museum	Ouagadougou
51	Institutional	Music school	Ouagadougou
52	Artistic	Hip hop music	Ouagadougou
53	Institutional	Copyright bureau	Ouagadougou
54	Media	Webzines/sites	Ouagadougou
55	Artistic	Hip hop music	Ouagadougou
56	Artistic	Hip hop music	Ouagadougou
57	Media	TV show	Ouagadougou
58	Media	Radio show	Ouagadougou
59	Institutional	Swiss Cooperation	Ouagadougou
60	Institutional	West African intergovernmental cooperation	Ouagadougou

61	Artistic	Hip hop music	Ouagadougou
62	Institutional	State cultural centre (technical unit)	Ouagadougou
63	Media/Institutional	Academic (sociology)	Dakar
64	Institutional	Governmental cultural unit	Dakar
65	Institutional	National Art School	Dakar
66	Institutional	Ministerial cultural unit	Dakar
67	Institutional	Francophone intergovernmental cooperation	Dakar
68	Institutional	French cooperation	Dakar
69	Institutional	Municipal cultural unit	Dakar
70	Institutional	Copyright bureau	Dakar
71	Institutional	European cooperation	Dakar

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