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Choreomusicology II Translocality | Local Ontologies



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**Choreomusicology II
Translocality | Local Ontologies**

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The Separation of Music and Dance in Translocal Contexts

Kendra Stepputat and Elina Djebbari

Abstract

Music-dance genres are not necessarily bound to a particular place, especially with regards to their contemporary practice. They do, however, often have a (real or constructed) place, region or culture of “origin” that is associated with the historical development of the genre. In the course of migrations and the circulation of music-dance genres over time and space, the relationship between music and dance may change profoundly. This article investigates processes of separation of dance and music from a choreomusical point of view. By comparing various case studies, we attempt to outline general patterns of the effects of translocalisation on the relationship between music and dance, putting emphasis on the influence of contexts of migration and diaspora, adaptation and appropriation, forms of transmission, and economic factors.

Many music and dance genres are not bound to a particular place, especially with regards to their contemporary practice. For instance, flamenco is performed in Japan (Van Ede 2014), and Brazilian samba in Australia (Shaddick 2018). These genres however have a (real or constructed) place, region or culture of “origin” that is associated with the historical development of the genre. The two examples mentioned above are associated with Andalusia in Spain (flamenco) and Rio de Janeiro in Brazil (samba). In other cases, genres have developed within the networks where they continue to be practiced, without association to one particular place even at the time the genre first emerged. Some were at some point—or still are—practiced mainly by people with a migrational or diasporic background, while others have travelled as trends or ideas without the actual replacement of people.

Finding a proper term for such “travelling cultures” (Clifford 1997) is challenging; common descriptions include transnational, international, interregional, multi-local, migrated, cosmopolitan, or translocal.¹ For several reasons, we prefer to use the last-mentioned term. First, it avoids the categories “nation” and “region,” which are mostly historical constructs and not suitable for many of the phenomena described here. “Local,” by contrast, refers to concrete places which are fluid in terms

of size and boundaries, and therefore appears to be more applicable. Second, the prefix “trans-” (from Latin, “across”) captures the dynamics and non-directional network structures of the different “locales” involved better than the prefix “inter-” (from Latin, “between”), which is more of a qualifier for a reciprocal relationship and more restricted in its explanatory power vis-à-vis spatiality. Finally, the terms “migrated” and “cosmopolitan” apply only to a part of the phenomena included in the broader term translocal: neither are all translocal cultures cosmopolitan, nor do they all have a connection with migration.

In defining what “translocal” or “translocality” means with regards to the practice of a music-dance genre, we follow Gabriele Klein who states that

translocality is to be understood as phenomena which can be regarded as the results of circulation and transfer processes and which arise from movements of people, goods, ideas and symbols, as far as they transcend spatial distances and cultural boundaries with a certain regularity. The term aims to put the perspective on the interrelation between transgressions and localisations.² (Klein 2007:17–18)³

To understand the implications of the translocalisation of various music-dance genres, it is necessary to work comparatively. However, to be able to usefully do so, it is important to adopt a translocal approach when looking at specific examples. According to Fabienne Darling-Wolf, “a translocal perspective moves beyond a traditional comparative approach by putting the emphasis on the multifaceted relations, connections, and dynamics between the sites rather than on each site individually” (Darling-Wolf 2015:2). In this article we compare the effects of translocalisation on the relation between music and dance. With this, we attempt to outline general patterns and developments with regards to choreomusical⁴ factors.⁵

The movement and sound structures of a translocal music-dance genre are not restricted to particular features. Movement structures range from solo and couple dances to group dances, from improvised to choreographed, from competitive to recreational. The music structures similarly encompass all kinds of ensemble or solo musics, instrumental and sung, composed and improvised. Not surprisingly, the relation between music and dance takes a wide variety of shapes as well, ranging from an active interaction to a passive connection and all possibilities in-between (Stepputat 2017b)⁶. While music and movement features can differ significantly, social patterns related to practitioners and their relations, historical causes and developments, transmission factors, and constructions of place bear significant similarities. Of interest for us is how these factors cause a transformation of music and dance as well as their relation over time. While we explore these phenomena in-depth in our case studies on *tango argentino* and salsa (see our respective articles in this volume), we investigate here more general processes of separation of dance and music forms that were once closely related, in particular regarding a genre’s movement through time and space.

Translocal practices and their relation to place

“From the earliest notated chants to wandering minstrels to mp3 files, music has been caught in a continuous cycle of displacement and re-placement for as long as its history can be reconstructed” (Watkins 2001:408). In this statement, Holly Watkins underlines how music—and dance—are commonly considered to have a “place” they are related to, even if this place is consciously or unconsciously constructed and changes over time. Publications in different areas of music studies have looked at the phenomenon of musical composition as well as reception in relation to their surroundings and references to certain places (e.g. Glahn 2003, Watkins 2001, Cohen 2012).⁷ Watkins puts emphasis on the fact that the connection to a place can be very different from listener to listener, depending on individual experiences (embodied and over time): “Music [...] carries the trace of that locale but also sends listeners on imaginative journeys of their own” (Watkins 2001:408). Martin Stokes adds the issue of mentally re-locating (or “re-embedding”) oneself through music (or dance), so by listening or moving, a person can evoke foreign “places” at their current location, and at the same time distinguish themselves from the surroundings: “The musical event [...] evokes and organises collective memories and present experiences of place with an intensity, power and simplicity unmatched by any other social activity” (Stokes 1994:3).

For translocal music-dance genres, it is actually the frame of the practice itself that allows for creating the sense of place and emplacement that practitioners might seek. Louise Wrazen suggests how “music performance can create a performative space through which a variety of place-bound experiences and possible identities may be accessed” (Wrazen 2007:187). Accordingly, anthropologists Solrun Williksen and Nigel Rapport assert that “places” and “homes” are generated during collective or individual performance (Williksen and Rapport 2010:3). Often practitioners have no first-hand experience of the music-dance genre at its earlier or constructed place of origin due to the temporal and spatial spreading of the genre. Yet such concrete places—often cities, villages, specific areas, regions or even nation-states—have a strong identification and authentication potential for practitioners who are separated from them by time or space, birth or travel. Prominent examples are Chennai for *bharata natyam* (O’Shea 2007), Buenos Aires as the birthplace of *tango argentino* (Stepputat 2017a), the village of Doolin in county Clare for Irish musicians (Kaul 2007), or *capoeira* and the region of Bahia (Griffith 2016). An example for a “secondary” birthplace is Herräng, the town in Sweden that turned into the centre of lindy hop dancing, although the origins of the dance practice can be traced back to Harlem in the 1930s (Wells 2013). This last example shows how the construction of a genre’s place accompanies the translocal circulations of music-dance practices. The definition of geographic origins or a current centre of practice can be a response to the movements of dance and music across space and time (Raibaud 2015:15).

The notion of place is of great importance for practitioners of translocal genres, yet sometimes it is precisely the absence of place that becomes an important signifier

of the genre itself. Music-dance cultures cannot exist in a void; what is meant here is that their translocal practice is not bound to a particular somewhere. Instead, the genre is practiced in many places simultaneously, in parallel, in connection, sometimes even in competition with each other. These places can have cultural, historical or geographic significance for the genre's current practice as a whole, but they do not necessarily have to. In fact, often most places of practice have only local significance and are best seen as a node within a complex network. For instance, in her comparative study of salsa dancing in West Africa, Elina Djebbari has shown how the different scenes that are built up in the main metropolises are linked to each other through the dancers' networks, yet each scene developed very localised features (Djebbari 2019b).⁸ We might use the term placeless for such translocal phenomena although "multiplaced" could provide an alternative term and a slightly different perspective on the phenomenon.

Placelessness hence stands for translocal genres where instead of a re-location that takes local practices into account and makes a practice distinct from similar ones at other places, music and dance practices are interchangeable and indistinguishable from one place to another. Examples of this are the *tango argentino*, *zumba*, lindy hop, ballroom dancing, and many more. Dancers or musicians practicing a placeless translocal music-dance genre might travel to any other place where this genre is practiced and easily fit in there, being recognised as a practitioner of the same genre and instantly included in the local "community of practice" (Wenger 1998).

In many cases, placeless translocal genres have a strong connection to cosmopolitanism. Cosmopolitans, in its literal meaning "citizens of the world," are generally conceived of as people who believe in the idea that all human beings should care and support each other on a shared moral basis, regardless of the existence of any actual personal relations or links (Appiah 2006:xv). Yet the concept of cosmopolitanism is not unequivocal. Sheldon Pollock *et al.* (2002:1) point out that any definition of cosmopolitan is inherently paradoxical when they state that cosmopolitanism "must always escape positive and definite specification, precisely because specifying cosmopolitanism positively and definitely is an uncosmopolitan thing to do." Similarly, Thomas Turino (2003:61) argues that "when most people use the term cosmopolitan they are speaking from within the discourse of cosmopolitanism itself." Yet, the above-mentioned definition of what being cosmopolitan refers to, gives an idea of what a cosmopolitan translocal culture might be. Turino first used the term "cosmopolitan culture" to differentiate a re-located culture from one with diasporic or migrational backgrounds. Similarly, Stokes introduces the term "musical cosmopolitanism" and explains that

it invites us to think about how people in specific places and at specific times have embraced the music of others, and how, in doing so, they have enabled music styles and musical ideas, musicians and musical instruments to circulate (globally) in particular ways. (Stokes 2008:6)

Turino further elaborates on the formation of cosmopolitan cultures, stating that

members of the same cosmopolitan formation are attracted and related to members in the same and other sites around the world through a substantial degree of cultural similarity as well as travel, institutions and concrete communication loops. (Turino 2003:62)

He also refers to cosmopolitans as “culturally trans-local” (Turino 2003:63). In contrast to diasporic and migrational cultures, members of a cosmopolitan culture might be native to their current living place; the culture they are part of has travelled to them, not through them. Cosmopolitan music-dance genres may have a first level of dissemination among migrants that contributed to blurring the historical association of the genre with a particular place of “origin”.⁹ Examples are the *forró* from the North of Brazil to the urban South (Fernandes 2005, Draper 2010, Graf 2019) or salsa’s spread from New York to many places around the globe (Rondón 2008, Abreu 2015). Both genres have turned into cosmopolitan translocal practices within decades after their initial displacement. Other genres have spread more directly from the place they are associated with, such as flamenco associated with Spain or Andalusia (Goldberg *et al.* 2015), belly dance with the regional connotation of Egypt or “urban Middle East” (Shay and Sellers-Young 2003, Adra 2005), or the *tango argentino*, investigated more closely by Stepputat in this volume.

Migrations and diasporas

Diasporic situations also entail the formation of translocal genres that may be linked to a prominent place considered the main—or even only—locale of current practice. Reasons for the displacement of people and their cultures are manifold and have been researched extensively.¹⁰ We follow Turino in differentiating between diasporas and immigrant communities based on the length of time that a group of people have identified as a community. In this situation, diasporas tend to be more permanent, and relate equally intensely to other diasporas as they do to the homeland, whereas immigrant communities will mainly orient their attention to the new homeland and fade into the new surroundings over time (Turino 2003:59–61). If a community of people is dislocated, forming a diaspora, the music and dance they brought with them—if not prohibited (see below)—potentially continue to be practiced in the way they were practiced in the homeland, provided the whole infrastructure, which includes musicians, their instruments, dancers, knowledge of tunes and movement structures, has relocated along with the people.¹¹

Styles and practices change over time in response to the new surroundings and circumstances, and the cultural practices of migrated communities become distanced from developments “at home.” Margaret Sarkissian’s work on Portuguese settlements in Malaysia provides a very interesting example of the formation of a cultural diaspora. She argues that “through repetition and gradual variation, the heteroglot potpourri is in the process of being transformed into a uniquely local repertoire” (Sarkissian 2000:87). Through this “process of domestication” (Sarkis-

sian 2000:101), diasporic performing arts become local through transformation, hybridisation and authentication. Peter Manuel (2000:200) gives another example by showing how Indo-Caribbean communities are defined as “uniquely local” yet also constantly shaped by their relations to other local Creole cultures, global trends, as well as the (historical) homeland (Manuel 2000:196–202). Carol Silverman (2012) explores Romani groups who formed separate diasporic groups with distinct, local features, yet closely connected to other Romani diasporas and clearly identified as “Romani” performing arts cultures. These are different examples of diasporic cultures that are localised and at the same time based on strong, reciprocal connections to other places (homeland, other diasporas or surroundings).

This constant reciprocity, among other factors, can cause change in music and dance practice as well as in the relation between dance and music. One reason for such change can be the absence of the musical instruments the community used before migration, leading to the adaptation of instruments from the new locale, or the construction and development of new instrument types. One such example is given by Sarkissian, in her exploration of Portuguese heritage in Malaysia. She states that song and dance melodies are the factor that connects the diasporic practice to the “past,” but these melodies can be played on “whatever instruments are available” (Sarkissian 2000:102). She further describes how, in parallel to the music, the dance style changed; although steps and choreographies were still basically the same, the way movements were carried out moved closer to Malay aesthetics of “refinedness” (Sarkissian 2000:106–107).

If communities were dislocated forcibly, for instance through slave-trade, it was almost impossible to continue music-dance practices of the homeland. A well-researched example is the development of the five-stringed banjo. African slaves developed the instrument in the North American South drawing from stringed instruments of several bardic (*griot*) traditions from West Africa (Conway 2003:150–151). The instrument, made with materials from the new locale, was not only adapted in terms of materials, but also to suit new playing techniques and tunes. The banjo was built as a replacement instrument but became a motivation for the development of new musical styles and practices (Conway 2003:153).

Slaves from Africa were often prohibited to dance, and even if they were allowed, they missed the musical instruments they had previously used to accompany their dancing. The conceptually tight connection between sound and movement, according to Samuel Floyd, was therefore transferred into self-accompaniment through clapping, stamping and other body percussion. A prominent example for this is the *juba* dance, a self-accompanied solo dance documented in the eighteenth century in the U.S.A. (Floyd 2001:119). At the same time, slave communities interacted with music and dance cultures of other communities in the new locale. For instance, slaves started practicing dances from Europe such as the French *cotillion* and *quadrille* (Jamison 2003:391) and they learnt to play the fiddle not only for their own dance gatherings but also for those of their “masters.” This process led to profound transformations in both the music and dance components of the *quadrilles*, a devel-

opment which lead to the emergence of the creolised forms practiced for instance in the Caribbean (Manuel 2009).

Other examples of translocal practices follow from migratory movements which did not lead to the building of diasporic communities. For instance, individual migrants can be highly influential in spreading their culture in the new locale, adapting and transforming it while teaching it to others. Natasha Pravaz (2014), for example, looks at the joint music making of samba by migrants of Brazilian and diverse other backgrounds in Toronto. In the 1980s, Brazilian migrants brought percussion ensembles with them, starting a Brazilian percussion vogue (Pravaz 2014:274, also see Eisentraut 2001). In these ensembles, the focus is on the musical aspects of the practice, whereas the visual—so important in samba practice in Brazil—is left aside.

The two possibilities described here—direct transmission under cosmopolitan circumstances on the one hand, and transmission via migration or diasporic networks on the other hand—are of course prototypical. They should not be seen as two opposing categories but as two ends of a continuum. In addition, at different times in the development of a genre, one or the other process can take over. A placeless translocal genre can inspire the emergence of re-located practices, and re-located genres can spread and develop into placeless practices. A recent example of the re-localisation of a translocal genre was given by Sarah Town, who looks at cosmopolitan migrant musicians meeting to play Cuban *timba* music in New York (Town 2019). Even more complex, the same genre can be considered national, diasporic and cosmopolitan at the same time, as Avanthi Meduri argues for *bharata natyam*. She explains that in big Indian diaspora communities, such as in London, practicing *bharata natyam* is seen as a continuation of a national art form linking the diaspora to its homeland. Yet at the same time, *bharata natyam* is also practiced by a broader variety of people with other cultural backgrounds, which turns it into a cosmopolitan translocal genre (Meduri 2008:298).

Translocal genre formation: adaptation and appropriation

Cultural formations, and with them music-dance practices, constantly change. Part of the dynamics of change lays in the incorporation of new elements from other traditions, the combination of old and new material, the abandoning of older layers, and resignification processes. The ways in which people actively (re-)shape their cultural practices by integrating new elements, especially in situations where an imbalance in power-relations is prevalent, have long been a subject of debate among scholars. While we do not want to go deeply into the topic here, issues of adaptation and appropriation should be mentioned as one of the important cultural dynamics at play (see also Born and Hesmondhalgh 2000, as well as Djebbari in this volume).

Silverman summarises the process of appropriation as follows:

By appropriation I mean taking music from one group and using it in other musical projects, usually for profit. I am aware of the underlying essentialism in the concept of

appropriation; music cannot be ultimately assigned to unitary “sources.” Postmodernists would argue that neither music nor any other part of culture is owned by individuals or groups, and I would agree that music cannot be ultimately owned; intermingling has always occurred. Notwithstanding this observation, certain musics are associated with certain groups or individuals and do get used in new contexts outside the group. (Silverman 2012:274)

Manuel uses the term in a much broader sense. For him, appropriation is an umbrella term for possible interactions between converging music genres:

On a strictly musical level, appropriation can involve the active alteration, however subtle, of acquired styles, as competent imitation gives way to creative syncretism and further evolution. More importantly, however, appropriation is a socio-musical process, involving the resignification of the borrowed idiom to serve as a symbol of a new social identity. (Manuel 1994:274)

We prefer to see appropriation as one among many possibilities of cultural exchanges and interactions, and hence as one dynamic that impacts and shapes translocal cultures.

The diversity of people and places involved in translocal music-dance practices directly influences a genre’s development. Two general trends can work in parallel, more or less strongly, seemingly contradictory and yet sometimes at the same time: On the one hand, placelessness can lead to a diversification of the genre through adaptation to local habits, tastes and values, and even a splitting of the genre into several new ones. On the other hand, it can also lead to a homogenisation through standardisation, because only the most robust traits of the genre, compatible with all contributing locales’ habits and values over time, become defining for the genre in general. Manuel gives an example of such diverse effects working simultaneously in different places:

The Puerto Rican reaction to Cuban musical influence—wholesale adoption and socio-musical rearticulation—thus contrasts with other scenarios, such as initial adoption and eventual rejection in Africa, absorption and indigenization in Spain, and co-existence in the Dominican Republic. (Manuel 1994:275)

Dances of the ballroom dancing repertoire, in particular those of the “Latin” range, provide a prominent example of adaptation, and thereby extreme transformation. The development of rumba from an Afro-Cuban dance to the ballroom repertoire was based on the re-interpretation of the rhythmic relation between the steps and beat emphasis, and a step standardisation, which changed the dance to the extent that today’s dancers of both styles do not recognise the respective other as something related (McMains 2010:38). In addition, the complex rhythmical and melodic musical components and percussion-heavy instrumentation that characterise Afro-Cuban rumba contrast sharply with the music chosen to accompany ballroom Latin dances, which are string orchestra and jazz band arrangements, or pop songs with a preference for Spanish lyrics (Bosse 2007:33). Juliet McMains concludes that Afro-Cuban and ballroom rumba “share a complex history that reveals both a deeply troubling racist legacy and the resilience of rumba to reassert vital characteristics

throughout a century of appropriation, recontextualization, and transculturation.” (McMains 2010:48). Ultimately, she puts emphasis on the fact that through the parallel development over time, it is impossible to judge one or the other as more authentic, so instead she argues for a “multiplicity of rumbas” (McMains 2010:46–47).

Just as McMains negotiates different perspectives on the genesis of ballroom rumba, so does Samantha Carroll (2008) for the case of lindy hop, which developed from a dance practiced primarily by African Americans in 1930s Harlem, into a cosmopolitan translocal genre. She cites Desmond, who “argues for a ‘dialectics of cultural transmission’, where the movement of dance forms between cultures and communities is not innately bad or good, but a more complex, shifting system of relationships” (Carroll 2008:192; see also Sékiné 2017). Similarly, Pravaz concludes about Brazilian samba that “the transnational circulation of samba and sambistas, thus, rather than a one-way street of North-South cultural appropriation or South-North migrants yearning for home, is effected by a wide array of peoples with different desires, personal histories, and corporeal outlooks.” (Pravaz 2014:291)

All of these examples and many others show that translocal music-dance genres are necessarily shaped by cultural exchanges. Terms and concepts ranging from adaptation, re-signification, transculturation, and recontextualisation to appropriation, all open up discourses about the ways such cultural interactions work. Many authors engage with the topic and try to negotiate perspectives, as part of the wide field of “cultural rights” (see for instance Weintraub and Young 2009). We do not aim to cover this discussion thoroughly here; instead, in an effort to put this contribution in perspective, we wish to underline that methods, power relations, approaches and values in cultural contact situations change along with cultural configurations over time. Regardless of how cultural contacts may be framed, not only sound and movement structures, but also their meanings and mutual relations change in translocal situations.

Changing ways of transmission

Translocal music-dance genres are subject to different ways of transmission while becoming translocal and also in processes of reiterating, developing and spreading. Transmission here refers to both the spread of general information about a genre, and the practical, embodied teaching and learning processes. The way music and dance are taught in a translocal context affects the relation between music and dance. Likewise, changes in transmission may lead to a change in choreomusical features of a genre and its practice. A common phenomenon is the standardisation of step patterns or sequences, often in combination with the institutionalisation of the genre. Danielle Robinson, in her investigation into the changes from “ragtime” to “modern” dancing in the first decade of the twentieth century, calls the standardisation and simplification of steps for teaching purposes a “commodification” process (Robinson 2010:186). She describes how ragtime’s

central skills could not be easily taught to large classes of students and its improvisational structure could not be adequately explained in quick and easy how-to-dance manuals. Indeed, ragtime dancing needed to be radically changed in order to become saleable to more than a few consumers at a time. (*Ibid.*)

What Robinson describes here for ragtime is true for many other dance forms as well, especially couple dances like tango (Apprill 2015), salsa (Hutchinson 2014), and more recently *kizomba* (Jiménez Sedano 2019). Such simplification and standardisation processes are not only useful for practical teaching and notating the dances in dance manuals; they also cause a separation of movement and musical structures. On the one hand, standardised dance sequences and steps can be more easily taught by counting numbers or verbalising steps or durations of steps (“quick-quick-slow”) without reference to specific musical features (see Djebbari in this volume); on the other hand, musical features attuned to the dancers’ improvisations are no longer transmitted in one-to-one lesson format or at the conservatoire (Kennedy 1953). A change from rote learning or “learning by doing” to formalised dance or music classes tends to loosen the structural relation between music and dance. As Kennedy put it with regards to the institutionalisation of folk music and folk dance teaching in England, teachers had “to classify the material into a system, and in the form of simple intellectual concepts to present an analysis of the steps and figures, to break up a whole movement into parts which can be practiced in separation and then be reunited as a controlled co-ordination” (Kennedy 1953:49). Such a “process of conscious analysis” (*ibid.*) in the frame of formal teaching, which approaches the music and dance components of a genre separately, suggests to students that a musical understanding of dance structures is ancillary at best, and vice versa. Moreover, dance is mostly taught to recorded music, whereas musicians learn to play music without feedback from dancers (Djebbari 2012:25).

The practice of multiplaced/placeless translocal music-dance genres tends to create new network structures to transmit knowledge and recruit new members into the formation. Some locales might have an infrastructure of teachers working in dance or music schools or teaching privately. However, media are just as important as more direct, embodied teaching and learning situations to the spread and maintenance of a translocal genre. “Media,” here, refers to any representation of movement or sound, ranging from paper to digital formats, that is used as a means to transmit knowledge about a specific cultural practice. Digital media, spread and shared via the World Wide Web, are a substantial element of translocal cultural transmissions in the contemporary global and digital age.¹²

Long before the advent of digital media, recording technologies had a major impact on the dissemination and thereby also transformation of music-dance genres. For instance, in her study of the changing contexts of traditional music-dance genres in Ireland, Hazel Fairbairn (1994:577) points out the role of sound recordings as early as the 1920s in spreading the practice of listening to recorded music that was disconnected from the live event and thereby from dance. The production of sound recordings not only curbed the role of improvisation and interaction with other com-

ponents of the performance, but also ultimately turned many music-dance genres into music formats made and marketed mainly for listening purposes. Although there are many more historical examples like this, we will not go into more detail about twentieth century media development and influence on music consumption, because this topic is way beyond the scope of this article. Instead we focus on more current media phenomena, mainly digital media and their spread through the World Wide Web in relation to translocal genres.

Translocal music-dance practices, because of their wide dispersion, depend on digital mediation and its affordances. The World Wide Web is a crucial source, tool, and networking agent in the formation of a “community of practice” (Wenger 1998). Laureen Miller Griffith gives an example of *capoeira* and its digital spread: “The prevalence of the Internet throughout the capoeira community intensifies this feeling of shared participation with web sites, chat rooms, and social networking sites like [...] Facebook facilitating the flow of information about capoeira across the world” (Griffith 2016:35). If the term “capoeira” in this sentence were replaced by “tango argentino,” “lindy hop,” “fórró,” “Irish dancing” and so forth, the statement would be just as applicable. As mentioned before, teaching and learning take place in digital ways as well: professional teachers, celebrity dancers and musicians all have online channels and blogs in which they share information in a carefully curated mix of self-promotion and knowledge transmission. In her analysis of online social media use, in particular YouTube, with regards to lindy hop, Carroll points to the fact that not only the passive consumption of archival or professional materials, but also the active sharing of “new footage” (Carroll 2008:193) by “ordinary people” (Carroll 2008:194) massively shapes the way the genre and its power relations are constructed.

Several examples show the crucial role media have played in spreading, but also changing a music-dance genre, for instance the dissemination and reconstruction of lindy hop as described by Christopher Wells (2013) and Carroll (2008). In the 1930s, film was the main dissemination medium for the swing dance vogue within the African American community (Carroll 2008:190). These same film clips were much later used by a completely different community—mostly white European urban dancers—to recreate lindy hop as a cosmopolitan translocal dance practice. Wells states that by using these films, a staged form of lindy hop was reconstructed, not the social dancing widely practiced in the 1930s. Only by consulting members of the original cohort, contemporary dancers learned what dancing “social lindy hop” historically meant and how it was connected to the music (Wells 2013:392). The usage of film for learning and (re)constructing a genre may significantly change the relation of music and dance from interactive (dance improvised to live music) to merely connected (choreographies to recorded music).

The evolution of communication technologies in the twenty-first century made possible new ways of promoting and transmitting music and dance genres, which of course also impacted the way music and dance were consumed, either separately or in connection with each other (Djebbari 2019a). Technological advances in the field

of audio-visual recordings, especially through smartphones, have led to an exponential growth of music video production to support the online promotion of artists. YouTube and other social media platforms emphasise the visual dimension of music videos, leading people to “watch music” instead of primarily listening to it (Straw 2018). The visualisation of music has thus given dance movements new roles. Today, dances of many different styles play an important role in the creation of music videos trending on social networks. French scholars have proposed neologisms such as *discomorphose* (Hennion *et al.* 2000) and *numérimorphose* (Granjon and Combes 2007) to describe the aesthetic transformation music consumption practices have undergone since the advent of the recorded disc and digital file. Djebbari proposed the term *videochoreomorphosis* to specifically address the transformative interactions between dance and videos in the digital age. *Videochoreomorphosis* encompasses the aesthetic transformation of choreographic techniques as well as the changes instigated by the video format in the transmission, practice and consumption of dance (Djebbari 2019a).¹³ Through the process of *videochoreomorphosis*, the triangular relationship of video images, digital technologies and social media networks has transformed the interaction between music and dance practices towards the video representation of (different kinds of) dancing being perceived as a part of the “seen” music.

Although a lot of transmission processes occur digitally, the individual dancer or musician must embody the knowledge they are exposed to (Kabir 2019:74). It is in this moment of discontinuity from (digital) media back to the body that mis-interpretations including the addition and loss of information mostly happen. Carroll states “the more experienced and skilled a dancer, the more likely he or she is to be able to recreate the dance steps seen on the screen” (2008:195). At the same time, skilled dancers might also consciously transform and add their individual interpretation to the steps they replicate. As students may switch back and forth between embodied learning and use of media, the vastly different frameworks these settings provide further contribute to the separation of music and dance.

Economic factors in music-dance relations

Economic structures impacting music-dance genres include market interests, commodification and commercialisation processes as well as post-colonial configurations reflecting imbalances, economic and otherwise, between different regions of the world where a given genre is practiced. Some of these issues have already been addressed in the preceding section of this contribution, so in the following we will focus on the role of global capitalist economies for the separation of the music and dance components of a translocal genre.

An indicator of how commercialisation and markets shape music-dance relations in translocal genres is the increase of both music and dance festivals since the 1990s. Festivals have become important events for live music and dance performances,

generating opportunities for performers and organisers to earn income. However, in accordance with the contemporary practice of such genres, often a distinction is made between music festivals vs. dance festivals.¹⁴ At salsa dance festivals (mostly called “congresses”), for instance, the emphasis is on dance workshops during the day and dance floor “socials” in the evening. On the other hand, although salsa music concerts will rarely prevent the audience from dancing it is nevertheless clear that the performance is intended for concert listeners, not for a social dance audience. When McMains discusses “the commercialization of salsa dance into an industry” (2015:73), she wonders “if the dance had not emerged as a saleable product separable from the music, perhaps the codependence of dancers and musicians would have been maintained.” (McMains 2015:72).

Capitalist structures naturally apply to translocal practices. On the one hand, commercial events, style innovations and new teaching methods serve to generate a bigger market. Teachers have the option to partake in the new development to satisfy the created demand. The recent development of “musicality” classes for dancers or “danceability” classes for musicians within couple dance networks provides examples for such a marketable diversification (see Stepputat in this volume). On the other hand, a lack of funds can lead to the absence of live music at public events or in rehearsal situations. Dancers get used to dancing to recorded music and have less experience dancing to live music. In turn, musicians who used to play music for dancing face precarious financial situations due to a lack of income-generating employment. This is especially true for immigrant musicians. To expand the scope of their performance opportunities, they may cooperate with other music groups, play other genres and choose to play in other contexts in addition to dance practice settings (Sechehaye and Weisser 2018).

Adding to the above-mentioned dynamics that are conducive to the separation of dance and music, the increasingly pivotal role music and dance play within the entertainment industry (Goodwin 1992) requires creative responses to the ever-changing supply and demand scheme in the area of leisure and sport activities. Numerous workout venues and gyms use music as a background for their fitness and aerobics classes. The performed dance moves and the background music are not historically or culturally linked to each other in any way, but a new connection comes about through the training practice at any given gym. Accordingly, major players in the fitness industry have created new dance trends and branded them as marketing enterprises. An example for this phenomenon is *zumba*, the Latin-inspired dance developed by Columbian fitness instructor Alberto “Beto” Perez in the 2000s (Sadlier 2017:124). Soon after its launch, “Zumba Fitness” met with huge success and the company’s authorised instructors offered *zumba* classes all over the world. Although *zumba* combines elements from Latin dance genres (mainly salsa, *cumbia*, *merengue*, and *reggaeton*¹⁵) with bellydance and Bollywood moves, the resultant dance assemblage is performed to a variety of Latin and Caribbean music genres. From her study of *zumba* classes in Florida, Nicole Schommer (2016:4) asserts how “most *zumba* participants are not concerned with whether or not the way that they danced a

particular song accurately represented the song's meaning or the culture from which the song came."

The example of *zumba* shows how the creation of a "new" dance for commercial purposes—and specifically branding—forges a new relation between a dance and the music to which it happens to be practised. Since at its core the dance is designed primarily as a physical workout, the music it comes with has to offer easy to follow, up-tempo and energetic rhythmic patterns to enable extensive cardiovascular training. At the same time, the branded choreographies have to be simple and attractive enough to appeal to large crowds. The dance and body movements are adapted to recorded music, either pre-existing or composed specifically for the purpose, and comprise a repertoire of steps that can be translated from one song to another. *Zumba* thereby exemplifies how dance-music relationships can also be actively constructed for economic purposes.

Patterns of separation and search for reconnection

All of the translocal genres mentioned so far underwent similar processes in the course of their relocation and/or becoming placeless/multiplaced. In the following, we sketch a prototypical development of this separation process. There are prominent examples that may appear to contradict our scheme: the movement tradition of *capoeira* continues to be closely connected to active music practice (see Downey 2002, Griffith 2016). Still the blueprint we elaborate on below might be helpful to understand the phenomenon and provide insights into the formation of translocal music-dance genres. We first present the prototypical development and then add three already mentioned examples, elaborated on here: "African dance" and *jen-be* drumming, Irish traditional music and dance, and salsa music and dance in the Americas. Two further detailed examples can be found in the following articles by Djebbari and by Stepputat.

"For something to be attractive to cosmopolitans elsewhere, however, it has to have marks of local distinctiveness or at least some type of novelty" (Turino 2003:72). Following Turino's thinking, a particular performance genre has the potential to entice cosmopolitan communities if it is different from their own current practices but still "couched within familiar cosmopolitan ethics, aesthetics and style" (Turino 2003:73). Let us imagine a genre meeting these expectations comes to the attention of a translocal audience as has happened for instance with *tango argentino* music and dance practice in the early twentieth century. This is the crucial point where a separation process can begin. A novel dance will be appealing to people interested in movement practices; a novel music, however, will attract people with an interest in music. These two groups do not necessarily overlap. Generally, people interested in learning something new are likely to focus on only one of the two. Also, immersing oneself in either a new form of music or a new form of dance is often perceived as less challenging to beginners than attempting to do both at the same

time. For the “new” genre to transition from passive consumption into active participation, an infrastructure for teaching and learning is needed, aided by the individual and professional use of media. If existing schools and private teachers integrate the genre into their programme, this is likely to have a knock-on effect. Consequently, an infrastructure will develop and expand in hopes of attracting more students, triggering a classic supply-and-demand scheme. At this point, the genre has already begun adjusting, catering to the new locales’ tastes and circumstances, resulting in re-localisation and/or standardisation processes (see fig. 1).

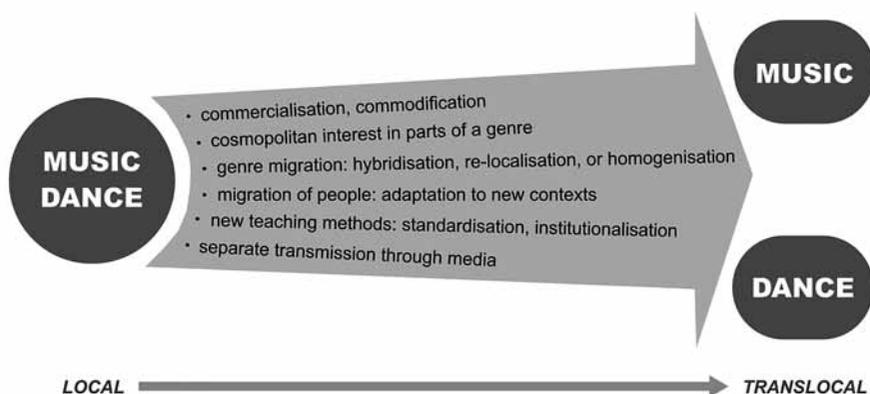


Fig. 1: Visualisation of interconnected processes influencing the development of a genre from local to translocal, causing a separation of music and dance. Graphic by Stepputat 2020.

All of these factors combined lead, with varying significance, to the manifestation of new translocal practices in which music and dance can prosper detached from the other. This is not to imply that the dance will be practiced with no music whatsoever, or with a musical accompaniment radically different from the previous one. What changes is mainly the *relation* between dance and music and the importance the music has for the dance practice and vice versa. In such scenarios, music for accompaniment can become limited to a few recordings, be broadened to include more musical styles, begin to include completely new genres, be reduced to ambient music for movement practice, and so forth. On the other hand, the music can become concert music played for listening purposes and not for dancing.

Further examples show how music and dance gradually disconnect as they transform into distinctly translocal performing arts practices. One example is *jenbe* music. The *jenbe* is a goblet shaped drum originally played mostly in Manding speaking areas (Polak 2000:7) and used for “African dance.”¹⁶ Both African dancing and *jenbe* playing made their way into cosmopolitan settings via internationally touring

ballet performances based on local traditions, common in countries of francophone West Africa (Seye 2016:41; Polak 2000:8). As these staged performances were constructed, the relationship between music and dance started to shift from an interaction based on mutual improvisation to a connection based on fixed choreography and composition (Djebbari 2012:23). Consequently, when musicians and dancers from these ballets started teaching outside of their home countries, they transported this new approach into their teaching. Djebbari (2012:25) notes that “dance and percussion classes as they have been developed in Europe or in the United States engender the separation of these two entities as two disciplines independent of each other.”¹⁷ Elina Seye (email conversation May 2019) further explains that dancers in translocal contexts tend to learn choreographies instead of improvisational techniques. Similarly, apprentice drummers do not learn to interact with improvised dance solos but mostly play composed pieces. They might be able to play together with dancers according to the logics of staged performances, but they do not necessarily master performance practice conventions outside of staged settings. Moreover, musicians and dancers have often specialised either in music or dance and rarely practice both at the same level, if at all. Rainer Polak (2000) addresses this issue, emphasising the significant change *jenbe* drumming underwent as it developed from dance accompaniment into a musical genre in its own right. By the time it entered the German market in the 1990s, dancing was “mostly left out and the focus [has] shifted further toward the music” (Polak 2000:14). Presently in European contexts, learning to play *jenbe* is still mostly disconnected from learning to dance, even though some overlaps do exist (Polak, Seye, email conversations, May 2019).

Another prominent example is Irish (competitive) dance and Irish traditional music¹⁸ that both started to spread with Irish migration and within the Irish diaspora but have subsequently turned into a cosmopolitan phenomenon. According to Fairbairn (1994:253), music and dance had started to separate in Ireland from the 1930s onwards, particularly due to the Public Dance Halls Act from 1935. The act prohibited private dance and music gatherings and forced musicians and dancers to either stop their practice or start playing or dancing at more officially approved venues (see also Ni Bhriain 2008). Irish music became of interest outside of Ireland in the 1960s, first in diasporic communities but soon gaining a broader audience mainly through recordings of Irish music (Williams 2014:611) and prominent individuals and groups who revived interest in Irish traditional music (Hast and Scott 2004:121–124). The crucial point that triggered widespread interest in Irish dance and turned it into a translocal practice was the show *Riverdance* (1994) (Hall 2009:113–127; Foley 2001; O’Connor 2013:123–142). In parallel but not necessarily connected, musicians with diverse cultural backgrounds inside and outside of Ireland started to spread the genre more rapidly in the 1990s until playing Irish tunes in informal music meetings (sessions) became a translocal practice (Hillhouse 2013:43; see also Dillane 2014; Morgenstern 2019). Currently, Irish dancing and Irish traditional music have become separate translocal practices.

In connection with salsa, McMains (2015:47–50) frames the separation of music and dance as “kineschizophonia.” With this, she refers to “the separation of dance from the performance of music for which it was named” (McMains 2015:50). In comparing the mambo and the modern New York salsa, she concludes that the differences between the two dance styles are mainly linked to the dancers’ “differing relationships to live music” (McMains 2015:49). Live music was the background for the development of the mambo in the 1940s and 1950s (Palladium era), whereas modern New York salsa dancers instead dance to recorded music played by DJs (2015:48). McMains (2015:50) argues that “the loss of interaction between dancers and musicians as a result of kineschizophonia enabled technical developments in salsa dance that distinguish it from Palladium-era mambo.” This example shows how the separation of music and dance is not necessarily dependent on divergent circulation patterns. A separation can well happen over time in the same place.

Finally, it is important to mention trends to reconnect the music and dance of a genre that were considered to belong together at some point in history. A simple Internet search brings up a wide variety of musicality classes for dancers, including lindy hop (Carroll 2008:198), west coast swing (Liebhard 2015), salsa, *forró*, and *tango argentino*. This trend is not limited to couple dances: currently, there are efforts to reconnect translocal solo dances like flamenco and Irish *sean nós* step dance (Ní Bhriain 2008) to the music perceived to be the “original” music to go with the dance.

Although further studies of different music-dance genres would be needed to assess whether the reconnecting of music and dance is only a current trend, or if this is a general tendency in the development of translocal music-dance genres, a few observations about reconnecting occurrences can be made at this stage. Typically, a reconnection starts to happen when an interest in an older, more “authentic” form of the genre is triggered among practitioners of both music and dance. Not only is kinetic and musical knowledge sought for in this case, but also knowledge about the historical aspects of the genre in its different phases. Complementary to this temporal development of a genre, an individual’s progress as an active dancer or musician might tend towards more interest in the respective other part, music or dance. Such an interest and progress takes place when a music or a dance practice becomes more than a hobby and the practice turns into a passion, even a lifestyle. Practitioners strive to become better dancers by understanding the music, or conversely, they will learn the dance to become better musicians. Of course, this coincides mostly with increasing skills; musicians and dancers must be skilled enough to appreciate the subtleties of the genre they practice, which includes the relations of movement to sound and sound to movement.

Conclusion and outlook

Music flows across space (from oral traditions to Internet distribution) in directions and along pathways that are sometimes directed, often random, but always mediated

by (or constituted as reactions against) flows of capital, new technologies and styles. Music creates places and networks of cultural flow, but does not do so beyond the worlds of politics, commerce and social life. (Connell and Gibson 2003:18)

This statement—also true for dance—sums up how music and dance move and develop in translocal contexts. In this introduction to the translocality theme, we have looked at some of the fundamental topics that underlie the development of translocal music-dance genres, with a particular focus on how music and dance may become separated along the way. An important insight is that there seems to be no general rule as to how a music or a dance genre must be structured to potentially become a translocal genre. Also, the origin of a genre seems to have no direct significance for its potential to turn into a translocal genre. However, what we have found is that the quality of the relationship between music and dance is of great significance, and that the relationship itself, just as sound and movement structures, changes over time and space. If there is a dynamic relationship, it is difficult to practice one without the other and still consider the result the same genre. But if sound and movement are more loosely connected (see Stepputat 2017b:35), they part ways more easily. We explored several cases in which, for various reasons, the relationship between sound and movement changed from a strong interaction into a loose connection (see also our respective articles in this volume).

We are aware that our survey was selective in a number of ways. Most importantly, we did not consider political and religious factors. Without a doubt, they play an important role in any development of music-dance genres, both local and translocal; however, they are beyond the scope of this overview. We focused instead on how changing ways of transmission—from informal to formal, direct to indirect, face-to-face to mediated—have a massive impact on the practice of both music and dance. We demonstrated, that the inclusion of digital media and social media networks in the teaching and learning as well as more general dissemination and consumption processes, enables translocal music-dance genres to be transmitted and practiced separately. Finally, we reflected on the influence of economics, exploring in particular the commodification of translocal music-dance genres within a globalised culture of commerce and leisure. As we have seen in some examples, where a re-connection process is underway, the same channels may be used to (re)connect music and dance forms that have a shared history.

To understand better how music and dance develop—in parallel or separated from each other—in translocal contexts, it is essential to adopt a choreomusical perspective on music, dance, and their relation. In addition to our own regional expertise, our comparative overview was in fact limited to the few published examples where authors actually explore the relationship between music and dance instead of focusing on just one of the two elements. Further studies are particularly needed in the field of diasporic and migrational cultures. An examination of the relationship between music and dance allows us to shed light on important historical, political, sociological and cultural dynamics in a globalised and digitalised world. We adopted a choreomusical perspective both as a methodology to explore the specific features

of translocal music-dance genres and as a theoretical framework to examine the complex and multilayered processes of cultural circulation over time and space.

Notes

- 1 Also see Appadurai (1996:48), who uses the term “global ethnoscapés” to refer to non-localised group identities.
- 2 In the original German, “Unter Translokalität sollen im Folgenden Phänomene gefasst werden, die als Ergebnisse von Zirkulations- und Transferprozessen angesehen werden können und aus Bewegungen von Menschen, Gütern, Ideen und Symbolen hervorgehen, soweit diese mit einer gewissen Regelmäßigkeit räumliche Distanzen und kulturelle Grenzen überwinden. Mit dem Begriff soll die Perspektive auf die Wechselbeziehung zwischen Transgressionen und Lokalisierungen gelegt werden.”
- 3 All translations from French and German into English are the authors’. We thank Liz Mellish for the English language proofreading of this article.
- 4 Also see Stepputat and Seye’s introduction to the first part of the *Choreomusicology* double issue (2020/1) for a thorough definition of the term and its significance for research in music-dance relations.
- 5 Kendra Stepputat wants to thank Felix Morgenstern, Rainer Pollack, Elina Seye, Babak Nikzat, Christopher Dick, and Sonja Graf for providing valuable insights into translocal cultures and tendencies from their respective fields of research, as well as important references.
- 6 Stepputat differentiates three basic forms of dance music relation: interconnection, interdependence and interaction, which form a continuum from fixed (composition/choreography) to flexible (improvisation) form. The more active, *i.e.* improvisatory, the relation is, the more it is necessary for dancers and musicians to perform together. Hence a separation will significantly change the genre.
- 7 Also see the overview of studies dealing with place and music in Connell and Gibson (2003:11–14).
- 8 Also see Skinner 2007.
- 9 We are of course aware that many of the genres we address have a long history of transformation. We look at genres at a particular point in time, shortly before they turn translocal, at which they are established with a label, a generally agreed upon sound and movement structure, and an association with a place.
- 10 See for instance Silverman (2012:39–44), Carl (2014:252–253), and more generally Cohen and Fischer (2018) as well as Connell and Gibson (2003).
- 11 Note that diaspora here is used as an abstract concept generalising the phenomenon. It is important to bear in mind that people living in a diaspora context are not automatically a homogenous group (Silverman 2012:41; Manuel 2000:197).
- 12 See Waldron (2018) for an introduction to the use and importance of social media in online music communities.
- 13 Also see Birringer (2002) for an analysis of the influence new technologies have had on dance practices, leading to the separation of the actual dance performance from the reception of it.

- 14 Obviously many counterexamples could be added, such as the *festnoz* in French Brittany or the *bal folk* in France and neighbouring countries, which gather thousands of people dancing to live music performers.
- 15 Information from the official company's website: <https://www.zumba.com/en-US>. Last accessed 23 October 2019.
- 16 The generalising term "African dance" is commonly and consciously used by dance studios, teachers, organisers, etc. without differentiating between national, regional or ethnically framed styles, a process which has been critically addressed by anthropologists (e.g. Lassibille 2004).
- 17 Also see Price (2013) for *jenbe* (*djembe*) playing in an African American context. Price mentions "African" dancing as equally important and intensely practiced but does not go into detail as to what degree drumming and dancing communities overlap. It is obvious that the ways in which African drumming and dancing were re-localised differ significantly.
- 18 See Hillhouse 2013 on the applicability of the term "traditional" in Irish music.
- 19 Just one example for this is South-Iranian *bandari*, which, due to political restrictions—based on religious premises prohibiting public dancing—turned into a listening genre in the Iranian capital Teheran (Nikzat 2018:15–16).

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