

**Learning, dropping, teaching, adjusting...:
Renegotiations of French Polynesian dance by its diaspora in mainland France**

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Abstract

At the crossroads of ethnology, dance and heritage studies, this research explores social articulations between dancers and their migratory experiences in a postcolonial context. 'Ori *Tahiti* is a group of dances specific to the French Polynesian archipelagos, and has been codified and performed for centuries (Moulin, 1979). Today it is still playing a role in defining identity within French Polynesia (Saura, 2009). Since the 70's, after years of being banned, the identity claim movement revived 'Ori *Tahiti*; which today is in the process of inscription on the UNESCO World Heritage list. 'Ori *Tahiti* can be considered a local cultural practice. However, today the French Polynesian diaspora is substantial and so, the Ori' Tahiti network is forceful around the world. For instance, most of the 20,000 French Polynesians living in France keep practicing their cultural activities in one of the 200 dance groups.

My research considers Ori' Tahiti dancers in France through their diasporic and intercultural experiences. Rather than focusing on the evolution of the heritage itself, I propose to focus on people's stories by questioning the notion of "belonging" as a dialogic perspective of interdependence between heritage and people. This approach leads me to observe how communities might *adjust their relation* to their travelling heritage; making this heritage a dynamic construction.

References:

- Moulin, J. (1979). *The dance of Tahiti*. Papeete, Tahiti: C. Gleizal/Éditions du Pacifique.
Saura, B. (2009), *Tahiti Mā'ohi: Culture, identité, religion et nationalisme en Polynésie française*. Papeete: Au vent des Iles.