

Tilburg University

"Rendez-nous le Tchip":

Malanda, Elodie

Published in:
CFC-Intersections

Publication date:
2023

Document Version
Other version

[Link to publication in Tilburg University Research Portal](#)

Citation for published version (APA):

Malanda, E. (2023). "Rendez-nous le Tchip": Performing a French Black Community through Podcasts. *CFC-Intersections*, 2(1), 63-79.

General rights

Copyright and moral rights for the publications made accessible in the public portal are retained by the authors and/or other copyright owners and it is a condition of accessing publications that users recognise and abide by the legal requirements associated with these rights.

- Users may download and print one copy of any publication from the public portal for the purpose of private study or research.
- You may not further distribute the material or use it for any profit-making activity or commercial gain
- You may freely distribute the URL identifying the publication in the public portal

Take down policy

If you believe that this document breaches copyright please contact us providing details, and we will remove access to the work immediately and investigate your claim.

Post-print version of : Elodie Malanda. “Rendez-nous le Tchip”: performing a French Black community through podcasts. *CFC Intersections*, vol. 2 (2023), pp.63-

79. <https://doi.org/10.3828/cfci.2023.5> (c)Liverpool Press

“Rendez-nous le Tchip”: performing a French Black community through podcasts

Elodie Malanda

“There is no Black community in France” (Pliskin). This widely shared idea is based on the fact that Afro-descendant people in France share neither the same culture or language, nor the same history. They tend to organize around nationality or regions rather than around race. However, this is changing. In this article, I study the podcasts *Le Tchip* and *Piment* as performative tools of a young Black community in France that is based on criteria of race and show how the strong lead of women and/or LGBTQI+ people in these podcasts shapes the common values of this Black community in the making.

“Il n’y a pas de communauté noire en France” (Pliskin 2020). Cette idée largement partagée est fondée sur le fait que les personnes afro-descendantes en France ne partagent ni la même culture, la même langue ni la même histoire, mais auraient plutôt tendance à s’organiser autour de la nationalité, de leur région d’origine ou de leur ethnie que sur des critères raciaux. Cependant, cela est en train de changer. Cet article analyse les podcasts *Le Tchip* et *Piment* comme outils performatifs d’une communauté noire, basée sur des critères de race, et montre comment la forte présence de femmes et/ou de personnes LGBTQI+ dans ces podcasts façonne les valeurs communes de cette communauté noire en devenir.

“Existe-t-il une communauté noire en France?” This title of an article of *Le Monde* published in 2009 can seem provocative in a country where the Black population is estimated at three to five million people (Crumley) making it the country with the highest Black population in Europe. Nevertheless, when it comes to a Black community, experts agree that this concept does not apply to France. In *La Condition noire*, Pap Ndiaye prefers to talk about “le groupe des Noirs” rather than “la communauté noire” and explains: “le groupe des Noirs [en France] est infiniment divers, socialement et culturellement, et [...] ranger toutes les personnes à indice mélanique élevé dans la même catégorie d’analyse est une opération très problématique” (34). Alain Mabanckou (Rousseau 2009), Léonora Miano (2012, 61-63), and

Fary (Pliskin 2020), the main actor of the movie *Tout simplement noir* (Zadi 2020), have echoed Ndiaye's thought by affirming, in one way or another: "Il n'y a pas de communauté noire en France" (Pliskin 2020). They argue that, as the Afro-descendant¹ population in France shares neither the same culture or language, nor the same history, Black people in France have long tended to organize around nationality, region, or ethnolinguistic group rather than around race. The French "modèle républicain"--considering any identification with a group based on race or religion as "communautariste" or "séparatiste," and thus suspicious (Beaman 547; Soumahoro 131)--might also have made it easier for Afro-descendant people to imagine themselves as part of a Malian, Bamileke, or Guadeloupean community rather than as members of a Black French community.

But in recent years, initiatives by and for Black French people seem to indicate that this is changing. Among these initiatives figure an increasing number of podcasts created by Black French people. Titles of podcasts like *Black mamans* (2020), *Thé noir* (2017), and *Tant que je serai noire* (2019) highlight the Blackness of the podcasters. So do the Spotify and Instagram presentations of *Cases Rebelles* (2010) and *The Why "Le Podcast"* (2016) referring to the podcasters as a "collectif noir." These podcasts explicitly claim a Black positionality, i.e., a positionality based on race rather than on national, regional, or ethnolinguistic origin. On Arte Radio, the hosts of *Le Tchop* (2016) are presented as "trois trentenaires sympas d'origine antillaise et africaine," however the description also focuses on their common Blackness by defining the podcast as "un regard noir sur l'actu et la pop-réflexion" (Arte Radio). Similarly, the founder of *Piment* (2017) qualifies the hosts as "afro-descendants/africains/antillais" (Bakèla), but she further insists on the fact that they all share experiences of Black people (Bakèla). Moreover, the choice of topics, the selection of the guests, and the opinions of the hosts of all these podcasts are informed by their common experience of racialization in France. My hypothesis is that these podcasts are rooted in the

concept of a French Black community and, at the same time, participate in creating this community by embodying and performing it.

According to Blackshaw, community is “a mode of relating” (10). It is a network whose members share a sense of belonging (Cohen 15). This network is endowed with “symbols”--ideas that “provide people with the means to make meaning” (Cohen 19). It shares common narratives (Astruc 58-61; Spitta 34), a common language (Tönnies 23; Spitta 23), habits, ceremonies or traditions, that “offe[r] new ideas on how to live, as well as inspiration, moral lessons, comfort, tales of the lives of others and how these might inspire us for how we live our lives” (Blackshaw 17). Through an analysis of *Le Tchipe* and *Piment*, I propose to study podcasts as performative tools of a young Black community in France. I will show that by creating micro-communities, by fostering a “we” and “them”-feeling, and by providing a common language and shared values, *Le Tchipe* and *Piment* embody and perform a Black community, which is based on racial criteria, thus challenging the traditional French “colorblindness.” I will finally analyze the intersectional approach to community adopted by those podcasts and show how this approach breaks with the misogyny and homophobia of some Black activist movements.

***Le Tchipe* and *Piment*: Black podcasts in France**

Le Tchipe is a podcast about pop culture and race hosted by Mélanie Wanga, Kévi Donat, and François Oulac. It ran from 2016 to 2021 and was hosted consecutively by the platforms Afrostream, Arte Radio, Binge, and Studio Majorelle. *Piment* is a live radio broadcast that can be listened to as a podcast. The first two seasons were broadcast on Rinse Fm, and the last one was aired on radio Nova.² Hosted by Binetou Sylla, Rhoda Tchokokam, Célia Potiron, and Chris Soglo, the radio broadcast/podcast ran from 2017 to 2020. It discusses societal and political topics linked to Afrodiasporic experiences, like colorism, Black

masculinity, the relation between the Caribbean and the African continent, reparations for slavery, etc. My choice of these specific podcasts has been informed by three main criteria: *Le Tchipe* and *Piment* are two of the best-known Black French podcasts in France; both ran several years in a row and were discussed in the media (*Africultures*, *Les Inrocks*, *TF1*³); furthermore, the two podcasts are both no longer running--it is thus possible to analyze the entirety of the episodes.

Not every podcast hosted by Black people is to be considered a “Black podcast.” *Miroir, Miroir* (2018) by Jennifer Padjemi is a feminist podcast that questions beauty norms; *Mounwoke* (2017) by Célia Potiron focuses on subjects related to Martinique; and *Hallal Love* (2022) by Madina Guissé deals with religion and love. Thus, their positionality is feminist, regional, and religious rather than based on race. *Le Tchipe* and *Piment*, in contrast, adopt a Black positionality, i.e., a positionality that highlights the race of the podcasters. The hosts openly display their Blackness and structure their podcast around topics linked to it.

The podcasters themselves embody this Black community, which is based on race. All the podcasters are of different origins. François Oulac and Kévi Donat of *Le Tchipe* are from the French Caribbean and Mélanie Wanga is of French and Ivorian descent. Binetou Sylla’s parents are from Mali; Rhoda Tchokokam was born and raised in Cameroon; Chris Soglo is from Benin; and Célia Potiron is Martinican. The hosts of *Piment* are also of different religious and social backgrounds: in one episode, they discuss how their upbringing in bourgeois or working-class families has shaped their trajectory, while in another one they address their relation to religion, but otherwise these social and religious differences remain in the background. They, however, often claim their belonging to their country or region of origin, and stress cultural differences between these different territories, all the while emphasizing their common Blackness and their common experiences as Black people in France. By overcoming regional, national, and religious differences--without erasing them--

and building micro-communities, based on their common racial experience, the podcasters of *Piment* and *Le Tchipe* personify this Black French community in the making.

Nevertheless, this Black positionality is not enough to perform a community. We know, since Benedict Anderson, that “all communities larger than the primordial villages of face-to-face contact (and perhaps even these) are imagined” (6). Anderson explains that the nation “is *imagined* because the members of even the smallest nation will never know most of their fellow-members, meet them, or even hear of them, yet in the minds of each lives the image of their communion” (6). Like nations, the Black French community that Black podcasts participate in creating, is imagined. Not only because the members will never know each other, but even more so because their commonality--Blackness--is a construction. As race has no biological foundation, the question of who is Black must be permanently renegotiated. Mixed-race people with one Black and one white parent will probably be considered Black in Europe (even if that is slowly changing in certain European countries), but will be seen as white in Africa--as Mélanie recalls from her first trip to the Ivory Coast (*Le Tchipe*, season 2, episode 7, 29:20-30:00). The heritage of the one-drop rule in the US, stating that whoever had one drop of Black blood was Black, makes it perfectly possible and legitimate for people who look white to claim their Blackness in America, while in most European countries they would pass as impostors doing so (Mbuka 2020; Haluhalo 2020). Unlike members of a religious community who pray to the same god(s), and unlike members of nations, who share a territory, a history, and often a language, a potential Black community in France would have no concrete common reference, except that of their common French references (language, territory, government, etc.) and their “condition noire” (Ndiaye). This “condition noire” is a social situation, characterized by a minority status (Ndiaye 29), largely determined by the experience of discrimination (38). It is not a strong commonality though, as dark-skinned Black people tend to encounter more discrimination

than light-skinned Black people (Ndiaye 82-127). In the face of the blurry foundation of a possible Black community in France, it is particularly important to give this hypothetical community common narratives, common values, and clear boundaries, as they are essential elements of every community (Blackshaw 6).

Friendship: creating a feeling of collectiveness

One of the core elements of community is a feeling of belonging (Cohen 15). *Piment* and *Le Tchipe* craft this feeling by openly displaying a net of relations and friendships. They thus foster a feeling of what Tönnies calls “Gemeinschaft,” i.e., a community based on personal relations, in opposition to “Gesellschaft” (society), which is founded on impersonal relations (Tönnies 45). Tönnies lists friendship, together with kinship and neighborhood, as one of the three “original communities” (Tönnies 18). The hosts of *Piment* and *Le Tchipe* openly show friendship as a pillar of their podcasts. *Piment* and *Le Tchipe* are both conversational: although every episode deals with topics that have been thoroughly prepared in advance, the discussions between the hosts are informal. They interrupt each other, joke around, burst out laughing, or get impatient. Binetou of *Piment* explains this choice of format:

Je me suis dit tout de suite que je voulais vraiment une team autour de moi: Célia, Rhoda, Marina et Chris... Je les connaissais tous personnellement. [...] C'est ça aussi vraiment, le délire des palabres, des discussions pimentées entre potes, où on s'exprime, où on peut se couper la parole, où chacun a un point de vue affirmé qu'on peut partager ou qu'on peut confronter. (Bakèla)

The hosts of these two podcasts do not hide that they know each other from before, and sometimes refer to things they have done together outside of the studio. They show their friendship openly, making the listener feel that they are witnessing an informal discussion between friends. The podcasters also present themselves as part of a bigger friendship circle, which stretches beyond the restricted group of the hosts and includes their guests. They address their invitees in an informal way, calling them by their first names, giving the

impression that they have known each other for a long time. By displaying their friendship, the podcasters perform a collectiveness that is essential to the creation of a community.

This familiarity between the hosts could be excluding the listeners, if the podcasters were using inside-jokes, or referring to events or people without giving their listeners the necessary information to follow. However, the hosts include the listeners into their circle. They share details about their private lives, be it their love lives or information about their families or their jobs. They also share their feelings and their current moods. In doing so, they seem to offer the listeners the possibility to get to know them personally. They also make sure that the listener has the tools to follow their conversation. When one of the hosts uses a word, or mentions something the listener might not know, one of their co-hosts will usually stop them and ask them to explain further. The podcasters even explicitly invite their listeners to join their circle: *Le Tchip* does surveys on social media, asking the listeners' opinions about different topics, to which the podcasters react in the following episode. On Twitter, they sometimes address their listeners by calling them "family" ("la mif") and assuring that they love them (Twitter, 7 May 2021). When the last episode of *Le Tchip* was aired in November 2021, they threw a big party inviting their listeners to "come drink and dance with [them]" (Twitter, 19 Oct. 2021). During the Covid pandemic, the hosts of *Piment* offered their listeners to call them by phone "to relax, to exchange cultural tips, and to discuss [their] new habits" (Twitter, 19 Mar. 2020). They thus present themselves as an open circle and invite their listeners into this friendship community.

For us, by us: creating a "we" and "them"-feeling

Kévi declares that they are happy if white people are listening to *Le Tchip* (Bakèla), but the hosts do not hide that the podcast is primarily aimed at a Black audience. Mélanie explains: "la communauté noire--mais pas que--est tellement invisibilisée par les médias de masse en

France, que cela me tenait à cœur que le podcast s'adresse à elle" (Bakèla). Likewise, Binetou of *Piment* declares: "on parle entre nous, pour nous, sans attendre de validation!" (Bakèla). Even if they are available to everyone, these podcasts are shown as "by us for us" products--"us" being Black people. The implicit listener is thus positioned as Black. This becomes clear when François starts an episode of *Le Tchip* by asking: "Salut à tous! Vous avez froid, vous avez le cheveu sec, vous mettez la triple dose de crème pour protéger votre mélanine et vous êtes célibataire au beau milieu de la coughing season? Détendez-vous, vous écoutez le Tchip!" (*Le Tchip*, season 2, episode 3, 00:25-37).

The reference to melanin shows that François addresses Black and brown people. The same goes for Mélanie, when she recommends African and Caribbean kitchen ingredients to offer to "your mums," presupposing that the listeners' mothers know how to cook Saka-Saka, sauce-chien, or Mafé. The topics also position the implicit listener as Black. The podcasts deal with subjects such as colorism, the necessity to support Black "for us by us" projects, the challenges faced when traveling as a Black woman, Black masculinity, racism in the workplace, textured (afro) hair, or the place of Black people in sports. Some of the topics covered by the podcasts might interest non-Black listeners, but they do not impact them personally. These topics, mirroring the everyday life of Black people in France, can create a feeling of belonging for Black listeners,⁴ especially as they are usually not considered as a target audience by mainstream media.

The most effective way of creating a "we-feeling" is by opposing the "we" to a "them." In the case of these Black podcasts, the "them" is white people. In this respect, the title of the first episode of the second season of *Piment* speaks for itself. The episode is called "Ils nous regardent..." and it makes no doubt here that the "ils" (they) are white people, while "nous" (we) are Black people. Benedict Anderson (20), Fredrik Barth (38) and Anthony P. Cohen (12-13) have all stressed that boundary-making is an essential tool of

imagining a community. This “we” and “them”-discourse is thus elementary for the construction of a Black community. Even if only three episodes of *Piment* and five episodes of *Le Tchipe* explicitly tackle topics around whiteness, issues of white people’s gaze or cultural appropriation by white people regularly emerge in discussions about other issues. When white people are mentioned, it is usually as an impersonal group, that is either mocked or perceived in its position of dominance. The podcasters of *Piment* often openly display the fact that they do not care about white people’s opinion. “On s’en fout des Blancs” was even supposed to be one of the jingles of the podcast (*Piment*, season 1, episode 17, 14:04-12:15). Unlike *Piment*, which regularly deals with sub-Saharan politics, *Le Tchipe* mainly focuses on mainstream African-American culture and may thus be more accessible to white people, but that does not prevent the podcasters from openly mocking or criticizing them. In an episode called “Nos soirées les plus blanches,” Kévi, Mélanie, and François distance themselves from white people with humor by analyzing white party traditions and highlighting the things, they think, are most embarrassing and unnerving. Aware of the fact that they also have white listeners, Mélanie directly addresses them in the beginning of that episode. She says: “si vous êtes blancs et que vous écoutez cette émission, c’est le moment d’apprendre et de comprendre comment vous êtes vus de l’extérieur” (*Le Tchipe*, season 3, episode 35, 2:00-2:09). This reversal of gaze is emphasized through the operation of naming white people. “Colons” (colonizers), “Jean-Mi,” “pimpelle,” “le “blanctriarcat,” “nos amis caucasiens,” “Candia” (a milk brand) are words the podcasters and their guests sometimes use to refer to white people. Through naming white people, the Black podcasters invert the power relation between themselves and the white majority, as the act of naming someone, and especially a group of people, presupposes a position of power. By naming them and subjecting them to their Black gaze, the podcasters deny white people their usual position as “the norm” (Röggl 56), while “othering” them. This othering and reversal of the gaze might be the most unsettling

experience for white listeners. It is, above all, a powerful tool for the podcasters to set the boundaries of the community they create.

“Gemeinbegriffe”: creating a common language

Ferdinand Tönnies stresses the importance of language in community-building and indicates that community is formed through language (Tönnies 23). It is thus not surprising that the podcasters regularly reflect on the use of language in relation to community. Rhoda, who is also the founder of the website *Atoubaa* and the podcast *Exhale*--both directed toward Black people--explains that thinking about the words she employs is a way to resist the white gaze: “J’essaie de me poser les bonnes questions, en fait. Sur le lexique que j’emploie, sur à qui je m’adresse. [...] Si je passe énormément de temps à expliquer quelque chose qui est hyper logique dans ma tête...ça veut dire que je ne m’adresse pas au bon public” (*Piment*, season 2, episode 1, 52:40-53:02).

Here, using words and concepts that some people know and others do not is a natural way of sorting out her audience. Juliane Spitta uses the word “Gemein-Begriffe”--“community-terms”--that she defines as political collective terms “that appeal in different ways to the binding forces and coherence of a social structure”⁵ (Spitta 20). “Pimprelle,” “Jean-Mi,” or “blanciarcat”--terms the podcasters use to refer to white people--can be considered as such. Further “Gemein-Begriffe” of these podcasts are words that are taken from political antiracist discourse. “Culture-vulture” (a person doing cultural appropriation), “misogynoir” (misogyny against Black women), and “afrofeminism” are a few examples of those “Gemein-Begriffe” used in the podcasts. Some of those words have reached French mainstream media by now, but when the podcasts started in 2017, this vocabulary was largely unknown outside of activist circles in France. This is illustrated by an interview with *Les Inrocks* in 2018, in which the podcasters of *Le Tchip* were asked: “On entend aussi

beaucoup de néologismes dans *Le Tchip*. A quoi correspond ce vocabulaire?” (De Abreu).

The fact that the interviewer qualifies this vocabulary as “neologisms” indicates that he thinks that these words have been made up by the hosts. François corrects him, explaining that these terms are taken from the antiracism activist sphere. *Le Tchip* and *Piment* very likely participated in spreading this antiracist vocabulary and concepts within the community of their listeners, turning them into “Gemein-Begriffe”--“codes” that could be deciphered by this specific community.

Another important linguistic topic tackled by the podcasters is how to name themselves and their group. In episode 11 of season 1 (11 Feb. 2018), the hosts of *Piment* discuss how to translate the English term “Blackness.” They come up with different options--*négritude*, *noirité*--, discussing the advantages and disadvantages of every term (*Piment*, season 1, episode 11, 54:00-59:00). This discussion is of crucial importance, as language is shaped by history and can thus convey a racist ideology (Arndt and Ofuatey-Alazard 195-571). Language of race and Blackness is especially tricky, as it is linked to colonialism and slavery (Gordien 2018; Geneste and Testa). For us, Black people, naming ourselves is thus self-defining who we are, outside of the white gaze and of racist history (Geneste and Testa; Miano 2020, 95). A further linguistic issue is putting Black struggle into words. While invited to *Le Tchip* (18 Jan. 2018), Marie Dasylyva, a coach for BPoC women suffering from racism at their workplace, explains how difficult it was for her to clearly identify the racism she faced in her office, since she did not have the words to describe her experience (*Le Tchip*, season 2, episode 7, 14:50-14:55). She insists on the importance of naming whiteness, racism, or Blackness (*Tchip*, season 2, episode 7, 24:13-24:26). Naming these realities means to unravel the structural domination that often lies beneath seemingly innocent comments of white colleagues or bosses towards Black employees. Through naming whiteness, Blackness, racism, white privilege, or misogynoir, these podcasters and their guests challenge the French

usual “color-blind” attitude when it comes to discrimination. By using these words to describe their daily experiences, the podcasters show that structural racism, discrimination, macro- and micro-aggressions are not--as many people still think--concepts “imported from the United States” (Wagener) but reflect French realities. They thus give their Black listeners the tools to interpret their own experiences and to uncover the hidden racism they might be subjected to in their everyday lives.

These “Gemein-Begriffe” are embedded in shared narratives. Stories like the one of Marie Dasyva, who was racially discriminated against at her workplace, and now works as a coach empowering BPoC women, create narratives about discrimination and racism, but also about common fights and resilience. By showing Black realities, negotiating ideas about Blackness and whiteness, and systematically denouncing racism, French Black podcasts craft narratives in which Black listeners can recognize themselves--an important trait to enhance the feeling of belonging.

“Trash ou iconique?”: creating common values

The podcasts not only give their listeners words, narratives, and concepts to make meaning of their lives, they also openly convey values. They share them through the choice of topics and their opinions. Even if the hosts of *Piment* describe themselves as people “aux opinions bien tranchées”--people with clear-cut opinions--and that the discussions are often lively, the podcast is not built around polemics and oppositional opinions. The podcasters do not always agree, but their opinions usually diverge on details, never on important points. Thus, the values and ideas they stand for are clear and “readable” for the listener. *Le Tchic* usually discusses “lighter” topics than *Piment*, and is less openly political, but it nevertheless has a clear axiological line. Here too, values and opinions are shared through their point of view on different topics, be it music, movies, or more serious topics, like depression or Black

masculinities. One important way in which *Piment* and *Le Tchipe* pass down values is through their “opinion” sections. In a section called “sel et poivre,” the hosts of *Piment* share things that “made their nerves go tense” in the previous week. In a similar section called “trash-ico,” the hosts of *Le Tchipe* choose a recent political, cultural, or societal event and decide whether it is “trashy” or “iconic.” They condemn Kanye West’s controversial statement on slavery, share their anger about important French journalists cyberbullying women for speaking their minds, and criticize white women pretending to be Black on YouTube and working as influencers on Black beauty topics. By sharing the things that have annoyed them recently, and usually getting support from their co-hosts, they clearly state their values and offer the listener an axiological line of thinking. The fact that the hosts sometimes express their annoyance or make fun of the people who think otherwise, makes these opinion-sections a guideline for the values in place in the community they are performing. Furthermore, they share cultural recommendations, like books or series, creating common knowledge and common references that are essential to generate a feeling of community.

An intersectional approach: renewing the values of Black fight for equality

Many of the recommendations and events mentioned in the podcasts’ opinion sections are linked to race and racism, and sharpen the listeners view on racial discriminations. However, race and racism are not the only topics discussed in those podcasts, as the podcasts have a clearly intersectional approach to Blackness. In *Piment* (afro)feminism and misogynoir, class differences, colorism, fatphobia as well as topics around queerness, homophobia, and transphobia are recurrent themes. Chris regularly reflects on the difficulty of being Black and gay, and Célia sometimes brings up her situation, as a Black, overweight woman. The Gay Pride in Martinique, Black trans activist Marsha P. Johnson, or coming out as a Black man, are some of the themes discussed in *Piment*. Chris openly talks about his homosexuality, as

do some of the podcast's guests. In *Le Tchipt*, LGBTQI+ topics are less discussed, but when they come up, the podcasters talk about it in a positive way. One could think that the pro-feminist and pro-LGBTQI+ attitude, which *Piment* and *Le Tchipt* openly defend, is due to individual sensibilities: *Piment* is formed by three openly feminist women and one gay man, who considers himself an afrofeminist (*Piment*, season 1, episode 1, 1:00:48-1:00:50) and Mélanie of *Le Tchipt* is an active feminist.⁶ But *Piment* and *Le Tchipt* are not the only Black French podcast that explicitly reject misogyny, misogynoir, and homo- and transphobia. The podcast *The Why* "*Le Podcast*" has dedicated an episode to being Black and gay, even though one of the two hosts admits that he does not have any gay friends (*The Why*, "Noir et Gay" 20:20),⁷ and one of the hosts of *Thé noir* directly addresses the listeners who might be homophobic, urging them to educate themselves and recognize the violence of the discriminations against Black LGBTQI+ people (*Thé noir*, episode 34, 16:33-17:10). The longest running Black French podcast *Cases rebelles* explicitly rejected sexism and homophobia in its very first episode in 2010. As this first episode is constructed like a manifesto, it is clear that the fight against misogyny and homophobia is one of the pillars of the ideological line of the podcast. Twelve years later, the group producing *Cases rebelles* is formed only by Black queer and trans women, and has published a book called *AfroTrans* written by Black trans people. The fact that the fight against misogynoir and against homo- and transphobia can be found in various Black French podcasts bolsters gender and LGBTQI+ equality as core values of the Black community that these podcasts are creating.

This is particularly interesting as homosexuality is sometimes viewed negatively within Black communities. Ary Gordien (2020) warns of the danger of reducing homophobia to a non-occidental problem and insists on individual differences and on the ongoing change of mentalities. He nevertheless notes that family norms and the predominance of religious values in the French Caribbean make homosexuality condemnable for many Guadeloupeans.

Similarly, the podcasters insist on the fact that homophobia and transphobia are a problem everywhere in society, but they do not hide the fact that homophobia exists in Afro-descendant communities. By openly defending the rights of LGBTQI+ people, the podcasts challenge not only homophobia in general, but also the values of a part of the Black people in France and in the world.

Homophobia and misogyny are also present in some currents of Black emancipation movements. In *Ain't I a Woman*, bell hooks reminds the reader that “Marcus Garvey, Elijah Muhammed, Malcolm X, Martin Luther King, Stokely Carmichael, Amiri Baraka, and other black male leaders have righteously supported patriarchy” (94). Furthermore, the part played by women in historical Black fights--e.g., in the civil rights movement or in the Black Panther Party--has often been invisibilized (Farmer; Farmer, Philipps, Spencer and Yellesetty). More recently, Ary Gordien (2015) interviewed various Black activists in Guadeloupe who refuse homosexuality and/or gender equality in the name of cultural authenticity and tradition (506, 515, 518). They consider homosexuality as “a vice [...] imported by France” (509) and denounce feminism as a manifestation of female individualism that is in contradiction with local customs (506). A certain current of radical Afrocentrism (519) and Rastafarianism (Gordien 521; Hewitt 176) share this homophobia, and some activists of radical Afrocentrism defend the idea of gender complementarity rather than the one of gender equality (Gordien 507). The “manifesto” episode (May 2010) of *Cases rebelles* directly tackles these issues, by stating:

Nous considérons que les peuples d’Afrique et des diasporas ont tout intérêt à se reconnecter autour de luttes communes [...] Nous prônons une unité antisexiste, débarrassée des comportements sexistes et homophobes d’où qu’ils aient été hérités. Notre lutte ne vaudra que si elle est menée par les femmes et les hommes. Nous méprisons les frères qui méprisent les sœurs au nom de pseudos valeurs noires, africaines ou antillaises. Ce sexisme racialisé n’est qu’une excuse *la-ment-table*. Nous méprisons les discours homophobes, nous méprisons les discours définissant l’homosexualité comme la maladie apportée par le Blanc. (*Cases rebelles*, episode 1, 7:17-8:00)

By directly confronting Black activist people who reject homosexuality or preach inequality between men and women in the name of Africanness or Caribbeanness, the podcasters of *Cases rebelles* advocate for a different way of conducting the fight for Black people's rights. Binetou makes a similar statement, when she briefly mentions that she hopes that young Black people will listen to *Piment* instead of listening to Kemi Seba (*Piment*, season 2, episode 1, 1:22:00), a Black activist, who publicly referred to homosexuality as a deviance (NegroneWS). Thus, those Black French podcasts renew the values of Black activism and offer their listeners a model of an inclusive Black activist community that takes intersectionality into account.

Conclusion

By rallying around their common racial experience and discussing issues that affect many Black people, regardless of their national, regional, or religious specificities, the hosts of *Piment* and *Le Tchipe* embody a community based on Blackness. They perform this community by openly displaying their friendship and highlighting their feeling of collectiveness. They moreover create this community by investing it with a common vocabulary, common values, and narratives and by fostering a “we” and “them”-feeling. However, the very existence of these podcasts is already rooted in the belief that there are enough Afro-descendants in France who are willing to listen to podcasts that address them by appealing to their Blackness. Thus, it does presuppose that there is a feeling of racial belonging within part of the French Afro-descendant people. The podcasts build on this feeling and enhance it by nourishing a Black consciousness,⁸ i.e., the consciousness that experiences related to Blackness are not just individual but collective, since they are embedded in a societal and historical structure. They also nurture Black consciousness by passing on knowledge about Black history and Black culture, which can foster cultural and

racial pride. In *Le Tchipe*, this Black consciousness is partly inspired by the African American model, as the podcasters often discuss African American music, movies, or celebrities. In *Piment*, this Black consciousness is embedded in a pan-African heritage: the hosts are interested in Black people, culture, and history all over the globe. However, both podcasts point out specificities of French mechanisms of racialization and discuss Black French culture, hence inscribing the Black listener into a Black French as well as into a global Black community.

Andrew Bottomley notices that “audiostorytelling is helping a more diverse range of people to be made visible and recognized as having a voice; however, real social and political change will come only if these new voices challenge the dominant norms and strategies” (221). Podcasts *Piment* and *Le Tchipe* clearly challenge dominant norms. They challenge the French fear and disapproval of racial “communautarisme” by producing podcasts that primarily target Black people. They also challenge the traditional French antiracist discourse, grounded in a narrow idea of universalism (Suaudeau and Niang 5), by promoting an intersectional approach to antiracism that takes into account the different layers of power structures. They furthermore challenge a certain current of Black activism that conveys sexist and/or homophobic values. *Piment* and *Le Tchipe* did not only “give a voice” to young Black people in France. They gave Black people words, and a mental space to self-empower, far away from the white gaze. In 2021, Rhoda, Binetou, Célia, and Chris have published a book, whose title perfectly summarizes the mission of *Piment*, but could also be applied to other Black French podcasts. The book is called *Le Dérangeur*--“the disturber” (Collectif Piment). Through making the voices of Black French people heard, by performing a Black community and fostering Black consciousness, Black French podcasts certainly “disturb” the social and racial order in France and might even give impetus for social change.

- 1 Afro-descendant people are people of African descent, including Afro-Caribbean people, African Americans, people of any other Black diaspora and mixed-race people with one Black parent. I qualify Afro-descendant people of any nationality living in France as “Black French.” The podcasters themselves rather use “noir” (Black) or “afro” (without notable distinction of meaning), but I add “French” in order to avoid confusion with Black people of other countries.
- 2 Available on Spotify and on Apple Podcast (July 2022).
- 3 I have not found the episode, but Mélanie mentions that *Le Tchipe* has been discussed by TF1. (Tchipe season 3 episode 29 2:40)
- 4 It would take an empirical study to determinate whether this feeling of belonging extends to other Black listeners besides myself.
- 5 My translation. “Als Gemein-Begriff sind politische Kollektivbegriffe zu verstehen, die auf unterschiedliche Weise an die Bindungskräfte und an die Kohärenz eines sozialen Gefüges appellieren” (Spitta 20).
- 6 She is also co-host of the feminist podcast *Quoi de meuf*.
- 7 Unfortunately, all the episodes except one have been recently taken off the usual platforms.
- 8 The term is taken out of the African American context, but it also applies to the conscience raising efforts of these Black French podcasts, that show how historical events (like e.g., colonialism or postcolonial migration), and ideologies, like universalism, shape the racialization mechanisms in France.

Works cited

- Anderson, Benedict. *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*. Verso, 1991.
- Arndt, Susan, and Nadja Ofuately-Alazard, editors. *Wie Rassismus aus Wörtern spricht: (K)Erben des Kolonialismus im Wissensarchiv deutsche Sprache ein kritisches Nachschlagewerk*. Unrast Verl, 2011.
- Arte Radio. https://www.arteradio.com/emission/le_tchipe/1104.
- Astruc, Rémi. *Nous? L’aspiration à la communauté et les arts: postscriptum de Jean-Luc Nancy*. RKI Press, 2015.
- Bakèla, Dolores. “Podcasts: une douce révolution sonore et afro.” *Africultures*, 7 Sep. 2017, africultures.com/podcasts-douce-revolution-sonore-afro/.
- Barth, Fredrik. “Introduction.” *Ethnic Groups and Boundaries: The Social Organization of Culture Difference* [1969]. Waveland Press Inc., Kindle ed., 1998.
- Beaman, Jean. “Are French People White?: Towards an Understanding of Whiteness in Republican France.” *Identities*, vol. 26, no. 5, 2019, pp. 546-62.
- bell hooks. *Ain’t I a Woman. Black Women and Feminism*. South End Press, 1981.
- Blackshaw, Tony. *Key Concepts in Community Studies*. SAGE, 2010.
- Bottomley, Andrew J. *Sound Streams: A Cultural History of Radio-Internet Convergence*. U of Michigan P, 2020.
- Cohen, Anthony P. *Symbolic Construction of Community*. 1st Edition, Routledge, 1985.
- Collectif Piment. *Le dérangeur: petit lexique en voie de décolonisation*. Hors d’atteinte, 2020
- Crumley, Bruce. “Should France Count Its Minority Population?” *Time*, 24 Mar. 2009, content.time.com/time/world/article/0,8599,1887106,00.html.
- De Abreu, Maxime. “Une émission uniquement composée de Noirs qui donnent leur avis, c’est encore choquant pour beaucoup de gens.” <https://www.lesinrocks.com/actu/une->

[emission-avec-des-noirs-qui-donnent-leur-avis-cest-encore-choquant-rencontre-avec-les-createurs-du-tchip-132992-03-02-2018/](https://www.aaihs.org/the-long-history-of-black-womens-exclusion-in-historic-marches-in-washington/)

- Farmer, Ashley. "The Long History of Black Women's Exclusion in Historic Marches in Washington." *Black Perspectives*, 4 Jan. 2017, www.aaihs.org/the-long-history-of-black-womens-exclusion-in-historic-marches-in-washington/.
- Farmer, Ashley, Mary Philipps, Robyn Spencer, and Leela Yellesetty. "Women in the Black Panther Party." *International Socialist Review*. no. 111, Winter 2018-2019.
- Geneste, Elsa, and Silvina Testa. "Nominations et dénominations des Noirs." *Nuevo Mundo Mundos Nuevos. Nouveaux mondes mondes nouveaux-Novo Mundo Mundos Novos-New world New worlds*, Dec. 2009, journals.openedition.org/nuevomundo/58143?lang=es.
- Gordien, Ary. "Être gay en Guadeloupe: entre homophobie et préjugés raciaux." *The Conversation*, 14 Mar. 2020, theconversation.com/etre-gay-en-guadeloupe-entre-homophobie-et-prejuges-raciaux-136884.
- . *Nationalisme, race et ethnicité en Guadeloupe: Constructions identitaires ambivalentes en situation de dépendance*. Doctoral thesis, Université Paris Descartes, defended on 24 Nov. 2015.
- . "Peut-on être à la fois 'Africain' et 'Français'?" *The Conversation*, 2 Oct. 2018, theconversation.com/peut-on-etre-a-la-fois-africain-et-francais-102120.
- Hewitt, Roderick. "The Influences of Conservative Christianity, Rastafari and Dance Hall Music within Jamaica on Homophobia and Stigma against People Living with HIV and AIDS." *Alternation*, vol. 23, no. 2, 2016, pp. 169-84.
- Mbuka, Berty. "Jedes Mal aufs Neue eine schmerzende Rassismuserfahrung." *Amadeu Antonio Stiftung*, 5 Nov. 2020, www.amadeu-antonio-stiftung.de/jedes-mal-aufs-neue-eine-schmerzende-rassismuserfahrung-62975/.
- Miano, Léonora. *Habiter la frontière*. l'Arche, 2012.
- . *Afropea: utopie post-occidentale et post-raciste*. Bernard Grasset, 2020.
- Ndiaye, Pap. *La Condition noire: essai sur une minorité française*. Gallimard, 2009.
- Pliskin, Fabrice. "Fary, acteur et roi du stand-up: 'Il n'y a pas de communauté noire en France'." *L'Obs*, 26 Apr. 2020, <https://www.nouvelobs.com/culture/20200426.OBS28014/fary-acteur-et-roi-du-stand-up-il-n-y-a-pas-de-communaute-noire-en-france.html>.
- Röggla, Katharina. *Critical whiteness studies und ihre politischen Handlungsmöglichkeiten für weiße AntirassistInnen: eine Einführung*. Mandelbaum, 2012.
- Rousseau, Christine. "Alain Mabanckou: 'Existe-t-il une communauté noire en France?'" *Le Monde.fr*, 5 Feb. 2009, https://www.lemonde.fr/livres/article/2009/02/05/alain-mabanckou-existe-t-il-une-communaute-noire-en-france_1150934_3260.html.
- Seba, Kema, and Negronews. "Kemi Seba x Negronews 'Les Noirs sont moins respectés que les sodomites en France.'" *NN*, 28 Apr. 2013, negronews.fr/culture-kemi-seba-x-negronews-les-noirs-sont-moins-respectes-que-les-sodomites-en-france/.
- Soumahoro, Maboula. *Le Triangle et l'Hexagone - Réflexions sur une identité noire*. La Découverte, 2020.
- Spitta, Juliane. *Gemeinschaft jenseits von Identität?: über die paradoxe Renaissance einer politischen Idee*. Transcript, 2013.
- Suaudeau, Julien and Mame-Fatou Niang. *Universalisme*. Anamosa, 2022.
- Tönnies, Ferdinand. *Communauté et société. Catégories fondamentales de la sociologie pure*. 1887. Translated by Sylvie Mesure and Niall Bond, PUF, 2010.
- Wagener, Albin. "Le 'Wokisme' ou l'import des paniques morales." 8 Dec. 2021, *The Conversation*, theconversation.com/le-wokisme-ou-limport-des-paniques-morales-172803.

Media

- Collectif Cases Rebelles. *Case Rebelles*. Episodes 1-100, Cases Rebelles, 2010-2022, www.cases-rebelles.org/category/podcasts/.
- H A L U H A L O. *H A L U H A L O Mixtapes*-“Being White Passing/Presenting Mixed Race.” *YouTube* uploaded by Susan Dale, 10 Oct. 2020, www.youtube.com/watch?v=cKPsyOpwIGU.
- Ndaya and Néné. *Thé noir*. Episodes 1-42, 2017-2022, podcasts.apple.com/us/podcast/th%C3%A9-noir-podcast/id1439556999.
- Sylla, Binetou, Célia Potiron, Christiano Soglo, and Rhoda Tchokokam. *Piment*. 2017–2020, podcasts.apple.com/us/podcast/piment/id1304513721. Wanga, Mélanie, Kévi Donat, and François Oulac. *Le Tchip*. Afrostream, 2016, [https:// soundcloud.com/afrostream](https://soundcloud.com/afrostream). —. *Le Tchip*. Episodes 1–14. Arte Radio, 2017–2018, https://www.arteradio.com/emission/le_tchip/1104. —. *Le Tchip*. Episodes 1–29, Binge Audio, 2018–2021, www.binge.audio/podcast/letchip. —. *Le Tchip*. Episodes 30–36, Studio Majorelle, 2021, <https://podcasts.apple.com/kg/podcast/le-tchip/id1438111964>. *The Why*. @theWhyPod, linktr.ee/thewhypod.
- Zadi, Jean-Pascal, and John Wax. *Tout Simplement Noir*. Gaumont, 2020.