

**AFRICAN AND BLACK DIASPORA: AN
INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL (ROUTLEDGE)**

CALL FOR PAPERS

**Black Paris: Place, Circulation and the
Mapping of Black Experiences**

The Editors of *African and Black Diaspora: An International Journal* (Routledge) announce the call for papers on: **Black Paris: Place, Circulation and the Mapping of Black Experiences.**

In France, the convergence of black experiences in Paris, following the 1950s-1960s massive migrations from the Caribbean and Africa, generated significant social and cultural practices, which, for most, have remained unknown to French people. Rather, the national collective imagination has been marked by striking, powerful and widely broadcasted images: the special forces violently evacuating African families who occupied Saint Bernard church and asked the government for long-term visas or, conversely, the victory of the "*Black-Blanc-Beur*" soccer team in 1998. These events made black people visible but their diversity was ignored. Yet, the social and human sciences did not fully seize the complexity of such histories and trajectories. Instead, scientific and public productions were - and are - fragmented into area and disciplinary studies and tend to produce a unified and homogenizing image of these populations. Some scholars like Pascal Blanchard and al. (2001) interrogated the representations of blackness in the French culture and criticized the enduring invisibility of blacks in French history. They brought to light the names of famous ones like René Maran who were left aside the national narrative. Developing a historical and political posture, they recollected pieces of the French past. Others, like Milena Doytcheva (2011), analyzed the role of ethnicity in urban public policies thus providing a valuable understanding of the tension between universalism and multiculturalism in the French context. From the late 1990s to the early 2000s, other studies on "diversity" came out, unveiling important social processes and mechanisms, but not opening to a true analysis putting "blackness" at the center. Similarly, blackness was not explored in connection with the city.

In our post-*Black Atlantic* world exploring creolization, the cultural, social and economic connections between Africa, America or the Caribbean, it no longer seems possible to consider black Paris only in its locality or solely in relation to French history. Rather, one should consider how black populations in Western societies - notably in European societies - imagine the city in connection with multiples scales intermingling American, African, European, Asian worlds so to represent their composite cultures and identities. Following these routes (Clifford: 1997), reflecting on black Paris implies showing how this cultural and social diversity is epitomized in the "city of light".

The editors are seeking papers that examine black Paris through circulation, interaction and confrontation between people, cultures, identities and social practices. Contributors are encouraged to explore black Paris as a nexus of transcontinental cultural, identity, political and economic networks through a variety of perspectives, disciplines and fields including theoretical works, literary and cultural studies, the arts and popular culture, social and urban policies.

Papers may question the meaning of a contemporary black Paris. Considering the official absence of race in French politics versus the inevitable presence of populations defined or self-labeled as blacks in Paris, how can blackness be defined? How can such a definition include the idea of circulation so to reveal how black trajectories, histories and cultures evolve and interact in the city? Contributors may also explore the conjunction of different spaces (neighborhoods, the city, the *banlieues*). From concentration to dispersion, from neighborhoods identified as predominantly black - like Château Rouge - to the scarcity of the black presence in the first seven *arrondissements*, the point is to question how black populations occupy or modify existing public or private spaces or create "other spaces" (Michel Foucault: 1986) to represent its cultures, identities and memories. It means not focusing on the city as a delineated space bordered by the *périphérique* but rather as a mobile area, a place of interaction where various black selves are created and evolve.

Focusing on the circulation of people, cultures and social practices opens to another direction: one should locate black Paris in a wider space: the African and black diasporas. The constant travels of "*Ultramarins*", African migrants and African direct descendants back and forth to Africa, force us to consider black Paris in transnational terms. African and black diasporas also impact on the formation and existence of a black Paris.

Prospective contributors are invited to submit proposals for articles in the form of a 400 word-abstract by **July 30, 2012**. Authors of accepted abstracts notified by August 30, 2012 and authors of selected abstracts will be asked to submit articles in the final form (in English) by **December 17, 2012**. All communications regarding this special edition should be directed to the Guest Editors, Dr. Audrey Célestine, Université of Lille (Lille), audrey.celestine@gmail.com and Dr. Sarah Fila-Bakabadio, University of Cergy-Pontoise, (Paris), Sarah.Fila-Bakabadio@ehess.fr