



FULANI ARTISTS IN EUROPE

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FULANI PEOPLE

WHO ARE THEY?

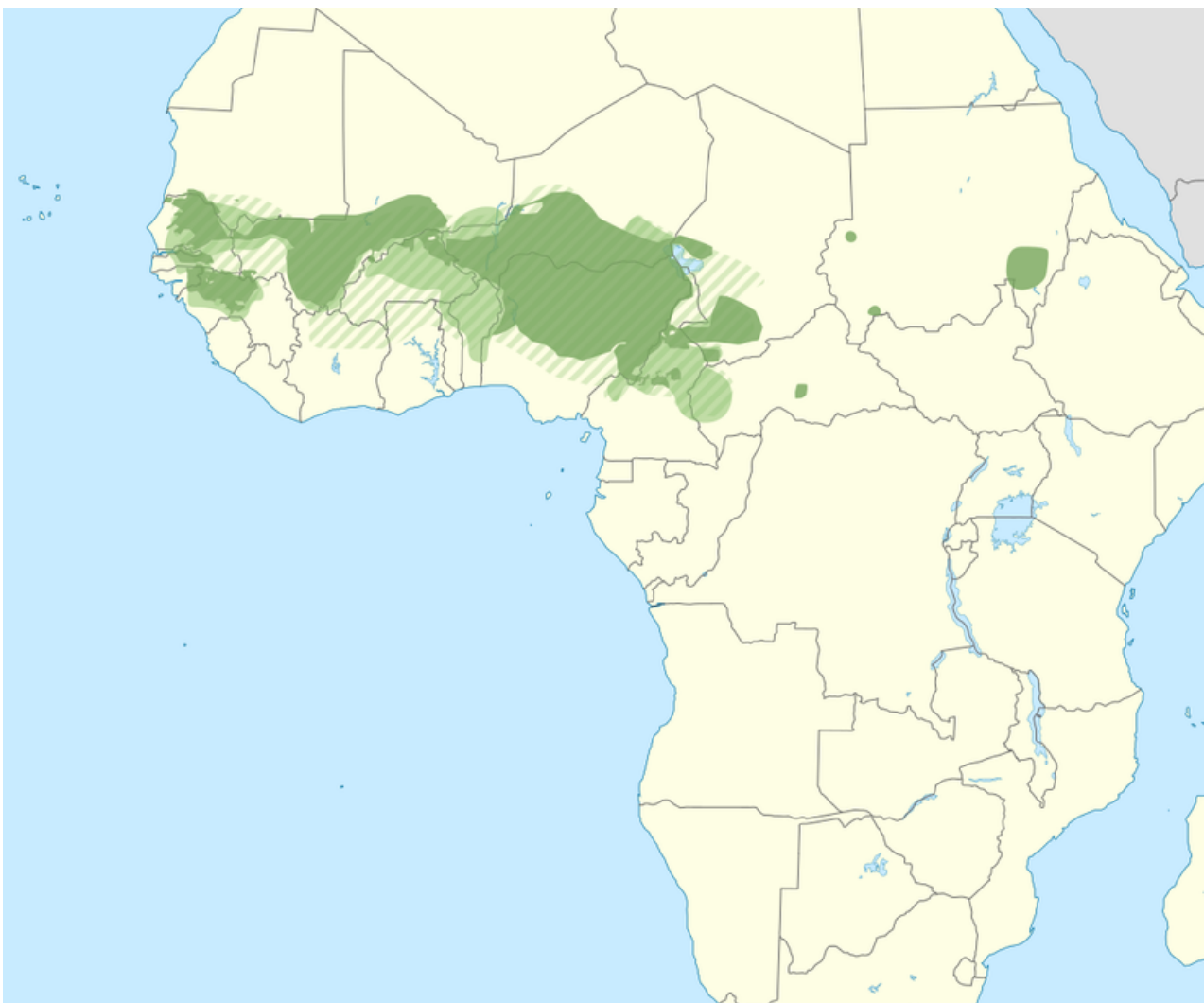
The sheer number of names for the people we will introduce in this blog reflects their spatial distribution in the past and present: Fula, Fulla, Peul, Fulbe, Pulaa, and Fulani, to name a few. The history of the Fulani is linked to pastoralism, and although only a minority of the at least 20 million people worldwide today still practice pastoralism, livestock farming remains an important part of their culture. The Fulani people of West Africa face certain constraints, such as desertification in certain regions, dispersal and miscegenation, and government programs to settle nomads. Additionally, recent military conflicts in some West African countries have also led to stigmatization of the Fulani. What makes a Fulani Fulani? Generalizing people is always a delicate task, but it seems that what unites the vast majority of Fulani today, besides their traditional self-perception as cattle herders, are language (Fulfulde), religion (Sunni Maliki Islam), history, and their code of behaviour, the Pulaaku.



GEOGRAPHICAL DISTRIBUTION

The Fulani are mainly located in West Africa and inhabit Nigeria, Guinea, Senegal, Mali, Cameroon, Niger, Mauritania, Burkina Faso, Chad, Gambia, Guinea-Bissau, Sierra Leone, Central African Republic, Ghana, and Ivory Coast. In addition, the centuries-old Islamic pilgrimage to Mecca (Hajj) led to the establishment of a smaller community in Sudan. A core problem perceived by many Fulani is the lack of a state of their own. The lack of a common citizenship is

also the reason why there are insufficient records of how many Fulani actually live outside of Africa. Of course, in the age of global migration, there are now numerous Fulani living outside their original continent. In a promising approach in 2014, Castor located the number of the largest Fulani diasporas outside of Africa in France, Belgium, Germany, Canada, the USA, Italy and the UK. 5 out of 7! Reason enough for us to deal with Fulani in Europe.





HISTORY

At this point we would like to start with the part in history that is still relevant for the Fulani today: The story of Fulani and Islam. Islam reached Central and West Africa around the 11th century. By this time, the Fulani had already formed their own identity. Unlike other peoples, the Fulani adopted Islam comparatively early. After the fall of the Songhai Empire in the 15th century, the Fulani's sphere of influence expanded considerably under ruler Askia Muhammad.

Islam played and still plays a central role in the Fulani's self-perception. With Islam is meant Sunni Islam that follows the Maliki school of law, the prevalent one in North and West Africa. Sufism, the Islamic mysticism, also plays an important regional role for the Fulani. Over the centuries, various Fulani dynasties were established in several regions: Futa Joro in Senegal, Futa Jallon in Guinea, Massina Empire and Toucouleur Empire in Mali, and the largest and longest-lasting - the Sokoto Caliphate in northern Nigeria. The beginning of British and French colonization ended all regional dominance. When the states of West Africa finally became independent in their new colonial borders in the mid-20th century, the Fulani found themselves as a minority in numerous different states. Their situation was different. Rather privileged in some states (Nigeria), the Fulani were oppressed in others (Mali, Mauritania). A condition that continues to this day.

INTRODUCTION TO OUR RESEARCH PROJECT

We are a diverse group of 4 AS students who have been studying Fulani artists in Europe. Our focus was on musicians, with the exception of Twitter and Tiktok, where we also included American painters and Fulani tiktok promoters. The topic evolved as we went along. Our research consisted of qualitative and quantitative methods. Qualitative methods included an interview with Yero Gaynaako, a Mauritanian rapper who is himself Fulani, currently living in the Netherlands. In our research, we divided the social media Facebook, Youtube, Twitter, and TikTok among us and applied mostly manual techniques (close reading, etc.) to get an overview of artist pages and Fulani activities. In the case of Twitter, we also applied the quantitative API method to obtain a meaningful dataset on Fulani topics (not artists alone). Our research also included reading academic works. Here, their lack of relevance to our concrete object of research stood out. Worth mentioning are the works of José van Santen (Fulani Identity, Citizenship and Islam in an International Context of Migration, 2014), Maimouna Barro (Trans-nationalizing the African Public Sphere: What Role for Trans-border Languages?, 2010), and Trevor Castor (Migration Mapping with Facebook, 2014). We present the results of our multi-layered work in this blog and an accompanying two-part podcast. It is important to us

that the blog and podcast are thematically aligned, but that the two are not interchangeable. (Siblings, not twins!) We deliberately chose these formats. The blog offers the possibility to present something visually (e.g. result tables, photos of the artists, screenshots), the podcast on the other hand offers the acoustic component (Fulani songs, interviews) as well as the possibility to explain contexts and results in more detail.

RESEARCH QUESTION

"Do Fulani artists in Europe express a sense of common identity? If so, what do they use for expressing their belonging (social media, organizations, language etc.)?"





INTERVIEW WITH YERO GAYNAAKO

Yero Gaynaako is a human rights defender from Mauritania. He is an artist, activist, public speaker, researcher and festival director.

You make videos on Facebook where you talk Peul. And you get a lot of comments and discussions under them. I couldn't understand them, but what do you talk about in the videos?

Well, I talk about the cast problems sometimes. Because we have cast problems, I told you about this. A problem within the Peul. Sometimes, when you talk about a subject, it's important to speak the language of the person, so that they can understand. Because when you use the more intellectual French language, not everyone understands. The people who need the message the most don't understand any other language. So that's why. We talk about subjects, maybe we prepare it in radios or in television, it doesn't pass me. And then it goes on Facebook, it is downloaded, it goes on WhatsApp. That is that, for example, you make a video now, for example, someone calls me ... he saw my video of 2016 where there is a video of 2020. The message got there now. You know everything about social topics, sometimes political topics, sometimes a little bit Hip-Hop topics.

In Europe, do you have a Mauritanian community too?

Yes, there is a Mauritanian community, but there is mixing with the Fulani community from Senegal. C'est comme ça. The Chinese and Turkish people are together, that is not a problem. We have Mauritanians here, but it is not like in France.

But as you are looking for a community in Europe, are you looking for Fulani or is the origin not important?

I am in organizations of people as I said. I found Fulani from Sierra Leone. There are Fulani in Sierra Leone. I never thought we were so close. It's so clear. It's the same thing. Closer than with the Fulani in Guinea. With the Fulani of Sierra Leone it is even closer than Guinea. Guinea is closer to Mauritania and Sierra Leone is far away but we and Sierra Leone get along more normally.

And they have schools, a foundation, they do cultural activities. So I am with Fulani from Sierra Leone, Burkina, Guinea, Senegal, Mauritania. And then ... I am also with Dutch people.

But the languages are different, right?

Yes, but we understand each other (on a medium level).

Is it a problem for you to talk with a Peul from Niger?

No, it is one language. For example, the dialects in Africa are languages. They carry all the sciences. But afterwards, when you live with people for centuries, there are bound to be influences. And the influences, for example, the Peuls in Niger, they live with the Hausa, they live with the Yoruba. And we, for example, in Mauritania, live with the Berbers, with the Wolof, with the Soninke. The Fulani in Guinea live with the

Malinke, with the Sousou. You see, it's like that everywhere in Africa. In Cameroon, you have Peuls, but there are inevitably changes. But then you can always understand. If you are very good in your mother tongue, you have learned a bit of the language you know. You'll get along with my neighbors, the Sierra

Leoneans, for example. Zero effort, it's crazy. And with the Fulani in Mauritania and Senegal, it's the same thing. In Mali, you have Massina, Fouta Djallon, and in Guinea, we can understand each other as well. In Niger, it will be a little more complicated. But I know Fulani people from Niger and we can understand each other. But it is a little more complicated.

But it is the same for Nigeria?

Yes, I know Nigerian Fulani Youtubers, I understand them. Ghanaian Youtubers and TikTokers, Fulani. I understand them. In fact, it is a scattered force, nomads, they are everywhere. This is also a big problem in Africa. Because you find countries like Cameroon where you find almost 300 languages, dialects etc. But the Fulani, I think, are the most scattered people in Africa. You have, for example, the Hausa or the Yoruba as the most numerous people. The Arabs are more numerous as well, but only in three countries. But Fulani are in more than 18, 19 countries. That means, if we had the United States of Africa, we can choose the Fulani for this. Because they are everywhere.

Do you travel to France a lot to connect with the people there?

Yes. for instance on November 19, I'll be there for a conference. And I have been there before. I go there for meetings. I also go to Belgium. So we have a community. We have brothers, cousins, family, friends. My little brother is in Paris, my cousins are in Paris. The little sisters are in Canada.





Do you have a specific target audience for your songs?

I always try to give something. In Wullaango Djamma, I am talking about the situation of the young ones in Mauritania nowadays. What happens to them. [...] The young ones find the songs interesting because it is about them. Sometimes, I do different things with specific targets. When I talk about hip hop and the younger ones, the older ones cannot understand the message. The way I have to speak to the boys or to speak to the old people is always different. Sometimes you can find the middle of both, the juste milieu.

Concerning your target audience: Do you want to reach all Mauritians or only Fulani?

It depends on the song and the fixed objective. For example, in "Allegorie de la caserne" I wanted to reach the French speaking people in Mali... because many people in Africa were not aware about what is happening in Mauritania. So, If I write the message in French, it allows me to reach people in Mali, Burkina, Senegal, Morocco and France. But there, some Peul came and said: Hey, you rap in French. I have heard you. Can you rap in Pulaar as well?

It depends on the target audience and the sense of the song.



DISCURSIVE REPRESENTATION OF FULANI ARTISTS ON TWITTER

Introduction

Nijenhuis (2014) argues that the media have become powerful actors as their reports often influence public opinion and have the potential to ameliorate or exacerbate conflicts. Media and social media seem to have symbiosis and causal relations where both feed each other. Social media can help mobilize people around a common purpose. This changed the scope of revolutions as well as wider activities to support citizen engagement and oversight including elections monitoring, constitution-making process, and human rights and crisis reporting (Meier as cited in Lamoreaux & Sureau, 2019). Social media (SMS, Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Whatsapp) and crowdsourcing technologies facilitate participatory and discursive practices of producing evidence and shaping the official narrative by enabling people to engage in different representations of reality (Lamoreaux & Sureau, 2019). Interactive platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, and Ushahidi enable the public to define the sense of open space for dialogue rather than in

the Habermasian sense of the public sphere as rational communication for finding consensus (Bernal, 2014; Okolloh, 2019). Depending on the platform, people can participate in varying degrees and forms. Content is structured by both the technology used to collect and represent information, and by what people do with the data. As social media has become such a powerful actor and thus, can be considered useful for monitoring how Fulani express their identity on this platform, we have chosen to include Twitter for this part of our research. Artists can play a central role in periods of uncertainty and volatility, both as commentators of events and as inspirators for change (Grabska & Horst, 2022). There are 37,293 tweets (approximately four hundred thousand words) posted on Twitter in English and French regarding Fulani from January 2016 to November 2022. Most of the comments, which consist of 30% of Tweets are dominated with words with quite negative tones like #terrorist

#bokoharam #taliban #kill #attack #alshabab. This study explores another discursive representation of Fulani through keywords #artist #art #music and #hiphop from public discussion on Twitter which is still largely untapped.

Methods

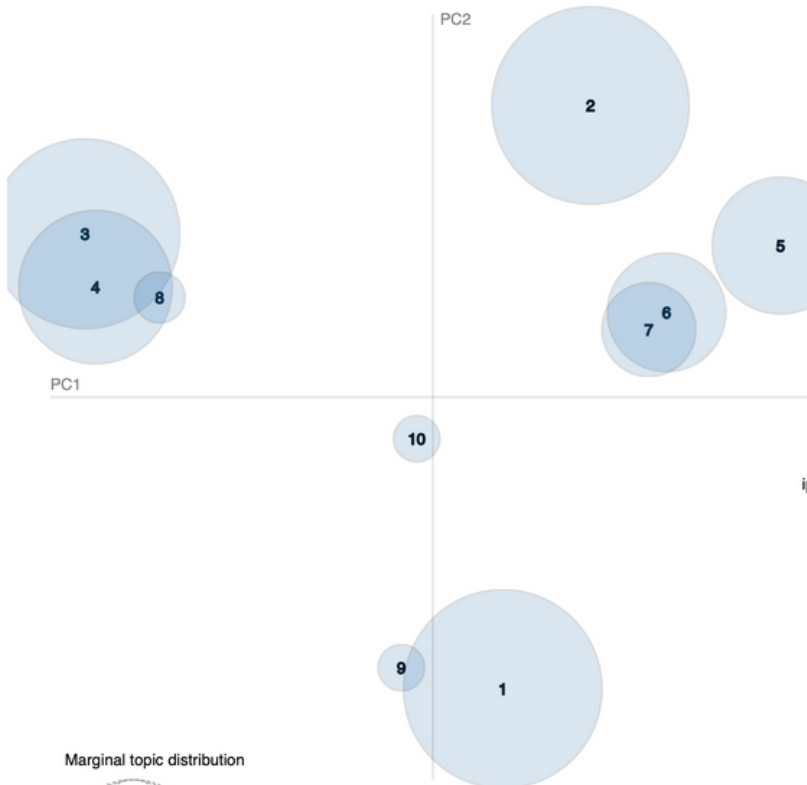
The data of this study is based on a corpus of online discussions about Fulani artists from European Twitter user perspectives. For the process of text mining to collect large textual data from Twitter, we are developing an algorithmic code by following the hashtag, symbol #. A hashtag works as index keywords or topics on Twitter. This function was created on Twitter and allows people to easily follow topics they are interested in. In addition, People use the hashtag symbol (#) before a relevant keyword or phrase in their Tweet to categorize those Tweets and help them show more easily in Twitter searches. Social media (and Twitter among those media) have become an easy-to-access source of information for researchers trying to map discussions, patterns of people's behaviour and distributions of ideas through geography and networks (Gelfgren, 2016). Social media data is available for download through an API (Application Programming Interface). API is an interface which defines which kind and how much data we can download. In this study, geolocation is used to filter that the Tweet will be scrapped is only from the European user accounts. Many APIs allow accessing only part of

the data available on the website, like Twitter API. For this purpose, we use the latent Dirichlet allocation (LDA) method. LDA is a form of topic modelling that seeks to automatically discover thematically coherent 'topics' within a large collection of texts. Topics are extracted based on word co-occurrence. Once a collection of texts has been loaded into the computer, software like Jupyter Notebook searches for patterns of words within individual texts. Where a group of words tend to co-occur within the same text with a degree of regularity, it is assumed there to be a relationship between those words (Brookes & McEnery, 2019). The analysis is divided into two parts. The first part reports the results of phase 1 of the analysis, outlining the 20 most characteristic words of each topic before briefly describing our interpretation of each topic based on our inspection of these lists of words. The latter half of this section then reports the results of phase 2, in which we qualitatively examined the texts assigned to each topic to either confirm or revise our initial interpretations from phase 1.

Do you want to know more about the method used for our Twitter analysis? Then you shouldn't miss the interview with our Twitter expert Muzzar in the second episode of the podcast.

FINDINGS

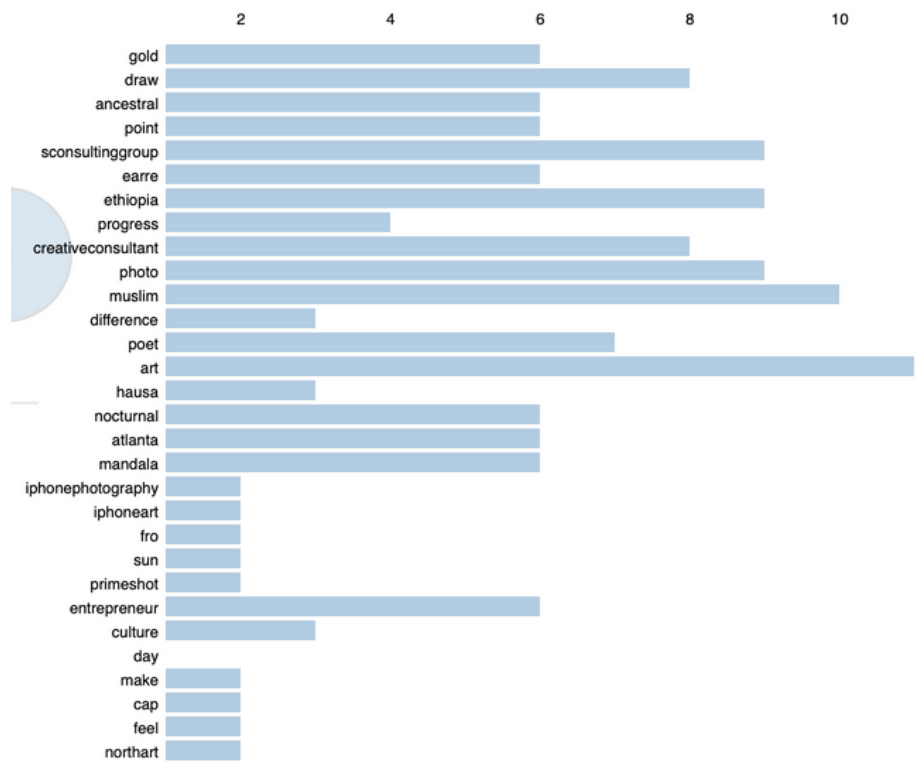
Intertopic Distance Map (via multidimensional scaling)



Marginal topic distribution



Top-30 Most Salient Terms ⁽¹⁾



Overall term frequency

Estimated term frequency within the selected topic

1. saliency(term w) = frequency(w) * [sum_t p(t | w) * log(p(t | w)/p(t))] for topics t; see Chuang et. al (2012)

2. relevance(term w | topic t) = λ * p(w | t) + (1 - λ) * p(w | t)/p(w); see Sievert & Shirley (2014)

Phase 1

Topic	Wordlist	Interpretation of Comments
1	<p>art, difference, culture, hula, mendress, fashion, service, affordable, arewa, order, dress, hausafulani, hausa, hausawedding, man, quality, northart, feel, cap, make</p>	<p>The traditional cap (hula) worn during a wedding ceremony by the Hausa-Fulani ethnic group</p>
2	<p>Ethiopia, photo, muslim, sconsultinggroup, entrepreneur</p>	<p>Luqmon Abdus-Salaam, a content creator about Fulani, labels himself as Afro Muslim and Afrofuturistic. The output of his art is a poem about the Fulani which is published through his personal website at wiserservant.tumblr.com and photos on his Instagram account @b_treel.</p>
3	<p>draw, art, progress, nocturnal, Atlanta, mandala, gold, ancestral, point, earre</p>	<p>Jessica Scott-Felder is a visual and performance artist from Atlanta, Georgia. She is an Assistant Professor of Studio Art and teaches Drawing, Design, Figure Drawing, Painting, Printmaking and Senior Capstone in the Department of Art and Art History at Wofford College located in Spartanburg, South Carolina.</p> <p>Jessica's latest performance art piece, Adornment was featured in the group exhibition "Africa Forecast," at the Spelman College Museum of Fine Art in Atlanta and featured in the 2017 edition of the Emergency Index, a nationally distributed performance art catalog.</p>

Phase 1

**Topic Wordlist Interpretation of
Comments**

<p>3</p>	<p>draw, art, progress, nocturnal, Atlanta, mandala, gold, ancestral, point, earre</p>	<p>She was 2017 featured visiting artist at Ithaca College in New York where she presented her artistic research on “Black Matter”, an installation based on Black Hole physics, American folklore, Afrofuturism, and imagination. Her drawings are not only focused on Fulani but several of his paintings have been inspired by Fulani culture, like earring.</p>
<p>4</p>	<p>Ethiopia, photo, muslim, sconsultinggroup, entrepreneur</p>	<p>Related to the pictures created by Luqmon Abdus-Salaam on his Instagram account.</p>
<p>5</p>	<p>love, Africa, fashion, art, culture, Instagram, independence, food, week, africanart, Cameroon, naija, genius, onelove, finding africa, instagood, nature, photography, melanin, artwork, acrylicpainte, 2, African, music, man, arte, travel, draw, beautiful, artist</p>	<p>Michael J. Parham, a painter from the United States who gives more attention to his drawing on Fulani related themes.</p> <p>Hand-crafted placemat from raffia which was created by local Fulani artisan in Northern Nigeria.</p> <p>A picture of a woman wearing a Fulani traditional dress and headscarf.</p> <p>NFT Showroom, a digital art marketplace built on the Hive blockchain, which specialize to promote and sell the photo, painting, sketch etc created by or related to African American and African.</p>

Phase 2

A keyword is a word whose frequency in a corpus is unusually high in comparison with some norm (Scott, 1996). Keywords and wordlists reveal recurrent themes, topics, and linguistic representations in a corpus. In this study, keyword analysis and concordance programs are carried out using the LDA model as illustrated in picture 1. In the phase 1 table, there are five topics or themes based on keywords co-occurrence of Fulani artist and their work art. The first 20 keywords in the order of frequency and significance in the Topic 1 are art, difference, culture, hula, mendress, fashion, service, affordable, arewa, order, dress, hausafulani, hausa, hausawedding, man, quality, northart, feel, cap, make. The public discussion on Twitter related to those keywords of Topic 1 is about the traditional cap (hula) worn during a wedding ceremony by the Hausa-Fulani ethnic group. Hula or kube cap is composed of 10 pieces of plain-woven cotton (The British Museum, 2022). The outer layer of the cap is solidly embroidered. The body of the cap is decorated in three horizontal bands the central band is divided into repeating blocks: contains writing (dyed yellow, blue and red cotton); an image of a mosque (dyed green, blue, red and yellow cotton); and building (possibly a mosque) set against a night sky (dyed blue and red cotton). The central band is flanked by two bands of alternating orange and green lozenges in dyed cotton. The top of the cap is decorated with a band of repeating blocks as can be found on the body of the cap. This band borders a large white embroidered

circle. The top of the cap is finished by a 'knot.' The cap is lined with eight pieces of machine-woven cotton dyed blue. In topic 2, there are 5 keywords in the order of frequency and significance namely, Ethiopia, photo, muslim, sconsultinggroup, entrepreneur. These keywords are identified in the discussion about Luqmon Abdus-Salaam. For many European Twitter users knew Luqmon Abdus-Salaam as a Fulani artist through his poem. Although he is Ethiopian and does not have Fulani descent. He is more of a content creator about Fulani than an artist. Luqmon Abdus-Salaam even labels his art as Afromuslim and Afrofuturistic. The output of his art is a poem about the Fulani, most of it published through his personal website at wiservant.tumblr.com and photos on his Instagram account @b_tree1. The 10 keywords in the order of frequency and significance in the Topic 3 are draw, art, progress, nocturnal, Atlanta, mandala, gold, ancestral, point, earre.

A traditional Fulani cap





The public discussion on Twitter related to those keywords of Topic 3 is about Jessica Scott-Felder. She is a visual and performance artist from Atlanta, Georgia, United States of America with Fulani descent from her mother. At this moment she is an assistant professor of studio art and teaches drawing, design, figure drawing, painting, printmaking and a senior capstone in the Department of Art and Art History at Wofford College located in Spartanburg, South Carolina, US. Jessica's latest performance art piece, Adornment was featured in the group exhibition "Africa Forecast," at the Spelman College Museum of Fine Art in Atlanta and featured in the 2017 edition of the Emergency Index, a nationally distributed performance art catalogue.

She was a 2017 featured visiting artist at Ithaca College in New York where she presented her artistic research on "Black Matter", an installation based on Black Hole physics, American folklore, Afrofuturism, and imagination. Her drawings are not only focused on Fulani but several of her paintings has been inspired by Fulani material culture. Her drawing about Fulani earrings contributes to making herself widely known by netizens (nickname for Twitter user) as a Fulani diaspora artist. The 5 keywords in the order of frequency and significance in the Topic 4 are iphonestography, fro, iphoneart, Ethiopia, creativeconsultant. The meaning of the list of keywords which emerges in Topic 4 is identified to link with the discussion about

Luqmon Abdus-Salaam. So, topic 2 and topic 4 have close correspondences. Even though topic 4 is more focused on his work art in form of digital pictures, which he published on his Twitter and Instagram accounts. His picture is provocative which shows Fulani's struggles. In addition, he purposely created that picture which can be downloaded freely by his viewers to be used as mobile phone wallpaper. Meanwhile, love, Africa, fashion, art, culture, Instagram, independence, food, week, africanart, Cameroon, naija, genius, onelove, findingafrica, instagood, nature, photography, melanin, artwork, acrylicpainte, 2, African, music, man, arte, travel, draw, beautiful, artist, emerges as keywords for the Topic 5. Unlike the last four topics which can be interpreted as a single theme, this Topic 5 has several meanings. The group of words that consist of Africa, art, culture, independence, instagood, draw and acrylicpainte are identified to be related with the discussion of Michael J. Parham,

a painter from the United States who give more attention to his drawing on Fulani-related themes. The word list of nature, naija and artwork is identified in the discussion of a hand-crafted placemat from raffia created by a local Fulani artisan in Northern Nigeria that was first published on Twitter by the account @mygidan. Furthermore, the word list of Cameroon, love, findingafrica, onelove, independence, week, and beautiful are identified to have high co-occurrence while discussing about a picture of a woman wearing a Fulani traditional dress and headscarf. This picture was first published on the Twitter of @Finding_Africa in 2017. This account describes itself as a digital page that was created to share things that show 'beauty' about Africa. This account mention that the image of the Fulani girl is a counter-narrative Tweet to the negative digital labelling on social media which is always profound while discussing Fulani in Nigeria.

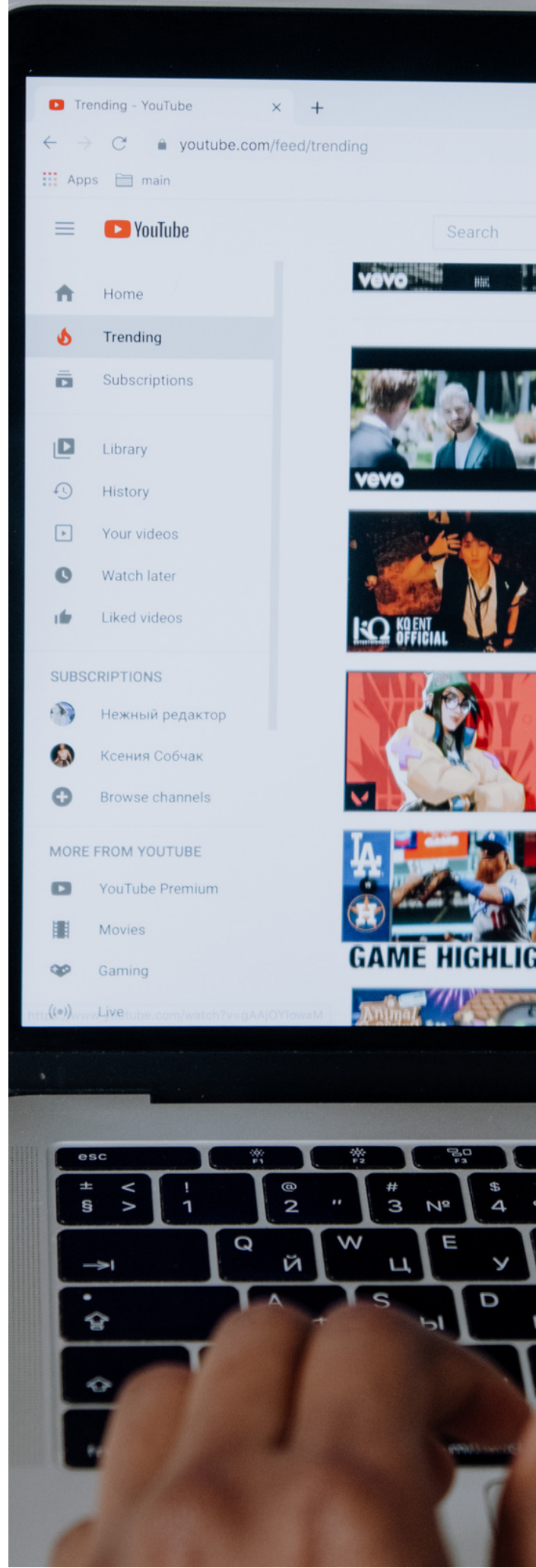




YOUTUBE RESULTS

Youtube is a platform where people can upload videos containing audio and visuals, and it is used throughout the entire world. On Youtube, musicians upload their music for others to find and consume their works. The platform is used by high level performing artists such as Burna Boy and by smaller creators such as Yero Gaynaako. However, people search after music or videos in which they can relate with, or to discover something new. As for this research we were focusing on musicians, Youtube is undeniably the platform for us to use when researching the Fulani artists. Furthermore, Youtube provides us with the information on how the audience is receiving it by looking at the comments to see how they receive the music or visuals the artists are putting out. Therefore, we looked at Fulani musicians on Youtube, in particular Yero Gaynaako.

Sometimes you have to hear in order to see. In the second episode of our podcast, Idil explains in detail her findings in the Youtube research.





Yero Gaynaako Music video for Kiwaal where you can see the person wearing a the traditional Hula hat.

Yero Gaynaako

When going on Youtube, you can find the Fulani musicians songs, music videos and their engagements. The Fulani artists often speak more than one language due to the context of them living amongst other ethnic groups, or speaking a colonial language, such as French. Therefore, when looking into the language aspects of their music, we can see different audiences being targeted. As with Yero Gaynaako, he speaks Fulani, French and Wolof, but he tends to rap either in French or Pular, his native tongue.

The songs where he does rap in French such as in Anti Negre 2, he raps about the issues regarding Black people in Mauritania. Gaynaako had many songs where he discussed the oppression of the Black people in his native country, not only regarding the Fulani people but also other ethnic groups such as Soninke and Wolof. An interesting observation found from analysing Youtube was how artists from Mauritania often focused on their Blackness while this was not identified with the Fulanis from other countries.

@nubiandeggyteediallo4873 3 years ago

TROP COOL D'ÊTRE PEULH HAMDOUNILAH VIVE AUX PEULH DU MONDE.CONAKRY BY NIGHT

👍 1 🗨️ Reply

@ibrahimadjigo8362 3 years ago

Machaallah mon la fierté de la jeunesse panafricaine peulh ❤️👏MR YO Allahou renn wad soutouro inchallah

👍 2 🗨️ Reply

@thiernoalioudiallo8686 3 years ago

Mes félicitations. C'est un homme à encourager avec énergie et engagement car il magnifie notre langue. Je suis peul de la Guinée. Dès lors que quelqu'un est peul quel que soit son pays. Il est une partie de moi. Merci Poulou Dimo Yo Geno Maidou Gandal, Famou et Balde. Dian Hiri Maa.

👍 1 🗨️ 🇸🇳 Reply

Commen section of Yero Gaynaako's music video Kiwaal, where people are showing they are proud to be Fulani and where they are from.

Moreover, Gaynaako would often use hashtags under his videos such as #Mauritanie, #Peul or #Noir, which are indicators to his songs and also his identity. In the song Kiwaal, Gaynaako uses the hashtags #Pulaar and #Mauritanie in the description boxes. Furthermore, in the video it seems as Yero is using a traditional Fulani hat, and the woman in the video is using traditional clothing. Moreover, under this video the comment section had commenters expressing how proud they are to be Fulani, and stating which country they are from. These types of comments occur under some of his other videos as well but mostly

to the ones where he raps in Pular. This phenomena can be seen under other Fulani artists comment sections as well, such as Baba Maal and Sa Roi Majeste Hems, who both tend to sing in their native tongues. While watching an interview of the famous Fulani singer Baba Maal on Youtube, he was asked why he sings in Pular, and he answered by saying it is a language that creates unity as it is a language that links people from Nigeria to Cameroon. On Youtube you can find compilation videos of Fulanis all over the world dancing to Babab Maals songs while showing their cultural attire and expressing their 'Fulaniness'.

#Pulaar #Mauritanie #kiwal

Yero Gaynaako
Yero gaynaako: Kiwal



Yero Gaynaako

3.69K subscribers

Subscribe

17,015 views 12 Aug 2019

#kiwal extrait de #Yerotrip disponible sur toutes les plateformes de téléchargements legales..

#Mauritanie #Pulaar

The description box of Gaynaako's Kiwaal music video showing the hashtags under the video.

To conclude, Youtube is a platform where you can see the visuals and music of the artists, which gives a greater insight about the Fulani artists identities. As seen some artists such as the Mauritians often discuss Blackness in their songs and visuals when using this platform compared to other Fulani artists with different nationalities. On the platform you can find comments to see how the viewers react to their different videos, and we can identify who of the listeners are Fulani and which nationality

they have since they often give this information when commenting. This information can show us how Fulani artist who are in Europe are reaching out to Fulanis from other countries in and outside of Africa. Their art is not exclusive to the regions they reside in, but follow the transnational behaviour of the Fulani people. Finally, it shows us how Fulanis do share a common sense of identity, and that they relate and understand Fulani artists, such as Gaynaako regardless of not sharing a nationality.



Lyrics from Gaynaako's song Beyat showing his identity with Blackness



FACEBOOK RESULTS

Facebook is still the most important social media in West Africa. Therefore, it was only natural to take a closer look on it for elaborating Fulani content. For the research, we chose three possible angles on Facebook. First: The FB presence of selected Fulani artists living in Europe. It was not that we had the option to pick up randomly a few out of hundreds. In fact, it is difficult to estimate how many artists with Fulani background do actually live in Europe. We looked at the artist pages of the Mauritanian rap duo Diam Min Tekky (Belgium) as well as the Mauritanian rapper Yero Gaynaako (Netherlands). We also investigated the FB presence of the Senegalese singer Omar Ka (Netherlands). The selection of the artists was not based on a specific system. It was only important that the artists have a certain reach, that we include different countries of origin and living and there is meaningful content to analyse. The second angle were Facebook groups related to Fulani. We joined several FB groups and analyzed the content of the postings. As a third angle, we followed selected Fulani media on FB. As a third angle, we followed selected Fulani media on Facebook such as X and Y.



Diam Min Tekky (23,000 likes)

Diam Min Tekky is a Mauritanian rap duo that has been living in exile in Belgium for several years. They rap mainly in French, but have also released songs in Fulfulbe. They are active on Facebook, but thematically focus less on international Fulani issues than events in Mauritania. There is an overlap here, however: For example, a few weeks ago they published a documentary on Youtube about the displacement of parts of Mauritania's black population (including Fulani) during the 1989-1991 Senegal-Mauritania border conflict, and the comments under their videos also have a Mauritanian focus. At the same time, however, they support the Senegalese Fulani artist ILAM and have been nominated for the transnational Fulani Awards

Omar Ka (638 Followers)

Omar Ka is a Senegalese musician currently living in the Netherlands. He is moderately active on Facebook on the page "Omar Ka & Fula Band" and posts in English. His posts are mostly live videos in which he presents his songs (exclusively in the Fulfulbe language). Omar Ka does not express himself politically and actually addresses little to no of his Fulani identity publicly. He establishes his connection to the culture through language. One exception is an interview with Radio Nederlands, in which he talks about growing up in Senegal (Dakar) and his Fulani background. In addition, he says that the music he makes is actually a mixture of everything (incl. Western influences) and not purely Fulani music, which he considers as Blues: "In the end, it is all African music. That's what I play to make a living."



Yero Gaynaako (34.267 followers)

Yero Gaynaako is a music artist and activist, very active on Facebook, who comes from Mauritania and currently lives in the Netherlands. Yero often expresses himself politically, both on issues in Mauritania and issues related to Fulani. For example, he publicly addressed the deportations of black people (including Fulani) during the 1989-1991 Senegal-Mauritania border conflict. Yero has previously released songs in French and Fulfulbe (e.g. Wullaango Jamma). Just recently, numerous Fulfulbe songs have been released. He also refers to the Fulani culture in videos through clothing and language. In addition, he is in contact with Fulani organizations (e.g. Salon culture et arts Peul) and performs there together with other Fulani artists. In addition to his published music, he posts articles publicly addressing Fulani-related issues, such as supporting Mauritanian Fulani rapper Aviser. He also supports the Mauritanian initiative OLAN (Organisation de l'officialisation des langues nationales), which seeks recognition for the Mauritanian minority languages Fulfulbe, Soninké and Wolof. In general, Yero shows interest in both Mauritania and transnational Fulani activities.



FACEBOOK MEDIA

ful3e_fof (110,000 likes)

ful3e_fof is a not quite attributable Facebook page that posts exclusively on Fulfulbe, often taking posts from Fulani media. The page is very active and sometimes features music. Yero Gaynaako's song Wullaango Jamma has also been shared there. Due to the high level of activity and reach, content can thus be disseminated to a Fulfulbe-speaking target group in a targeted manner.

Tabital Pulaaku

It is remarkable that the largest Fulani organization existing, Tabital Pulaaku, does not have a unified Facebook presence. Although various regional offshoots exist, such as Tabital Pulaaku Paris (10,000), even these are only moderately active. Various groups on Facebook bearing the organization's name sometimes reach up to 1.7 million members, but have no connection to the organization and generally no admin.

Fulani News Media (149,000)

Fulani News Media is an English language media based in The Gambia. It is unmatched in language and scale. According to its Facebook self-disclosure, it is "the premiere African news site with focus on Fulanis and West Africa." The site is very active, with several articles posted daily. The focus of the medium is on all kinds of Fulani people (athletes, politicians, musicians) and political issues. The site also reports on Tabital Pulaaku, positively. Although no posts on European Fulani artists could be found in recent months, Fulani News Media also focuses on Fulani musicians in the diaspora, e.g. the US-Americans Akon and Davido. Sites like Fulani News Media make the impression of being important in creating a common Fulani identity.

Fulbe Africa (13,000 likes)



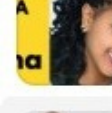



Fulbe Africa is an English-language media based in The Gambia. Regular postings deal with political or cultural conferences as well as the organization of an annual Fulani festival (International Fulbe Cultural Festival), from which musicians from different countries are invited. It can be assumed that festivals like this contribute to the creation of a common identity.

FULANI GROUPS

There are numerous Fulani-related groups on Facebook. The following groups represent only a small selection, but at the same time show the existing diversity of groups in topic and organization. The aforementioned Tabital Pulaagu group (1.7 million members), for example, is not controlled centrally by admins and is mainly concerned with posting selfies of its members. The group Fulbe Mali (244,000) has a similar structure and content. Even without political content, these groups seem to contribute to the creation of a collective identity. Their members can thus see themselves as part of a larger community. The Fulbe Worldwide Community group (2000) also has no admin, but the content shared is more diverse. Partly media reports from Fulani media or topics related to Fulani are shared, partly also Fulani music. The group fulbe diaspora (10,500) is also not controlled by an admin, but its content focuses primarily on music. Songs by the rap duo Diam Min Tekky were also shared there.

In the overall evaluation of the groups, it is noticeable that they exhibit a high degree of heterogeneity in structure and content. In parts, however, they are used to support Fulani artists (also from Europe).

Groups you've joined

-  **Tabital Pulaagu**
Last active 4 hours ago
-  **FULBE AFRICA**
Last active a day ago
-  **Group fulbe diaspora**
Last active 13 hours ago
-  **Fulbe Worldwide Community**
Last active 4 hours ago
-  **fulbe Sénégal**
Last active 6 hours ago
-  **ZONE FULBE**
Last active 5 weeks ago
-  **NEGROS MAURITANIENS [PEULHS, SONINKE ET...**
Last active a year ago
-  **TABITAL PULAAKU**
Last active a year ago
-  **Zone Fulbe Daura**
Last active 2 hours ago
-  **Finatawa Fulbè Adouna**
Last active 2 hours ago
-  **FULANI FOR EVER**
Last active 21 hours ago
-  **«_FulBè MaUritAnle_»**
Last active 4 weeks ago
-  **MRشبابMR وبناتMR موريتانياMR**
Last active 8 minutes ago
-  **English Community in Mauritania**
Last active 17 hours ago
-  **FULBÉ MALI**
Last active 14 hours ago



RESULTS

TikTok has become a very popular social media platform among young people in the past few years. On this platform, one is able to share and post videos on a global scale. Besides that these videos are being used for entertainment, one is also able to share information. To elaborate on this, TikTok is useful for businesses to advertise and thus, reach a bigger consumers' market. In some other cases, this platform can be crucial to raise awareness of issues, and hence, political activism. Considering its multiple uses of information through videos and our research question to explore Fulani identity, it is of importance to include TikTok in our social media research. Therefore, in this part of our blog, we will investigate how Fulani artists express a common identity on TikTok and share our findings. As mentioned previously, it is difficult to estimate how many artists with Fulani background do actually live in Europe and in addition to this, not every artist that we have discussed previously has a tiktok account. Based on hashtags, such as #fulanitok, we aimed to discover how young people share fulani music or their Fulani identity on TikTok.

FXLNI

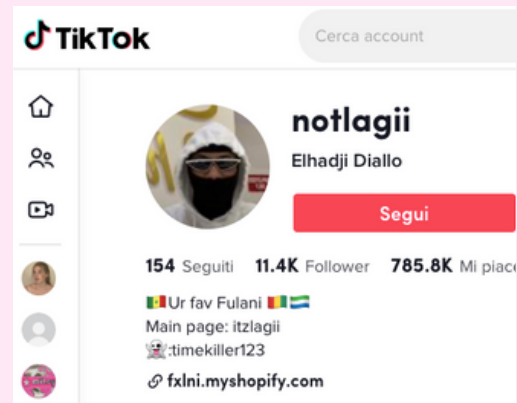
ELHADJI DIALLO

A Fulani Tiktokker and
founder of 'FXLNI' from Senegal

While researching TikTok and using the hashtags of #Fulani, #FulaniTiktok, #Peul, we were able to find a young Fulani tiktokker named Elhadji Diallo. He was born in Senegal and his parents are originally from Mauritania and Guinea. Besides posting videos of Fulani vlogs, he has found his own brand called "FXLNI", in which he sells clothes, with the slogan "Diversity is a must". In one of his videos, he explains the creation of his brand, shares the link of his webshop in his bio on Tiktok and its correlation to the Fulani identity.

https://www.tiktok.com/@notlagii/video/7159653626657508650?is_from_webapp=1&sender_device=pc&web_id=7175913452312036869

One can notice that Elhadji Diallo also emphasises the important role of the Fulani language. He announces in one of his videos that he created a group chat for Fulani speakers and people with Fulani heritage, who would like to learn the language, to join the group. It seems that language is an important key aspect to expressing a sense of common identity for the Fulani.



Thus, to answer our research question: "Do Fulani artists in Europe express a sense of common identity? If so, what do they use for expressing their belonging (social media, organizations, language etc.)?", it can be argued that in the case of TikTok, people are able to express their Fulani identity through these videos on their language and using hashtags to reach a broader audience.

Despite Elhadji Diallo is not an artist and is suspected not to be from Europe. He is able to target the right people for his content on Fulani. Furthermore he is able to unite Fulani people on a global level and create an online Fulani community. Tiktok also allows him to promote his Fulani identity through his clothing brand and promoting his language group.

Conclusion

At the beginning of this project, we as a group asked ourselves whether Fulani artists in Europe express a common identity as members of the Fulani community and, if so, how they do so.

We were able to determine that there are many ways to express this belonging. We identified the Fulani language, Fulfulde, as the most crucial medium. Fulfulde seems to us to be the most important transnational element of a Fulani identity, as it is understood across countries. We have focused primarily on musicians who work with language. Thus, artists like Yero Gaynaako or Omar Ka record all or some of their songs in Fulfulde. In Yero's case, statement videos on Facebook are added in Fulfulde. We identified clothing (e.g., the Hula cap), the Pulaaku (code of conduct), shared Islamic history, and Fulani music as other elements of a common Fulani identity. It is important to emphasize that for all their commonalities, Fulani face different circumstances in different African countries. While there may be inter-ethnic conflicts with Fulani in Mali, Nigeria and Burkina Faso, skin color is usually insignificant - but not so in Mauritania, where the conflict with the lighter-skinned Arabs is also about skin color. Some Fulani artists are highly politicized, while others do not address political issues at all, but still contribute to a Fulani identity through the use of the Fulfulde, for example.

We found that through social media, Fulani artists express their identity to varying degrees. In doing so, they sometimes experience support from Fulani organizations (e.g., Tabital Pulaaku, Fulbe Africa) that organize Fulani concerts and events. Fulani media (such as Fulani News Media) contribute significantly to the creation of a Fulani identity and disseminate artists' content.



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Sources of the Pictures

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Painting: Fine Art America
Yero: Tracklib

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