

# Contents

<i>Illustrations</i>	xi
<i>Tables</i>	xiii
<i>Acknowledgments</i>	xv
Introduction	3
Background to the Study	3
Beyond Ethnicity: <i>Brassage Sahélien</i>	8
Niger: Postcolonial Developments	11
The Period of the 1990s	11
Enactment of Identity in the Urban Landscape	14
From <i>Makaranta/Madarasa</i> Literacy to the Quest for Material Basis of Empowerment	17
The Place of Biography	21
Outline of the Book	26

## Part 1: Women, Education, and Epistemological Traditions

Chapter 1: When <i>Kuble</i> (Seclusion) Literacy Invades the Electronic Space: Malama A'ishatu Hamani Zarmakoy Dancandu and the Politics of Knowledge	33
Introduction	33
Gendered Spaces: Between Indigenous Tradition and French Colonialism	36
Poetry, Piety, and Identity	43
Transitional "Digraphia": From Hausa <i>Ajami</i> to Arabic Script	52
Malama A'ishatu: Between Womanhood and Motherhood	54
Conclusion	55
Chapter 2: Women and the Political Economy of Education	57
Introduction	57
Women, Orality, and Literacies in Precolonial Niger	62
Women's Other Educational Skills in the Precolonial Era	65
Education and the French "Civilizing" Mission: Gender Implications	68
Women in Education in the Aftermath of Independence	71
Constraints on Women's Education in Postcolonial Niger	73
Women in Islamic Schools	75
Grassroots Women's Responses to the Educational Crisis	78

## Part 2: Women, Folklore, and Performative Identities

Chapter 3: Politics, Popular Culture, and Women Performing Artists: A Biographical Inquiry in a Francophone-Islamic Context	87
Introduction	87
Habsu Garba and Hybridity: A Critical Discourse Analysis	88
Habsu Garba and Educational <i>Brassage</i>	94
Habsu Garba: Between Modern Education and Indigenous Traditions	96
<i>Brassage</i> and the Urban Landscape	98
In Search of Professional Fulfillment	99
The Becoming of a Performing Artist and Its Cultural Problematics	101

Griotte(s) of Tradition and Modernity: The Struggle for Space	105
Functional Art: Between Orality and Literacy	106
The Tension between Performance and Politics	114
Between Political Patronage and Political Representation	115
When Fieldwork Connects the Present with the Past	119
Conclusion	127
Chapter 4: Cinderella Goes to the Sahel	129
Introduction	129
Islam, Folklore, Gender, and Modernity	132
The Story of the Orphan Girl Who Married the Prince of Masar	133
Analysis of the Tale	138
Conclusion	144
 Part 3: Women and Overt Political Contestation	
Chapter 5: Islamisms, the Media, and Women's Public Discursive Practices	149
Introduction	149
Democratization and the Rise of Political Islam in Niger	150
Democracy, Islam, the Media, and Women's Activism	156
Plural Islamisms and the <i>Hijab</i> Discourse	159
Women's Islamic Literacy and the Public Display of Knowledge	162
Women, Islamisms, the Family Code, and the Media in Niger	164
UN Family Planning Campaign and Muslim Women's Activism in the Media	168
Chapter 6: Through the Eyes of Agaisha: Womanhood, Gender Politics, and the Tuareg Armed Rebellion	172
Historical Background	172
The Political Context of the Uprising	172
<i>Brassage Sahélien</i> : Women Dispel the Myth of Ethnic Purity	176
Tuareg Women Entrapped by Identity Ties	180
Sisterhood during War	184
Conclusion	184
Conclusion	187
 <i>Appendix A: Abdoul Salam's Dance Song Tigyedimma: Transregional and Transethnic Sahelian Brassage</i>	 199

<i>Appendix B: Biographical Sketch of Dr. Malama Zeinab Sidi Baba Haidara</i>	205
<i>Notes</i>	207
<i>References</i>	211
<i>Index</i>	225

# Illustrations

Malama A'ishatu at her home based Qur'anic school for women and girls	40
One of Malama A'ishatu's students	41
New women's sponsored neighborhood <i>madarasa (medersa)</i> in Niamey	79
Young pupils from the new private and formal Arabic-Islamic school sponsored by Islamist organizations at Quartier Wadata	79
Habsu Garba in performance at a political rally in Niamey	101
Habsu Garba and her troupe, Shock, posing in Tuareg attire before a performance on national reconciliation in Niger following the so-called Tuareg Rebellion	102
Habsu Garba posing with her husband and manager, Maiga, after her pilgrimage to Mecca	121
Malama Khadija providing Qur'anic literacy classes to a women's group at Quartier Wadata	160

# Tables

Table 1. Female access to French education in 1960	71
Table 2. Female access to primary/elementary education in 1982-92 and 1996-98	71
Table 3. Female access to secondary/high school education in 1982-92 and 1996-97	72
Table 4. Percentage of female students by faculty at Abdou Moumouni University from 1985 to 1991	72
Table 5. Percentage of class repeat and dropouts at primary school level in 1984	73
Table 6. Student enrollment retention from 1978 (primary school) to 1991 (end of high school)	73
Table 7. Medersa Franco-Arab enrollments	77
Table 8. Political representation of Nigerien women in government from 1957-99	118
Table 9. Women's representation in parliament	119