

Chapter 8

Music and Politics in North Africa

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Introduction

The three Maghreb states to be discussed in this chapter each have unique cultural and political histories. At the same time, they have important characteristics in common which justify considering them as a single region. Morocco, Algeria and Tunisia are all predominantly Muslim Mediterranean states which have achieved full political independence in the last 50 years. Their post-colonial experiences have been different, but all three have had to manage issues such as migration, politicised religion, economic change and other problems facing states in the process of establishing a sense of national identity. As both a medium and barometer of cultural change, music has been involved in the outworkings of these issues, and here I intend to outline this relationship using examples from the wide range of musical traditions that co-exist in the region.

Throughout the Maghreb, it is interesting to note that whilst musical meanings are framed by political discourses, these issues are rarely confronted explicitly through the music itself. However, the mere broadcast of songs in 'Berber' languages might be considered an assertion of non-Arab political identity even though the lyrics themselves are quite innocuous, or even meaningless, to Arab speakers.¹ Although ethnic 'Arab' and 'Berber' listeners may well apprehend the music quite differently, both would be aware that the very fact of its broadcast was significant in political terms. So politics permeates North African music in complex, diffuse ways, power being most frequently manifested through the (generally unspoken) rules which regulate when music can or cannot be performed, who is permitted to perform, and where and when it is appropriate to listen to it.

In this chapter I will investigate the relationship between music and power by pursuing three main strands. Firstly, I will identify some of the key social discourses in the region that relate most to music, focusing primarily on concepts of nationhood, religion and language. Secondly, I will consider three very different musical genres, examining their relationships to these discourses and thus their

¹ As Goodman demonstrates in her analysis of the song '*A Vava Inouwa*' ('My Little Father'; 1976) by Algerian singer Idir (2005). The song text is in Tamazight, the Berber language of Idir's home district of Kabyle.

significance as genres in relation to one another.² Finally, I will consider the global – or at least ‘transcultural’ – factors which have influenced these musics to varying degrees, as well as the socio-political context in which they exist.

Following Bourdieu (1984) and Hall (1997a), amongst others, it is my view that cultural, and therefore political, meanings are sustained by the experience of difference. Thus musical genres and practices, in distinguishing tastes, define their consumers as communities of shared knowledge and interest. Often, though imprecisely, these overlap with social categories such as class, ‘race’ and gender. This is particularly apposite in the context of North Africa, where social boundaries relating to class and gender tend to be fairly rigid. For each of the genres discussed below I will show how they map, in both sound and practice, onto specific social groups, which themselves may represent political positions. The first musical genre to be considered will be the *andalus* art music tradition, variations of which can be found in urban centres throughout North Africa. *Andalus* has an esteemed position in each state, partly because it is considered a link to a golden age in ‘Andalousiya’ (medieval Islamic Spain). The genre bears similar connotations of sophistication and heritage to those attached to Western classical music and is taught to middle-class children in much the same way. I will describe its sometimes ambivalent relations with class, state and Islam. Equally ambivalent is the magico-musical role of the *g'nāwa*, the focus of my second case study. The *g'nāwa* are a black ethnic minority whose musical performances involve ‘folk’ interpretations of Islam and include psychotherapeutic practices. Through musical ritual, the *g'nāwa* facilitate emotional catharsis amongst poorer women and the most excluded men in Moroccan society. In doing so, I will argue that they effectively bind themselves and their audiences into these marginal social positions. Lastly, I will consider the political implications of *rai*, a music of the urban poor that has (somewhat problematically) become a fêted ‘world music’. *Rai*’s syncretic nature raises issues of cultural hybridity and local identity which, during Algeria’s recent decade of political trauma, have proved particularly difficult to resolve. Before discussing these three examples further – and in order to contextualise them – I will first describe the broader cultural and political characteristics of the region.

Historical Background

Despite a number of commonalities, the political and economic histories of Algeria, Morocco and Tunisia differ in important respects. For example, Morocco is governed by a constitutional monarchy with a very high rural population (with around 40 per

² It would have been possible to choose between dozens of distinct musical traditions from the region to make much the same points. The decision to focus on *andalus*, the music of the *g'nāwa* and *rai* was based on my familiarity with these traditions, which have featured in my own research since the early 1990s.

cent involved in agricultural production).³ Algeria, by contrast, was introduced to industrialisation by French colonists, adopted centralist socialism on independence in 1962, has an overwhelmingly urban population and is largely dependent economically upon petrochemical exports. Tunisia, a much smaller country with fewer natural resources, has attempted, both diplomatically and economically, to serve as a bridge between the West and the Arab world. Over the last 20 years, international tourism has been a major contributor to the Tunisian economy.

At the same time, these adjacent Arab states have shared significant formative experiences that continue to influence current political and cultural discourses. These include colonisation by European nations on the other side of the Mediterranean,⁴ large-scale economic migration (often to these same countries), technological development, revolution and independence. In spite of recent constitutional reforms throughout the region, none of these countries have seen a significant change of political regime since the 1960s. At the time of writing (2007), the Algerian government is still effectively run by its military and the FLN (National Liberation Front), the party that led the revolution against the French. Tunisia, also dominated by the party that brought it independence (the Constitutional Democratic Rally), has had only two Presidents in this period. The present Moroccan A‘alawi dynasty has held power since the 1790s, despite the French/Spanish Protectorate of the twentieth century. Although Morocco has a longer history of independence than its neighbours, all three countries are relatively young as nation states, the region having been previously dominated by successive empires including the Romans and Ottomans.⁵ During the most recent European colonisation, religion and language became key areas of distinction between indigenous North Africans and settlers. Consequently both Islam and the Arabic language have become central features of national identity in the independent Maghreb states.

³ CIA World Factbook, <www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/mo.html#People> (accessed 13/08/08).

⁴ French Protectorates governed Tunisia between 1883 and 1956 and Morocco between 1912 and 1956. Spain also controlled large parts of northern and southern Morocco and continues to hold two peninsular enclaves on the Mediterranean coast. Algeria was more comprehensively colonised than its neighbours, being politically linked to the French mainland. Although French culture was introduced in each case, the settlers themselves were ethnically diverse: many were Spanish and came seeking refuge from Franco’s regime.

⁵ Historically, political power was centred in rich cities and the powerful elites that controlled their hinterland. Various local dynasties exercised control over key trade routes by patronising tribal groups living in the hills and plains between the cities. Inevitably such alliances fluctuated regularly. Modern national borders were largely established and maintained by colonial powers and some of these remain of doubtful legality. The most divisive boundary dispute between countries of the Maghreb concerns the Western Sahara, once a Spanish Protectorate, which is claimed by both Morocco and the indigenous Saharawi people. A mass occupation of the territory by Moroccan citizens took place in 1975, an event celebrated as the ‘Green March’. Algeria continues to support pro-independence Polisario guerrillas, whilst the United Nations is charged with resolving the dispute. See Stora (2002).

Religion and Political Culture

As discussed by many previous writers, Islam as an ideology proposes moral and legal codes which do not always sit comfortably alongside civil legislation in contemporary North African states.⁶ Though various schools of religious jurisprudence interpret *Shari'a* law in different ways, their moral right to criticise or even oppose secular government is widely accepted in the Maghreb. Indeed, this role is considered a healthy balance to secular authority and its potential excesses. However, the full integration of religion and nation into an Islamic state tends to appeal mostly to those with the smallest stake in the political *status quo*.⁷ Each state has attempted to manage religious activities, typically by suppressing its most radical manifestations whilst placating more moderate voices. Nevertheless, Islam has been used many times throughout the region as the banner for either political reform or resistance.⁸ For example, Algerian rebels who adopted a radical interpretation of Islam, were almost certainly influenced by individuals who had been involved in the actions of the Mujahedin against the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan in the 1980s. The recent war of mutual attrition between armed rebels and the Algerian government has come close to outright civil war on many occasions over the last ten years.⁹ In Morocco, the figure of King has long combined both secular and religious authority in one person. As a *sharif*, the royal line claims descent from the Prophet Mohamed so exploiting the political capital afforded to elite and religious lineages of many kinds in the region. Nominally a constitutional head of state, in fact the King has considerable personal authority and is extremely vigilant regarding potential threats to his regime.¹⁰ The Tunisian government

⁶ See, for example, Vatim (1987), Hourani (1991) and Munson (1993).

⁷ Some political parties in Morocco favour the integration of religion and state but they are not politically strong and most are obliged to work alongside the government. Nevertheless, it has been suggested to me that these movements are partly financed by interests outside the country and some are very active in building up support in the poorer urban neighbourhoods.

⁸ See Gellner (1981).

⁹ Amongst other economic problems, increasing unemployment and fewer opportunities for emigration led to widespread civil unrest in the late 1980s. General elections scheduled for 1992 were cancelled when it became clear that parties campaigning for Islamic political reform were likely to win a majority. A decade of extreme violence, allegedly carried out by both government forces and rebel factions such as the GIA (Armed Islamic Group) and FIS (Islamic Salvation Front), had left over 80,000 dead by 1997 (Amnesty International Report MDE 28/023/1998, <<http://web.amnesty.org/library/eng-dza/index>>, accessed 05/12/04). This has since risen to 150,000 according to BBC reports (<http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle_east/country_profiles/790556.stm>, accessed 12/01/05). Most of these casualties have been civilians.

¹⁰ During the early decades of independence, several assassination attempts and plots against the King were ruthlessly crushed (See Waterbury 1970). These attacks were mostly from left-wing factions who at the time considered the monarchy anachronistic. Perhaps

also keeps a tight rein on potential dissent although under Bourguiba's 30-year presidency the country developed increasingly secular policies in keeping with aspirations to play a key diplomatic role in the region. More recently, religious opposition groups have been invited to play a role in government, a policy which has served both to placate critics and to compromise their potential to challenge the current balance of power.

It is important to note that religious practices are much more diverse than those presented in orthodox discourses. Alongside the 'Islam of the mosque' (itself far from monolithic) many popular forms exist, particularly – but by no means exclusively – in rural areas. Many of these practices and beliefs, which syncretise with more orthodox viewpoints, are generally deemed 'ignorant' by religious and state authorities. 'Maraboutic Islam' (cults following practices established by charismatic individuals) tends to appeal to the most powerless in society, and Sufism (esoteric spiritualism) to a well educated but small minority. And since governments do not seem to consider these practices to be as threatening as blatantly politicised movements, only extreme forms, bordering on 'sorcery', are considered illegal under civil law.

The relationship between religious discourse and political authority has considerable impact upon the values associated with musical practices in these countries. As Nasr (1997) and al-Faruqi (1985) explain, each musical style can be placed conceptually on a moral scale, ranging from acceptable (*halāl*) to unacceptable (*harām*). Consequently, all acts of musical production or consumption, whether by individual or state, can be interpreted as adopting a position on such a continuum. Where it is possible neither to condone nor to suppress *harām* musical practices, North African regimes tend to turn a blind eye to their existence, whilst nevertheless monitoring their activities.

Language and Identity

The political significance of language, with its key role in identity construction, inevitably impacts upon any music involving song. Reflecting its indigenous ethnic mix and historical influences, local dialects of Arabic contain many

ironically, it is now 'socialist' Algeria that is under assault from radical Islamic groups. Traditionally, the Sultan (later 'King') of Morocco maintained his authority in a politically and ethnically diverse country by continually undermining potential allegiances against him and defeating opposition militarily. History has shown that complacent regimes were soon replaced by tribal alliances, frequently coalesced around charismatic religious leadership. Waterbury (1970) and Gilson (1990) investigate the significance of charisma and descent in Maghrebi politics. The persistence of the current dynasty is in many ways a testimony to its powers of surveillance and its ability to play the 'religious card' effectively. See also Vatim (1987) and Munson (1993) for discussions of political and religious discourse in Morocco.

influences, primarily from French, Spanish and Berber languages. Several Berber languages are spoken in the Maghreb, including Tamazight, Amazigh and Tifinagh, each associated with specific regions. In Morocco, where the promotion of cultural diversity might strategically prevent alliances which threaten the regime, minority languages and musics are tolerated and to some extent supported by the state. By contrast, in Algeria, which since independence has tended more towards institutional centralisation, Berber languages and identities have not been officially acknowledged until very recently, and only after considerable civil strife.¹¹ Colloquial Arabic (or *derija*), with its rich vernacular, exists in localised forms throughout the Maghreb and is the generally preferred medium for everyday communication. However, *derija* is rarely written or broadcast on state networks, where standard (international) Arabic dominates. In addition, French is still regularly used in many areas of business and education and North Africans have long been avid consumers of Francophone television broadcasts on satellite stations. Consequently, policies to promote and 'improve' the standard of Arabic used in Maghreb states have been largely ineffective.¹² The use of standard Arabic is probably weakest in Algeria, where French colonisation was most intense and educational developments inclined towards a 'modernity' framed essentially in terms of Western capitalism (Bourdieu 1977, Ottaway and Ottaway 1970). This is important in political and musical terms because movements seeking Islamic reform have portrayed linguistic pluralism as evidence of cultural and moral degeneracy. In the recent period of political unrest, editors of French language newspapers in Algeria have been attacked, as have teachers using French in technical education.¹³ Just as Islamic essentialism promotes orthodoxy in dress and behaviour, so purity of language has been engaged as a moral and political cause.

This cursory exploration of the North African cultural and political context is intended to provide a backdrop to the following discussion of musical practices. Since it is my contention that the political significance of these musics is both contextual and relational, the influences of such powerful cultural discourses as religion, nationhood and language will affect each genre differently, as they do the social groups with which they are associated.

¹¹ The Berber enclave of the Kabyle Mountains has been the main focus of protests against Arabisation in Algeria. This struggle for a distinct cultural identity inevitably goes against the pressure for increased linguistic homogeneity that has come from political Islamists. See, for example, Goodman (1996).

¹² See Maghraoui (1995).

¹³ See Maghraoui (1995).

Andalus: Art Music and Social Class

Tlemçen, an ancient hill-town overlooking the border between Algeria and Morocco, is considered the traditional home of *gharnâti*, a form of *andalus* art music that had its origins in the courts of the Umayyad Caliphate of Granada in Muslim Spain (Andalusiya). Like other closely-related schools of *andalus* music that are found across North Africa from Morocco to Libya, *gharnâti* is believed to have been brought to North Africa by migrants fleeing the Christian *reconquista* of Spain in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries.¹⁴ The repertoire is comprised of suites (*nûbât*) of songs and instrumental interludes named after the mode (*tab'*) in which they are played and the music is performed in ensembles which typically include the *oud* (lute), *kamenja* (bowed fiddle held upright on the player's knee), *rebab* (a low-pitched bowed lute), *târ* (frame drum) and *derbûka* (goblet drum). Though specialist singers may perform virtuoso parts, instrumentalists also serve as a chorus.

Whilst detailed discussion of *andalus'* long history lies beyond the scope of this chapter, even a brief outline of the last century will show how the role of the music has changed. It is quite likely that in both Andalusian and Maghrebian courts, professional Jewish musicians played a key role in maintaining the musical tradition. The *reconquista* being as prejudicial against Jews as 'Moors', many migrated with their masters to the powerful cities of the Maghreb. *Andalus* remains a quintessentially urban music. As the elite classes who patronised the *andalus* tradition lost political influence during the colonial period, so their music also suffered in terms of status and support. By the 1930s, the Algerian *mâlîf* from the eastern district of Constantine had become associated with low-status drinking clubs and hostels (*f'ndouk*). During the 1950s, however, pro-independence movements through cultural associations gradually rehabilitated the genre, presenting it anew as a distinctly indigenous art form with historical links to a pre-colonial era when Moorish civilisation flourished.

Since Maghrebi independence in the late 1950s and early 1960s, *andalus* has enjoyed a privileged status. Since most of the Jewish population left the Maghreb during this period (especially following the Six Day War in 1967), their role in preserving the tradition has tended to be overlooked. In their absence, the music became emblematic of a new national identity, providing a model of 'high culture'

¹⁴ The entire *andalus* repertoire is often ascribed to a single originator, the legendary composer Zyriab, who travelled from Baghdad to the western caliphate in the ninth century. The original collection is said to have comprised 24 suites of songs and extended instrumental passages, each with a specific modal structure and associations with a particular time of day, colour, cardinal humour and so on. Current repertoires are theoretically derived from the remnants and regional variations of this corpus. Contemporary schools of *andalus* include the *al-âla* tradition in Algiers, the *mâlîf* in Constantine, *çana fassiya* in Fez, *gharnâti* in Tlemçen, *fann* in Libya and the *nûbat* of Tunis. For details of the historical and stylistic distinctions between these schools, the reader is referred to Guettat (1980) and Poché (1995).

to rival (or perhaps supplant) that of Europeans, authenticated by an unbroken historical tradition.¹⁵ In each of these countries, *andalus* has been promoted through state conservatories and is recorded and broadcast by national networks. Music festivals and competitions at both local and pan-Maghrebian levels maintain fidelity to these traditions. Modern manifestations of regional 'schools' differ not only in repertoire but also stylistically as a result both of national policies towards music and the nature of local patronage. Possibly under the influence of Ottoman and other Arab art musics, Tunisian and Libyan schools of *andalus* have tended towards large ensembles, often with specialised choirs whose aesthetic includes a preference for precise musical unison. This may be related in part to the early transcription of the repertoire and the centralisation of music education.¹⁶ By contrast, since the complete Moroccan repertoire has only recently been transcribed, it is generally taught orally and there is a distinct tendency towards heterophony, performers being relatively free to ornament the melody according to their abilities. To suggest that the normative relationship between individual and community in each country is replicated in these musical aesthetics would be rather conjectural without further research. Nevertheless, it is interesting to note that the comparatively 'free market' economy of music in Morocco appears to encourage competition, both between ensembles and the musicians within them. In more centralised political regimes such as Algeria, where *andalus* ensembles are largely state-supported, this element of competition, and degree of musical heterophony, is noticeably less apparent.

My own involvement with *andalus* musicians has been in the cities of Tlemçen and Oran in western Algeria and Oujda in eastern Morocco, both places where the *gharnâti* school is well established. Interestingly, most of the non-musicians that I talked to in these cities were at the very least ambivalent towards *andalus* music or disliked it, despite (or perhaps because of) its privileged status. Whilst many acknowledged *andalus* to be a 'national treasure', very few chose to listen to it, saying that they found the language of the songs antiquated and dull compared with more contemporary genres. The music had no associations with the 'modernity' that young people in particular aspired to: it was rarely heard in cafés or cassette shops and, above all, was rarely danced to. I also found that on both sides of the Algerian-Moroccan border, the music retained strong associations with the town of Tlemçen and its social elite. In contrast, by far the most popular musical style

¹⁵ The fixed nature of the basic repertoire has not prevented considerable creativity within it. Each *nîba*, played in its entirety, would require hours to perform. Instead, contemporary ensembles tend to perform excerpts from different *nîbât*, and sometimes from different traditions, in order to make concerts more interesting to listeners. Also, within the *gharnâti* school there has developed an extensive repertoire of 'hawzi' pieces, which apply the general style of the *andalus* tradition to more popular songs and contemporary language. See Schuyler (1978) for a description of the *andalus* performed in other Moroccan regions and Davis (1996) for a discussion of Tunisian cultural policy regarding *andalus*.

¹⁶ See Davis (1996).

in the region was *rai*, a self-consciously eclectic and colloquial genre that will be described later in this chapter. I found such strong class associations striking and when I attended performances of *andalus* discovered that these preconceptions were often borne out by both performers and audiences.¹⁷ These associations are perhaps not so surprising in Morocco where class hierarchies are marked. Nevertheless, the association with Tlemçen, a city in an inaccessible neighbouring nation state, suggested that cultural and economic links with traditional political centres were more resilient than one might have expected.

As traditional patrons of the arts, the Moroccan upper classes have strongly influenced the status of particular musical genres, have financially supported the ensembles of favoured musicians and more recently, influenced government policies on music performance and education. In Algeria, where traditional power relations were deliberately and deeply undermined by the colonial regime (which was itself replaced in the 1960s by socialist-style collectivist programmes), it was remarkable to find that the old elite classes of Tlemçen still retained esteem in the present era. I was also intrigued by the persistent associations made between *andalus* and this social group.¹⁸ On a number of occasions, I accompanied the director of the Oran Cultural Centre to visit his counterpart at the Tlemçen Maison de la Culture in order to secure the loan of ancient instruments for display in an exhibition. In the course of these negotiations, it became clear that although Oran is now a much larger and more important city in the region, the visitor showed considerable deference, both to the Tlemçen Maison de la Culture and its director, who responded rather coolly towards his guests. After several visits, and in order to finally clinch the deal, the Orani director finally felt it necessary to stress his own familial links with Tlemçen and his personal commitment to the *gharnâti* tradition. What emerged through these and similar observations was that this form of *andalus* was strongly associated on both sides of the border with a social group which retained the cultural capital of a political structure that had not officially existed for generations.

In Algeria, *andalus* has occupied an ambivalent position since the recent political crisis. In a context in which rebel groups challenge the government's political and moral legitimacy, any music promoted by the state as a national treasure was unlikely to thrive. In the 1990 local elections, the Islamic Salvation Front (FIS) won control over many local authorities, including Tlemçen. In addition to promoting the ideal of an Islamic state, the policies of the FIS included improving

¹⁷ After attending rehearsals of Oran's *Association Andalouisiya* ensemble on a few occasions, it became clear that most of the young people who made up the group were well educated and drawn from the city's middle class. It also emerged that many of their families were indeed originally from Tlemçen. Learning to play *andalus* music is considered an important accomplishment for young boys and girls of this class, and most had studied for several years before joining adult ensembles in Oran or Oujda.

¹⁸ See Ottaway and Ottaway (1970) for a detailed description of Algeria's post-colonial socialist reforms.

local services, challenging corruption and training the unemployed. When starved of financial resources by central government, they drew upon networks of local volunteers and independent funds from abroad.¹⁹ FIS-controlled municipalities redirected resources from the arts to local services, leaving established conservatories, and therefore art musics, with little financial support. After the second round of the general elections was cancelled in 1992, the military-backed government banned the FIS and widespread violence ensued. This period of crisis itself made arts funding difficult to justify and with the imposition of a night-time curfew in many Algerian cities, the market for most 'officially sanctioned' music rapidly dried up. Although musicians continued to learn, rehearse and play *andalus* on a voluntary basis, the drastic reduction of state funding and possibilities for performance undermined the genre's privileged status. Reliance upon central funding is a common feature of the Algerian economy and although the black market positively thrived on the country's difficulties, *andalus* does not have the popularity necessary to fall back on alternative commercial sources. Conservative religious factions did not single out *andalus* for attack, but rather it has been left to wither without the state support it once enjoyed, and this has effectively weakened its symbolic value as a vehicle of Algerian national heritage.

Elsewhere in the Maghreb, where opposition groups have not resorted to force to the same extent as in Algeria, *andalus* retains a position of cultural prestige, although it does not enjoy much more popularity with the general public. The Moroccan ensembles with which I was involved were most active during Ramadan, rehearsing nightly in the weeks leading up to the holy month.²⁰ Regular public performances took place throughout Ramadan and many of these were financially supported by local government. Considerable competition existed between the various ensembles in Oujda for the best virtuoso performers. As free-market professionals, sought-after musicians rehearsed with several ensembles in the lead up to Ramadan, finally opting for the group most likely to pay the highest fee or with the most prestigious and numerous performances. As well as *andalus*, many musicians also performed other styles (including, when required, Western pop music). The busiest period in a professional musician's calendar, apart from Ramadan (which can fall at any time of the year), was the late summer wedding season. What is evidently different between the situation in Algeria and that of Morocco, is the extent to which the cultural economy is centralised: whereas Algeria has fostered excellence through state sponsored conservatories, the Moroccan government effectively supports the best musicians that arise through competition. In both cases, however, *andalus* is a genre which requires patronage,

¹⁹ See Davis (1992).

²⁰ It should be noted that these musicians were all men. Although young women do learn to play and sing *andalus* in conservatories, I never saw adult women perform in Morocco and only once in Algeria. This is partly because of the moral stigma attached to being a paid musician, as well as the fact that public exposure is considered undignified for a woman. In addition, women are traditionally discouraged from playing wind instruments.

either from elites or from governmental structures. Unlike the case of more popular genres, the sale of recordings is inadequate to sustain a large industry, and although there is growing international interest in *andalus* (particularly in Spain) this is insufficient to give the genre commercial independence. Inevitably then, the music is implicated with regimes of power, and in Algeria *andalus* has suffered as a consequence of this association.

Gender, 'Race' and the *G'nâwa*

In music, as in many other fields of social activity, gender segregation is common in North Africa, a dynamic that creates strong social bonds within single-sex sets and palpable discursive opposition between them. Independent Algeria's early enthusiasm for socialist-style 'progress' extended beyond the economy and education and attempted, with moderate success, to encourage gender equality amongst its citizens.²¹ Observers might consider that Algerian women enjoy a more 'modern' lifestyle than their 'traditional' counterparts in Morocco: they are more likely to drive cars, have greater access to education and in the cities tend to wear clothes that, though a little more modest, would not seem out of place in western Europe. Modernist aspirations encouraged though education and government rhetoric persuaded many Algerians to consider neighbouring countries as less 'developed' than themselves, though changed circumstances on both sides of the border in recent years have called this view into question.²² As increasing numbers of Moroccan women are entering higher education and becoming active in government, so the cultural polarisation arising from the Algerian conflict has led to increasing conservatism. In the 1990's, Algerian women had become the target of verbal and even physical intimidation for engaging in such activities as hairdressing, wearing Western dress and working outside the home. Much of this aggression came at the time from supporters of the FIS, though legislation such

²¹ Gender relations in Algeria and Morocco are partly fixed in statutes called the 'Family Code' which include such areas as inheritance, divorce and child custody legislation. Reforms of the Algerian code in the 1980s was widely criticised by local women's organisations for being discriminatory and too influenced by Islamist lobbies (Lyes Si Zoubir, 'Twenty Years of the Family Code', in *Le Monde Diplomatique*, on-line journal, March 2004, <http://mondediplo.com/2004/03/07familycode?var_recherche=zoubir>, accessed 31/08/09).

²² 'Development' here tends to be gauged in terms of literacy, health, industrialisation and the privileging of an urban, rather than rural, lifestyle. Whilst these were seen as positive characteristics, many Algerians that I spoke to acknowledged that this modernist sensibility is to some extent a legacy of colonisation. In fact, many idealised the 'simple', 'pious' life of the tribespeople of the deep south, who lived 'like real Arabs'. Such dilemmas were characteristic of conflicting discourses in Algeria between a romantic traditionalism and a glamorous modernism.

as the Family Code (1984) indicated the government's own retreat from its liberal 1960's policies.

The strong tendency towards gender segregation in North Africa has ensured that many kinds of music exist which are primarily associated with women, typically in the context of quasi-religious events and social gatherings where women are involved as both performers and audiences.²³ For example, the *medahat* are professional female musicians from the Algerian-Moroccan border region who play, sing and dance at single-sex pre-nuptial parties. Their performances reputedly convey marital advice to the young bride-to-be, and the wider female community share the *baraka* (blessing) generated by her change of social status.²⁴ Another important area of women's music making relates to 'folk' religious practices. Although not officially prescribed, it is more common for men to attend mosques than women in North Africa; instead, women tend to observe religious practices at home, in keeping with customary modesty in the public arena. Among the poorer classes in both Algeria and Morocco, groups of women often visit the shrines of local saintly figures, or *marabout*. Through such 'pilgrimages in miniature' women seek the intercession of saints in their practical problems or perhaps obtain the advice of the shrine's guardian (who often belongs to the lineage of the *marabout*). Visits also provide a legitimate opportunity to socialise with the women of their quarter.²⁵

For several months during the mid 1990s, I was often the only man in an audience of nearly one hundred who attended Thursday afternoon performances by a *g'nâwa* troupe in Oujda, Morocco. These took place in a small walled enclosure, where women and their children sat bunched together on floor rugs. The *g'nâwa* ethnic group are a small black community who live in certain districts of Moroccan towns. Only men performed at these events, although *g'nâwa* women collected donations and helped members of the audience who through the ritual process became distressed. The *g'nâwa* are thought to be descended from slaves or mercenaries brought from sub-Saharan centuries ago.²⁶ The name *g'nâwa* suggests 'Guinean' or other West African origins and this connection is supported by similarities in religious practices, instruments and musical structure. It is also possible that a proportion simply migrated north from the Sahel during the colonial period and have since occupied the cultural niche of *g'nâwa* for economic

²³ In order to illustrate a form of gender discourse which is broadly common throughout North Africa, I have chosen a socio-musical example where this discourse is most clearly illustrated. Inevitably, gender relations are manifested differently in rural and urban settings, and in different nation states, ethnic groups and social classes. Nevertheless, at the risk of over-essentialising these relations, I would contend that the presence and influence of such a discourse is identifiable throughout the Maghreb.

²⁴ See Nacéri and Mebarki (1983).

²⁵ See Schaeffer-Davis (1983) and Langlois (1998).

²⁶ See Schuyler (1981) and Baldassarre (1995).

reasons.²⁷ The popular discourse supporting this specialist role associates black people in general with dangerous supernatural powers, a double-edged stereotype which defines a racial group by ascribing unusual qualities to it.²⁸ *G'nâwa* troupes have exploited this reputation, and in so doing position themselves as intermediaries between the physical world and supernatural domains. Reflecting this dynamic between the *g'nâwa* and mainstream society, their music and even their instruments remain distinct from those used in other North African genres. For example, where pentatonic tunings or the *genbri* (also known as a *hajhouj*, a box-shaped lute which sounds in the bass register) are used in non-*g'nâwa* musical styles, they often represent explicit references either to the *g'nâwa* themselves or to the social and spiritual context with which they are associated.

G'nâwa performances in Oujda had a simple structure, the aesthetic and psychological efficacy of which depended on a web of complimentary beliefs and practices. Each musical piece would begin with an introduction to the melodic theme played on the *genbri*. The sound of the lute was augmented by several pairs of large metal castanets known as *qaqarbat*. After some minutes, a few women stumbled forward from the crowd to a small space in front of the musicians where they danced in a rigid, flailing manner, uttering occasional cries and loosening their clothes. For perhaps ten minutes, the tempo gradually increased to the point where the nucleus of the original melody was reduced to a bass ostinato over the roar of *qaqarbat*. Finally, as dancers swooned one at a time into the arms of audience members, the music came to an abrupt end, followed by a brief recitation of the names of local maraboutic saints, the prophet Mohamed and Allah.²⁹ The afternoon would be taken up with maybe a dozen repetitions of this pattern, though the melodies varied and different dancers came forward each time. The melodies themselves are derived from traditional *g'nâwa* suites, each associated with a specific symbolic colour, a maraboutic shrine and a type of affliction.³⁰ As women heard the melody and chanted the name of the saint linked to their own problems,

²⁷ The *g'nâwa* themselves maintain that they are descended from Bilal, the Prophet Mohamed's first *muezzin*, who was a black Nubian. Some even claim hereditary maraboutic powers, although since these are generally transferred deliberately (for example, by anointing a chosen individual successor with spittle), this is clearly not an automatic function of lineage alone. Both of these assertions seek to invert the low status ascribed to black people in North Africa, and allow *g'nâwa* performers to claim legitimacy in precisely the same way as other religious and political leaders, through association with an esteemed spiritual lineage.

²⁸ This accords with Stuart Hall's (1997a:223-79) views on essentialising racial difference.

²⁹ See Schuyler (1981) and Langlois (1998) for further descriptions of *g'nâwa* ceremonies.

³⁰ In the comprehensive liner notes accompanying Antonio Baldassarre's (1995) excellent recordings of *g'nâwa* musicians in Casablanca and Marrakech, he explains the complex relationship between the music, *djinn* and other spiritual entities.

they become entranced, dancing until the spirit (*djinn* or *m'louk*) causing these problems left them or were propitiated.

In my view, such events essentialise both physical and emotional difference, marginalising both poorer women and the *g'nāwa* themselves from orthodox (masculine) religious discourses. Just as the *g'nāwa* are excluded on the basis of their association with profane supernatural domains, this context enables women to exhibit precisely the emotionalism which is commonly believed to distinguish them from male 'rationality' and self-control.³¹ Participation in such cathartic rituals reinforces an essentialised gender distinction, by which women are to some extent represented as less 'civilised' than men. Women who actively observe Islamic practices tend to do so in their own homes or otherwise take part in 'folk religious' practices such as those provided by the *g'nāwa*. The fact that Moroccan *g'nāwa* performers are licensed by local authorities and carry cards identifying their profession as 'traditional musicians' suggests tacit state approval of these clearly heterodox religious practices, such regulation also affording some degree of surveillance and control. Maraboutism (and religious movements generally) have so frequently become politicised that it would be reckless to leave them entirely to their own devices.³² On quite a different level, such practices (and including several non-*g'nāwa* institutions which perform similar functions) enable a collective act of solidarity by some of the most disempowered in North African society. Since most of the women present would have known which melodies were associated with particular afflictions, they could tell which of the dancers had been abandoned or were childless, ill or depressed, and so on. The support offered to each fainting dancer amounted to a gesture of solidarity within the community. Moreover, because these events take place out of doors, the sound of (what is effectively) collective grievance could be heard throughout the quarter by men and women alike. As a *political* gesture this is admittedly oblique, but given the circumstances of these women, is perhaps as vocal a 'protest' as is possible.³³

In Algeria, as in Morocco, musicians from black ethnic minorities often function as mediators between the spirit world and women. Amongst those involved in such activities, performing troupes such as Les Frères Kakabou in Oran play a key role in summer wedding celebrations. The musicians involved here are more likely to be first or second generation migrants from the deep south of Algeria, and these origins are marked through both instrumentation (ensembles usually comprise several different sized clay goblet drums) and dress. Conceptually, *kakabou* music lacks the *g'nāwa*'s complex metaphysical

associations with colours, suites and *m'louk*, but otherwise these troupes play a comparable role to black musicians across the border. Performance during pre-wedding female gatherings brings about an entranced state amongst listeners, who dance to the point of collapse. In Oran, demand for *kakabou* performances at weddings regularly exceeds the pool of musicians from this community. Consequently, young, unemployed Arab men (who visibly do not belong to this ethnic minority) often form their own '*kakabou*' groups, dress like authentic 'southerners' and perform in pre-wedding events. Each summer Thursday evening (being the start of the Algerian weekend, the favoured night for wedding celebrations), these groups can be seen playing from the back of pick-up trucks leading wedding motorcades winding noisily across the city. These bands provide seasonal income for (typically underemployed) young men, although I was told that they are not paid as well as genuine 'southerners', most of whom reside in the *Medina j'dida* quarter of Oran. Clearly, one doesn't have to be black to play *kakabou* music, but the ethnic exoticism carries a kudos that makes their performances more sought after.

Just as *andalus* orchestras have acquired the connotations of elite social classes and their political interests, so other, very different styles of music are associated with lower classes. In the case of the *g'nāwa*, the niche of musician/ritual specialist provides a living, which until relatively recently has been mostly at the very margins of society. The ritual interaction of poor women and black men during *g'nāwa* events binds gender, class and racial stereotypes in a choreographed performance of ecstatic abandon. That this physical response is almost the complete opposite of that expected at an *andalus* event can hardly be coincidental, manifesting as it does the *actual* lack of control which poorer Moroccan women have over their own lives. Likewise, the use of language and understandings of religion are as distinct as the musics themselves. In political terms, these musical activities are not merely markers of differing taste but performances of almost entirely separate world views.

The one field of North African culture in which these otherwise distinct physical responses to religious music may be said to overlap is amongst the Sufi *zawia* (brotherhoods), where men perform long *dhikhr* rites leading to ecstatic trance states. These numerous organisations have a long and complex relationship to power in North Africa (see Gellner 1969, Gilsenan 1990) and vary in important regards from one another. Moreover, each North African state has its own approach to Sufism. Given its recent history, Algeria remains understandably wary of popular Islamic movements, whereas in the last decade the Moroccan government has actively supported certain 'approved' forms of Sufism as a preferred alternative to religious-political fundamentalism.

³¹ See also Deborah Kapchan's (2003) discussion of women's emotional response to music in Morocco.

³² See Waterbury (1970), Gellner (1981) and Gilsenan (1990) for detailed discussion of this phenomenon.

³³ Lewis (1986) presents an invaluable comparative study of the politics of female possession cults in Africa. See, in particular, Chapter 7.

Raï, Technology and Modernity

So far I have described musical genres and practices which tend to correspond more or less with specific social groups. In principle, there are few reasons why middle-class men shouldn't attend *g'nâwa* ceremonies but on the whole they don't, just as poorer women tend not to listen to *andalus*. Such are the distinctions between class, 'race' and particularly gender in North Africa that the cultural domains outlined above remain fairly discrete and therefore relatively easy for governments to monitor. Since the third genre to be discussed knows few such bounds, it has raised a number of problematic issues relating to morality, language and identity. *Raï* is a form of popular music most associated with the cities of western Algeria and eastern Morocco, but which is now also consumed internationally as part of the 'world music' phenomenon. On a superficial level *raï* is influenced by many global styles, from Egyptian art music to reggae, but at its structural and original core the music combines elements from local wedding musics and Western pop.

In the late 1940s and 1950s, *raï* (lit. 'my opinion') referred to a traditional style featuring women singers accompanied by flute (*gaspah*) and drum (*guellal*).³⁴ These *cheikha*'s were most likely *medahat* performers who had moved from the 'female only' market to entertaining men in the clubs of colonial Oran. In this morally-dubious cabaret environment – one of the few places where men and women, Arabs and Europeans, mixed – many stylistic fusions took place involving elements of jazz and Latin American musics, French *chanson*, Bedouin rhythms and even *andalus*.³⁵ After independence, urban musical tastes shifted towards emulating American guitar groups, but in the early 1980s disco electronics were also drawn into the mix and a new 'pop-*raï*' emerged, spurred by the growth of cheap cassette recording technology and a European *émigré* market hungry for Algerian recordings. The *raï* of this period posed significant dilemmas for the Algerian government. The authorities were prepared to tolerate the existence of a nocturnal *demi-monde* of cabarets and brothels, so long as it remained invisible. Although technologically dislocated from this scene, the *raï* music which emerged from it was considered lewd and tasteless. The songs often referred to frustrated passion, illicit sex and drunkenness, either explicitly or by innuendo, and the fact that they were sung by both men and women was even more shocking.³⁶ As if the themes of these songs weren't contentious enough, *raï*'s use of the vernacular language contributed to its notoriety. If the classical Arabic of the Qur'an is considered to be the purest form of the language, and for many the literal word of God, then the *derija* dialect with its loan words, 'corrupted' grammar and street

³⁴ The reader is referred to Virolle (1995), Daoudi and Miliani (1996) and Tenaille (2002) for good descriptions of early *raï*.

³⁵ The pianist Maurice el Medioni became locally famous for syncopating melodies from *andalus* suites with popular Afro-Cuban rhythms.

³⁶ Virolle (1995) and Tenaille (2002) both provide a useful analysis of *raï* lyrics during this period.

slang, occupied the opposite end of this moral scale. At the same time, *derija* is also the language of domestic spaces and the neighbourhood (*houma*). Unlike *andalus*, where passionate sentiments might be expressed in a literary form, *raï* tended to be prosaic and coarse. During the early 1990s, knowledge that women played *raï* cassettes inside the home could scandalise male heads of families, whose duty it was to maintain honour by ensuring the separation of domestic and public domains (Langlois 2005).

As *raï* moved from the private to public sphere, the Algerian government responded by banning its broadcast. However, it encountered numerous obstacles to effective censorship. Recordings were produced outside state control (in the back rooms of shops, for example) and distributed on street corners. *Raï*'s popularity, both at home and abroad, also proved problematic for the government. With less explicit lyrics, *raï* quickly became the preferred music for weddings, initially in the border region and very soon wherever North Africans had settled in Europe. Whilst the Algerian government could ban *raï* from its own national radio and television stations, it could not prevent it being broadcast on stations like Medi 1, based in Nador in neighbouring Morocco.³⁷ As complete censorship proved impossible, a compromise was eventually reached whereby broadcast was permitted on condition that cassette sales were taxed and lyrics toned down.³⁸ The government's approach may partly have been a matter of accepting the inevitable, but at this time of economic crisis they may also have sought favour with the urban youth who were the largest consumers of *raï*, had the smallest stake in society and were most attracted to political alternatives.³⁹ If this was the case, then it was a risky strategy, since appearing to condone such an obviously disreputable form of music played into the hands of the regime's many critics. This may well have been the outcome, since even though the songs themselves became 'cleaner', more sentimental and less sexually-explicit, *raï* never shook off its 'immoral' associations. In his study of masculinity in Oran, Schade-Poulson describes how young men intending to 'mend their ways' by a return to praying at the mosque had first to forego the temptations of alcohol, women and listening to *raï* (1999:149).

³⁷ *Raï* is also produced in studios on the Moroccan side of the border, although this is not perceived as problematic within Morocco, where *raï* is less popular than *cha'abi* and other genres, and is generally considered an 'Algerian' music. The towns of eastern Morocco are so distant from its other major cities that there are strong economic, familial and cultural links across the border, despite the border's official closure since 1995.

³⁸ See Schade-Poulson (1999) and Tenaille (2002).

³⁹ During the 1990s, over 60 per cent of the Algerian population was under 20 years of age. This age group suffered the highest level of unemployment and young people were most attracted to alternative political movements. Because of the economic crisis, young women were more likely than ever to marry overseas, into Maghrebi families resident in Europe. The same option was not open to young men who, underemployed, often remained in prolonged dependency in the family home.

Early *rai* singers doubtless benefited from the publicity that the genre's notoriety brought them and yet it was inevitable that they would become unwitting participants in the political turmoil that engulfed Algeria from the late 1980s. Even the most outspoken songs, though critical of social restrictions in a general sense, avoided overt political statements. Nevertheless, as political and cultural views became increasingly polarised, *rai* became associated with notions of cultural hybridity and modernity that in themselves had become problematic for many Algerians. Supporters of political Islam certainly considered *rai* a debased form of entertainment which exhibited both local immorality and 'Western values'. Whilst many people in Oran told me that they were rather ashamed that such a 'low' form of music had achieved international success, it nevertheless seemed clear that *rai*'s social role in weddings and even its very syncretic nature were distinctly local characteristics. Just as *derija* is a patois derived from many sources and Oranaise culture more generally draws upon both local and global features, so *rai* also reflects this complex and uncertain post-colonial mix of influences. As I have argued elsewhere (Langlois 1996), those elements of *rai* that suggest 'modernity' to listeners (for example, the use of synthesised, rather than native flute sounds) are often used rather cosmetically in local music production.⁴⁰ Despite a veneer of electronic instrumentation, Algerian *rai* generally adhered to traditional sonorities, and melodic and rhythmic structures. This allowed musicians to seamlessly adapt well-known popular and even religious songs into their repertoire. Such indigenous characteristics of the music would not protect it from a political critique which disapproved of music *per se*. Moreover, *rai*'s (global) syncretism and (local) immoral associations made it a highly visible target for insurgents. Many singers received death threats and several concert halls used for *rai* performances outside Oran were burned down in the early 1990s. Star performers such as Khaled and Mami, who had already become famous outside the country, left Algeria. Due to reduced opportunities for performance or intimidation, others retired or turned to other musical genres and some have even been killed. In September 1994 Cheb Hasni, certainly the most famous star of the *sentimentale* style of *rai*, was shot dead outside his home in Oran for (according to his detractors) 'spreading evil across the earth'. Two years later, Ahmed Baba, the genre's most celebrated record producer, was also assassinated in Tlemçen (Tenaille 2002).

Rai's political significance, by which I mean its widely perceived relations to political discourses, does not stem from its associations with specific social groups so much as its contradiction of such compartmentalisation. Had *rai* remained in those liminal spaces ascribed to it (weddings and nightclubs), had its vulgarity remained hidden and parochial, then its political significance may well have been quite different. Such controversy as *rai* has generated stems from its problematic visibility at least as much as from its content *per se*. *Rai* presents Algeria (and to

⁴⁰ Since most recording studios operate on a small scale for quick turnover, they are reluctant to take bold creative risks. Consequently, the greatest source of innovation in contemporary *rai* arguably comes from music produced outside North Africa.

some extent, North Africa generally) as a vibrant but contradictory cultural space. At once highly local in language, theme and structure (songs from Oran regularly mention specific streets and quarters of the city) but with the 'exotic' trappings of Western pop, *rai* is a trans-Mediterranean phenomenon in ways that other Maghrebi genres are not. *Rai* produced in France now addresses frustrations experienced in the housing estates of Lyons more than the Vieux Port quarter of Oran, its themes of loss, psychological conflict and disenfranchisement as applicable to diasporic North African culture as they are to indigenous youth. In a political environment where 'modernities' are not only perceived to have failed, but are under assault by proponents of hyper-traditionalism, *rai* demonstrates in many, doubtless unintended ways, the *bricolage* that most Algerians actually inhabit.

The Politics of Music Production and Consumption

As elsewhere in the world, new media technologies have had a considerable impact on the ways in which music is produced and consumed in North Africa. Pop *rai* owes its very existence to developments in recording and broadcasting technology, and in particular the fact that these have proved difficult for the authorities to control.⁴¹ On the production side, cassette (and now digitally-based) recording systems have enabled multi-tracking, sampling and – with stereo sound – spatial experimentation, all techniques which are more apparent in *rai* than in other genres. In contrast to recordings of *andalus*, which aim to reproduce 'ideal performances' of relatively large ensembles with little apparent editing, the *rai* aesthetic typically involves a solo singer accompanied by synthesised instruments, prominent electronic drums and a non-naturalistic spatial orientation of sound. In short, the object of the recording here is not to emulate a live performance but to employ novel, even disorienting techniques. In the case of *g'nāwa*, since the ritual event itself is so central to its meaning, this music is broadcast infrequently, although there are commercial recordings which attempt to reproduce 'live' performances in a studio.⁴² Not only do such different uses of technology appeal to varying audiences, but to some extent they also reflect differing notions of authenticity. For example, whilst *andalus* recordings demonstrate respect for artistic heritage – even

⁴¹ For comparative material and discussion on this theme the reader is referred to Manuel (1993) and Keil (1994).

⁴² Cheap recording technology has made it economically viable to produce small numbers of cassettes for local audiences. Consequently, music produced in regional languages or local styles do exist and are popular with urban migrants from these communities as well as with the home market. Although unmediated *g'nāwa* music does not have mass appeal, some characteristic features of the genre can be heard in other contexts, often signifying a degree of 'otherness'. For example, the popular Moroccan *cha'abi* group, Nass El Ghiwane (members of which have even been imprisoned in the past for political views expressed in their songs), use a *genbri* alongside a banjo and percussion instruments.

if neither the tradition nor the recording process are as straightforward as they are made to appear – *raï*'s 'authenticity' is based rather upon a local interpretation of modernity. More in tune with global styles, production techniques are influenced by 'foreign' *raï*, MTV and Levantine Arab pop, though musical structures and themes maintain continuity with familiar local sounds and consumption contexts.

The global impact of modern communication technologies upon local discourses and practices is by now well documented and it goes without saying that this window on the world has changed the ways in which North Africans see themselves and others. However, one general aspect of this phenomenon, which relates to the effect of media in the domestic environment, is worth highlighting here. In the Maghreb the home is broadly considered a feminine, family-oriented environment, whilst men tend to occupy public spaces from an early age. Satellite television and music broadcasting technologies in the home have effectively undermined the ability of men to protect the moral sanctity of domestic space through 'mutual surveillance'.⁴³ Although the sexes remain physically apart, it is no longer possible for this conceptual barrier to be convincingly maintained. The implications of such changes for gender politics have yet to be seen.

Conclusions

The most potent political discourses in contemporary North Africa relate to concepts of the nation state (often conflated with 'nationalised institutions' such as the presidency or official religion), to radical Islam, 'global modernity' and, to a less universal extent, to class, gender and 'race'. Each of the musics described in this chapter bear particular relations to these discourses, and consequently to one another. Whilst the Moroccan and Tunisian regimes have managed to either appropriate, placate or stifle potential threats to the current political *status quo*, this has proved much more difficult in Algeria. Because of its specific socio-cultural connotations, music itself becomes politically discursive, and this is particularly evident in cases where music engenders patterns of social activity or fosters ways of thinking and feeling about such core tropes as gender.⁴⁴ It is because music and musical practices are able to reinforce or challenge attitudes and behaviour that they have agency in identity formation. This process, however, is unpredictable and not easy for governments (let alone musicians) to control. As I have argued above, *andalus* is presented in each of the Maghreb countries as an inclusive symbol of national identity, and yet it nevertheless continues to be associated with urban elites. Though officially disapproved of, the activities of the *g'nâwa*

⁴³ See Langlois (2005) and Hadj Moussa (2003).

⁴⁴ Both Abu-Lughod (2002) and Armbrust (1996) discuss the role of the mass media in defining 'modern sensibilities' in an Egyptian context. This approach is particularly useful to music research, where political impact is most observable in the expression of emotions and behavioural practices.

are tolerated, partly because they are hard to regulate but also, I have suggested, because they serve a useful cathartic purpose and reinforce the boundaries between marginal and mainstream (that is, Arab, male) society. *Raï*, rendered problematically ubiquitous through new recording and broadcasting technologies, posits an ambiguous identity which in its crudest form is unacceptable to those responsible for national culture.

Interestingly, a correlation might be drawn between such musical discourses and the physical responses they engender, supporting Foucault's (1977) view that through culture the body becomes the ultimate site of political control. To take an example, both musicians and audiences at *andalus* performances typically respond with restraint, manifesting a respectful, static state of audition.⁴⁵ In contrast, the appropriate response to the music of the *g'nâwa* is emotional abandon. Once again, this is formalised: dancers do not suffer *uncontrolled* fits, but instead move rhythmically in a way that *suggests* trauma. It is hardly coincidental that audiences for *andalus* concerts tend to be predominantly male and that the concerts take place in public spaces, whilst mostly women attend *g'nâwa* events which are kept out of public sight, if not hearing. Equally characteristically, *raï* dancing is eminently social, usually involving small, single-sex groups rather than couples. Like the music itself, dance here combines traditional elements associated with wedding celebrations with the 'glamour' of the Western nightclub. The movements made in dancing to *raï* may be mildly sexually suggestive, but actual contact between dancers of different sexes rarely takes place.⁴⁶ As physical responses are not 'fixed' to these musics in all contexts (or for all time), it is reasonable to suggest that their current associations are, in part, a product of the social and political environment in which they exist. I suggest that this correlation between musical genre, social position and expressive behaviour may be a common principle in North African countries, though the musical styles themselves may be quite different. Musical genres have come to be strongly associated both with the groups that participate in them and with the behaviour they elicit, and consequently have connotative political meaning in relation to one another.

⁴⁵ This controlled response to music is reminiscent of the ideal emotional state of audition (*samā*) as described by Rouget (1985:264–70) and Racy (2003:56).

⁴⁶ At Algerian weddings which I have attended, male and female dancers do mix, although most guests are from the families of the bride or groom and they are closely observed by family elders. Where supervision is light it is not uncommon for fights to break out between jealous young men. Such fights tend mostly to be over issues of pride and I have not seen them result in physical injury.