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The Networked Self: Hip Hop Musicking and Muslim Identities in Neoliberal Morocco

By

Kendra Renée Salois

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requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

in

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of the

University of California, Berkeley

Committee in charge:

Professor Jocelyne Guilbault, Chair

Professor Benjamin Brinner

Professor Charles Hirschkind

Fall 2013

The Networked Self:  
Hip Hop Musicking and Muslim Identities in Neoliberal Morocco

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Kendra Renée Salois

## Abstract

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Kendra Renée Salois

Doctor of Philosophy in Music

University of California, Berkeley

Jocelyne Guilbault, Chair

This dissertation explores the emergence of a postcolonial neoliberal subjectivity amongst urban Moroccan Muslim youth through an ethnography of Moroccan hip hop practitioners' aesthetic preferences, performance practice, disciplinary strategies, and socio-musical networks. The hip hop arts, including emceeing, deejaying, b-boying or b-girling (dancing), and graffiti, were first introduced to Morocco in the early 1990s through existing networks of migrants to and from Francophone Europe. Today hip hop music-making flourishes in the nation's major cities and in smaller enclaves throughout the country.

Under the late King Hassan II and his son, King Mohamed VI, the Moroccan state has adopted neoliberalizing policies and forms of governance since the early 1980s with far-reaching social and economic consequences. In this context, I ask how hip hop practitioners' musical work enables and expresses new modes of citizenship and belonging while neoliberalization renders older forms of political participation less effective. To do this, I first situate Moroccan hip hop in relation to local musico-poetic traditions, already informed by previous generations' encounters with processes of globalization, and translocally circulating hip hop aesthetics. Drawing from an archive of interactions, interviews, observations, documents, recordings, and live performances, I then show how practitioners use hip hop to intervene in national debates, and to respond to, critique, and take advantage of the effects of neoliberalization.

While bringing the insights of network theory and Foucault's notion of governmentality to an ethnography of neoliberalization, I describe practitioners' techniques of self-management and self-care as they strive towards musical competence as well as greater economic and social mobility. In contrast with much scholarship on hip hop beyond the United States, I show that Moroccan hip hop music-making is critical, but not resistant. By locating their critiques in the terrain of the self rather than in movement-based politics, artists and their audiences effect political quietism through, not despite, their embrace of the transnational hip hop tradition's normative ideology of critique and opposition as both a stylistic and an ethical goal. The

practitioners' construction of valued selves within their socio-musical networks prompt a reconsideration of agency, citizenship, and political action in a neoliberalizing postcolonial environment.

Explicitly attracted by the discourses of freedom and resistance which hip hop and other Afro-diasporic sounds evoke in many parts of the world, members of Moroccan hip hop networks depend on those discourses to create music that enables local and translocal connections, even as their music-making and entrepreneurship conform to the goals of the neoliberalizing state. In a conjuncture profoundly shaped by Morocco's adherence to neoliberal economic orthodoxy, Moroccan hip hop practitioners offer to the national imaginary an alternative expression of pious "modern" citizenship, to transnational markets a calculated balance of proficiency and difference, and to music scholarship an alternative to the frequently unquestioned association of hip hop production and oppositional politics.

## Table of Contents

List of figures	iii
Acknowledgements	iv
Translation and Transliteration	v
<b>Chapter One</b>	
<b>Hip Hop Musicking in Neoliberalizing Morocco</b>	1
Hip Hop: Style, Politics, and Agency Under Neoliberalization	4
Neoliberalization: Economic Orthodoxy, Political Ideology, Lived Experience	9
Musickers	12
Translocal Circulation	16
Methods and Sites	19
Chapter Outlines	23
<b>Chapter Two</b>	
<b>The Urban Soundscape: Nostalgia, Recontextualization, and Nass el-Ghiwane</b>	32
Popular Musicking in the 1970s: Nass el-Ghiwane	34
Hip Hop After the “Ghiwanien Generation”	52
Conclusions	62
<b>Chapter Three</b>	
<b>The Emergence of Moroccan Hip Hop, 1990-2010</b>	68
First Encounters: 1990-1996	70
A Series of Firsts: 1996-2003	74
State Interventions: 2003-Present	78
New Technologies and Enhanced Networks: 2006-2011	84

<b>Chapter Four</b>	
<b>Financing Change: Hip Hop, Tourism, and Moroccan Music Festivals</b>	100
Modernization, Neoliberalization, and the Tourism Industry	102
Sponsorship, Representation, and Hip Hop in Moroccan Music Festivals	109
Conclusions	136
<b>Chapter Five</b>	
<b>From Subject to Citizen: Embodied Listening, Ethical Citizenship, and the Formation of a Hip Hop Counterpublic</b>	147
Listening and Agency in the Public Sphere	149
Two Live Performances	157
Citizenship	169
Conclusions	176
<b>Chapter Six</b>	
<b>From Citizen to Subject: Professionalism, Translocal Networking, and Neoliberalizing Subjectivities</b>	184
The Self as Entrepreneur: Professionalism Discourse	185
Becoming Professional	192
Translocal Connections Through Social Media	203
Conclusions: The Impossibility of Politics for the Neoliberal Subject	210
<b>Conclusion: Neoliberalization, Citizenship, and Translocal Forms of Belonging</b>	216
Works Cited	226
Appendix I: Hip Hop Musicians by City	249
Appendix II: Selected Discography	252
Appendix III: Tables	254

## List of Figures

Fig. 1. Solo and antiphonal singing in the first two lines of “Es-Siniyya” (1970)	44
Fig. 2. Nass el-Ghiwane in concert, Fes, June 5 2011	45
Fig. 3. Antiphonal singing in the third stanza of “Es-Siniyya”	46
Fig. 4. Time Unit Box System notation for Amine Snoop’s rap of “Lebtana” (1979)	54
Fig. 5. The program for the Festival de la Ville, 2010	112
Fig. 6. The audience in Place Boujloud waiting for Muslim’s performance	116
Fig. 7. Muslim on stage at Place Boujloud, Fes, June 7 2011	119
Fig. 8. An early frame in Rwapa Crew’s “Allah Ya Moulana” (2010)	125
Fig. 9. Rwapa Crew and friends walking away from the Koutoubia Mosque	126
Fig. 10. DJ Key juggling “Issawa Style” (2005)	158
Fig. 11. H-Kayne in concert, Meknes, July 20 2010	160
Fig. 12. Poster for Maroc Hit Parade, Rabat, 2010	164
Fig. 13. Poster for “Festival HipHop Non Stop,” Sala al-Jadida, 2010	193
Fig. 14. A limited network map for Amine, September 2009-September 2010	206
Fig. 15. ‘Adil and Amine at Borj Sud shooting “M’dina Majnouna” (2010)	208



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## Translation and Transliteration

Throughout the text of this dissertation I have used the *International Journal of Middle Eastern Studies (IJMES)* transcription guide to transliterate from both Moroccan Arabic (Derija) and Modern Standard Arabic (MSA). Transliterated words that do not follow these guidelines are already well-known in English, or are the preferred spelling of the person using the word (i.e., for a professional name or in the title of a song or album). The one major exception to this exception is the name of the city of Fes, which I spell with an *s*, as the French do, because it conforms to the way the Arabic word is spelled and pronounced (rather than Fez).

I have also transliterated original texts from Aransiya, a phonetic adaptation to Latin keyboards which uses Roman numerals to substitute for Arabic letters with no English or French equivalent, into the Latin alphabet using *IJMES* guidelines. Finally, I have left the original grammar and orthography in most of my interlocutors' written and spoken quotations in English; I usually indicate that I am doing so.

## Chapter One: Hip Hop Musicking in Neoliberalizing Morocco

In late November 2009, I arrived in Fes from Rabat during ‘Eid al-Adha (Ar. lit. “Holiday of the Sacrifice”), when Muslims commemorate Ibrahim’s example of submission to Allah’s will. I planned to accompany some American friends to their host family’s celebrations.<sup>1</sup> I also had a research objective: the day before ‘Eid, I was to visit JP, a French hip hop deejay, beatmaker, and producer who had just finished building a professional-grade studio in his pied-à-terre in suburban Fes. But at the last minute, my plans were changed.

“4pm Café Clock hiphop documentary. With JP and Syndi-K,” read the text I received from a mutual friend on Friday afternoon. I interpreted this to mean that JP and his group of Moroccan emcees, Syndi-K, were attending a showing of a documentary at Café Clock, a restaurant in the oldest part of Fes that had become a central gathering place for both the expatriate and the fashionable youth networks of the city. Disappointed that the studio tour was off, but wanting to salvage the appointment, I jumped in a taxi to Fes al-Bali.

As soon as I reached Café Clock I realized my assumptions were wrong. The café wasn’t showing a documentary; it was hosting the taping of one. A quartet of teens was performing on the balcony in front of a hand-painted mural of Islamic calligraphy. Across the balcony, a television crew was filming, with one camera on the rappers and one panning across the rooftop tables filled with young people nodding to the beat.

JP was nowhere to be found, but two of the emcees from Syndi-K waved me over to their table. Besides ‘Adil and Abdou, emcees in Syndi-K whom I had first met in early October, there was ‘Adil’s fiancée, a friend of hers, and L-Tzack, an emcee from the neighborhood who had recently left Fes’ most famous hip hop group for a solo career.

Everyone at the table agreed the film crew was German, but no one knew which channel they were from or what their television program was called. No one knew exactly how this group of relatively inexperienced young men, who called themselves Fassa, became the subject of the taping. I asked if Syndi-K would also be performing for the documentary. The two band members smiled and shook their heads.

During a break, one of the emcees came to the table and thanked L-Tzack in particular for coming to their performance. When the performance resumed, they invited him to join them for a song. At first L-Tzack demurred, but faced with cheers from Fassa and the audience, he wove through the crowd to the stage. The deejay cued up a beat dominated by a militaristic snare cadence. Someone handed him a mic, and with characteristic bravado, L-Tzack launched into one of the very few improvised raps I heard during my fieldwork.

After L-Tzack ceded the stage to the awestruck members of Fassa, the most confident of the three emcees launched into another verse. Soon he was interrupted by the *adhan*, the call to prayer, broadcast live from tinny speakers at the top of minarets all over Fes al-Bali. He was concentrating so intently that he did not hear the call, despite the characteristic keen timbre and steadily rising pitch of the Maghribi muezzin. A ripple of friendly cries and gestures seemed to accompany the wave of sound, from the back of the audience to the front, until the emcee’s bandmates heard and tapped him on the shoulder. The music was immediately cut, conversation levels dropped to a murmur, and I shut off my video camera as well.

Later that day, the popular English-language blog *The View From Fes* posted an interview with the director of the documentary, Hannes Schuler. Schuler and his crew traveled the MENA region to create “a German four part TV programme about Islam” for the German/French channel Arte (Ranger 2009). The finished product, *Gesichter des Islam (Faces of Islam)*, debuted in late 2010. Footage of Fassa was incorporated into the episode subtitled “Men and Women.” After footage in which the emcees discuss the traditional role of men as provider for their wives and families—presumably from an interview, though the questions are not audible—scenes of Fassa and their audience at the Café Clock performance conclude the segment. As music fades to background and the camera pans from the stage towards the sunset sky, the narrator intones, “With their music, the rappers of Fassa combine their Muslim roots with a Western form of expression. One of their songs is titled, ‘I Am Muslim.’ It announces an integrationist ideology, a reconciliation between religion and individuality.”

I could not find a copy of the entire four-part documentary. I have seen the segment featuring Fassa, however, because members of the band posted it to YouTube in both published versions—German and French—as part of their formidable online presence.<sup>2</sup>

This rather mundane vignette crystallizes several key issues in this study. From an ethnographic perspective it evokes a classic genre of fieldwork anecdote, in which the ethnographer must respond to spontaneous changes of plan and has some of her assumptions upended in the process. It illustrates the closeness, the intensely emplaced locality, of this small group of musicians and fans through the mutual respect between a young performing group and a local hip hop pioneer. It also demonstrates the ways Muslim identity and faith practice are pervasively woven into the texture of everyday life for Muslim Moroccans in Fes.

On the other hand, my vignette also insists on the centrality of issues, forces, and discourses that appear to come from beyond the fieldsite. For the German television crew, Fassa’s raps were another exotic media object to fit into an existing narrative about Islam, Muslims, and Arabs. By editing their footage of Fassa’s rehearsals, interviews, and performance around a discussion of heterosexual romantic relationships, the documentarists leveraged a difference within a difference, using the perceived timeliness and Westernness of hip hop to comment on the perceived timelessness, traditionalism, and patriarchy of (global) Muslim societies. Precisely because gender roles are such an object of concern in discourse about Muslims in Europe and North America, the film cannot help but confirm the importance of the subject for its viewers even as it seeks “to break the cliché” (Ranger 2009).<sup>3</sup> Hip hop’s unshakeable associations with contemporaneity, “the West,” and a history of African-American expressions of resistance allow the filmmakers, and implicitly the viewers, to claim a more nuanced view of the subject even as they indulge in traditional discursive tropes (“a reconciliation between religion and individuality”).

At the same time, the members of Fassa are active participants in their own mediatization and inscription into this discourse. By posting their segment of the documentary to YouTube, they repurpose the segment within their online networks as an advertisement for their own legitimacy and importance. They also raise issues of translocal mobility, since their appearance on German and French television could make possible further contacts or appearances in Europe. Their relationship to translocal media has come full circle, as they move from learning about an

internationally recognized art form through the internet to gaining competency in that art form locally to sending their locally inflected art “back” into the paths of international circulation.

However, exercising their agency within an overdetermined framework does not free the members of Fassa from that framework or those discursive tropes; rather, it highlights the degree to which Orientalist logics of difference are normalized even within post-colonial Moroccan life.<sup>4</sup> Repurposing the documentary segment may provoke short-term notoreity, but it also accepts--strategically or tacitly--the continuance of a colonial-era gaze in which European commentators define what is interesting or important about Muslim cultures. Hip hop artists in particular, aspiring as they do to national and international recognition, always have to be able to read the local through the eyes of the global—which frequently means the global North.

While these are tropes with a long history, their continuing forms belie fundamental changes in political, economic, and social structures in contemporary Moroccan life. Since 1983, when the country accepted a package of structural adjustment reforms along with its first loan from the International Monetary Fund (IMF), Morocco’s adoption of neoliberalizing policies has transformed the state into a selective advocate of “free” markets.<sup>5</sup> The first generation to come of age under these policies and their effects, the “*jil jdid*” or “new generation,” also hosts the nation's first hip hop practitioners.

In the context of the far-reaching social and economic changes wrought by neoliberalizing policies, what makes hip hop an attractive and effective choice for some young, mostly urban Moroccans? This dissertation argues that Moroccan hip hop musickers' musical and social practices enable modes of belonging and subjectivation that the musickers find more appropriate to their new, unstable socio-economic environment.<sup>6</sup> By creating and maintaining networks based around shared aesthetic preferences, hip hop musickers make a space in which they can respond to, critique, and take advantage of the effects of neoliberalizations. Crucially, this space also links to other hip hop networks, connecting Moroccan musickers aesthetically and materially to musickers beyond their neighborhoods, cities, and country through both new and historical paths of circulation. Just as “the local” is imagined in relation to “the global,” “the national” is imagined, represented, and invoked by Moroccan hip hop musicians in relation to the translocal and the diasporic.

This space--the space made by a new genre, simultaneously iconic of global media flows and deeply unfamiliar—allows for several things. It offers to a nation enmeshed in a debate over the best ways to be Moroccan, Muslim, and “modern” an alternative representation of that matrix, combining signifiers of each rather than stressing divisions between identities. It offers to musickers opportunities to connect with other practitioners in desirable localities, raising the possibility of social and economic mobility through personal ties and musical success. And it enables networked musickers to articulate, as a group, a set of values and techniques that encourage them to think of not only their music but also their selves as products of their consumption, visibility, and artistic successes in a translocal musical marketplace.

In what ways does making and listening to hip hop allow urban Moroccan youth to subject themselves to market discipline, to ethnic and political identifications, and to membership in the *umma*? In what ways does learning competence in the sociality, physicality, and ethics of the hip hop arts enable new formulations of citizenship and of belonging? This dissertation explores the

way that young, urban Moroccan hip hop musickers engage with the effects of neoliberalization on contemporary Moroccan life in and through their musicking, their socio-musical networks, and their self-disciplinary activities. I argue that through participation in Moroccan hip hop networks, musickers develop the conditions for and outlines of a neoliberal subjectivity, one in which expressions of Muslim piety, a critical outlook, and translocal affiliations are valued not first as tools for oppositional politics, but as competitive advantages in a fiercely dynamic market of musical products and life chances.

### **Hip Hop: Style, Politics, and Agency Under Neoliberalization**

Richard Jankowsky has pointed out that in Tunisia, critics of the healing musical practice known as *stambeli* “employ the same stagist theory of history that their colonizers utilized before them,” performing their own personal alignment with Euro-centric modernity by positioning *stambeli* practitioners as contemporary ancestors or survivals of the premodern era (2004: 57; cf. Fabian 1983). Within Morocco, modernist discourses that map Westernness (however defined) to the contemporary serve as tools of productive power, helping to structure hierarchies of social and economic positioning amongst Moroccans. Simultaneously, they are inverted by tourism discourse to promote and exoticize Moroccan music, art, and architecture as “heritage.” If traditional musical practices like those of the Gnawa, the Imazighen of the Atlas mountain chain, and various Sufi *turuq* (sing. *tariqa*; Ar. lit. way, path; brotherhoods) are occasionally celebrated for their “premodern” difference, hip hop is the Afro-diasporic sound on the knife edge of the future, splitting opinion between those who celebrate the discursive link between “modernity” and “Westernness” and those who worry about “cultural invasion” (*al-ghawz al-fikri*).<sup>7</sup>

Though I focus on the transnational hip hop tradition’s historic and structural connections to neoliberalization below, not all factors important to hip hop studies can or ought to be explained in terms of neoliberalization. As a social practice, hip hop emerged from a transnational milieu in the South Bronx of the 1970s, where US racial politics and New York City’s policies encouraged Puerto Ricans, Dominicans, African-Americans, and Anglophone Caribbeans to cluster together.<sup>8</sup> As a genre, it represents the latest, most omnivorous, and perhaps most commercially successful expression of Black Atlantic aesthetics. As a cultural and political force, its success rests to some degree on a historic discourse around Afro-diasporic sounds and bodies that it perpetuates, even as that success is mediated by its circulation through the corporations and institutions that make up the multinational popular music industry.

Hip hop’s constitutive aesthetic and political tensions become audible for transnational adopters of the hip hop tradition in the context of rhetoric that associates popular cultural expressions of the Black Atlantic with discourses of difference, freedom, and resistance. Hip hop practitioners’ emphases on individuality, entrepreneurship, expertise, and authenticity occur across varied political positions. They are all, I argue, effective responses to neoliberalization in both post-industrial US cities and post-colonial Moroccan ones.

The hip hop arts arose in conjunction with the effects of neoliberalized governance on the city of New York in the late 1970s, spreading during the early 1980s to other Atlantic coast cities, including London, and Los Angeles by the mid-1980s. In both New York and Los Angeles, the

shift of available jobs from manufacturing to the service sector, the movement to post-Fordist “just-in-time” manufacturing promoting flexible employment, and the decrease in public funding and welfare intensified patterns of economic and racial segregation (Rose 1994, Quinn 2005). Eithne Quinn has linked the emergence of Southern Californian gangsta rap to these conditions, framing them as symptoms of the United States’ rejection of Keynesianism and the rise of neoliberal leadership (“neoconservatives”) in the late 1970s and early 1980s. Disproportionately affected by the global redistribution of manufacturing centers and capital, working-class African-Americans in Los Angeles relied on strategically essentialist portrayals of their own impoverishment to sell records, turning early hip hop’s lyrics against criminal activity into a celebration of entrepreneurial activity within the context of a “survival culture” (Glasgow quoted in Quinn 2005: 48).

Hip hop scholars, as students of a preminent “global” artistic, linguistic, and commercial force, have been at the forefront of research into lived experiences of glocalization.<sup>9</sup> Recent work exploring the circulation and adaptation of hip hop aesthetics in locations as varied as Japan, Australia, Mexico and Tanzania foregrounds the role of changing telecommunications markets and infrastructure in young people’s adoption of hip hop arts, as well as its impact on what rhetorics and characterizations of African-American experience resonate with each group (Condry 2006, Verán 2006, Perullo 2005). Youth of Maghribi descent living in Europe, primarily in France, Holland, and Spain, access contemporary media read as African-American from the US simultaneously with “glocal” hip hop traditions dating from the 1980s in their home countries (Gazzah 2008, Prévos 1996 and 2001).

Over a decade ago, Tony Mitchell recognized that hip hop’s recorded music, at the very least, had “become a vehicle for global youth affiliations and a tool for reworking local identities all over the world” (Mitchell 2001: 2). The success of a shared hip hop aesthetic as we know it, one in which music from across countries, regions, and continents is audibly recognizable as hip hop, could not exist without the “simultaneous processes of globalization and localization” characteristic of circulations under neoliberalism (Alim et al, 2009). Without such processes, the “connective marginalities” described by Halifu Osumare (2007), or the “global Hip Hop Nation” in which linguistic anthropologist H. Samy Alim suggests compulsory membership, would lose their discursive force and cohesion. Marc Perry suggests that the “global flows” of hip hop’s performative and musical conventions allow youth of African descent throughout the world to rework locally dominant conceptions of Blackness through, not despite, their consumption of “hypercommodified” hip hop imaginaries, simultaneously adapting these contours to local aesthetics while forming themselves into “black diasporic subjects” (2008).

In postcolonial contexts like Morocco, scholars have traced the interlocking economic and cultural factors that structure the introduction of hip hop media and influence its meanings and uses. Many such contexts have in common the liberalization of media markets at the request of IMF structural adjustment programs, as well as the historic attractiveness of narratives of freedom, opposition, and difference associated with hip hop and other Afro-diasporic musics (Perry 2008: 640, Shipley 2009: 633). Moroccan musicians and their fans form part of a generation of hip hop musicking around the world who encountered the hip hop arts through their internationally mass-mediated forms, rather than through face-to-face meetings with early

practitioners, starting in the late 1980s and early 1990s.<sup>10</sup> Unlike the Brazilian or Ghanaian examples, for instance, Moroccan musickers only rarely invoke a shared Africanness, preferring to align themselves with the European and Middle Eastern parts of their historical, political, and cultural milieu. Yet they do share with Afro-diasporic and non-Afro-diasporic practitioners a rhetorical and an affective commitment to beliefs in the power of hip hop's genre conventions to move minds, hearts, and bodies.

### *aesthetics, authenticity*

Across various styles, hip hop values stylistic diversity and originality in sampling practices, creative use of rhyme and rhythmic patterns, and linguistic imagery. These may be deliberately historicist in their derivation and their logics, using traditional practices of signifyin(g) upon older and contemporary music, lyrics, and oral tradition, yet simultaneously individualist.<sup>11</sup> As early graffiti artist and emcee Fab Five Freddy put it, the hip hop artist's goal is constantly to push the boundaries of accepted practice, to achieve "a style nobody can deal with" that forces one's colleagues to respond with innovations of their own (quoted in Rose 1994: 80-81). Both individual artists and their works "operate...through the organized proliferation of individual difference in an economized matrix," as Lois McNay theorizes about neoliberal "regimes" (McNay 2009: 56). Assertive individuality is held in productive tension with continually expanding genre boundaries for musical and personal style.

Entrepreneurship has been part of hip hop aesthetics since its inception, though its forms and celebrations of those forms take shape differently in different times and places (cf. Shipley 2013). Even early hip hop's emphases on individuality, originality, and creativity followed a logic of differentiation that enables increased consumer desire, both from the perspective of practitioners as consumers (of records, fashions, etc.) and of practitioners as creators (of new recordings and cultural icons). Commercial recordings and mass media attention did bring about major aesthetic and philosophical shifts. Since the late 1970s and early 1980s, when the first commercial recordings initiated a refocus of hip hop practice on the figure of the solo emcee rather than teams, and on cohesive narration rather than contextual collections of rhymes, the independent voice has taken on greater sonic and metaphorical value (Dimitriadis 1996).

That is not to say, however, that the earliest hip hop arts existed outside of the logic of commodification characteristic of late capitalism and neoliberalism. The earliest parties, where deejays experimented with what would cohere as hip hop's musical aesthetic, charged admission fees and were designed to make a profit. Hip hop deejays and graffiti artists were paid for their work, in local discos and by New York's visual art avant-garde, before the earliest commercial recordings made emceeing the most profitable of hip hop's four elements (cf. Chang 2005). As youth who hailed predominantly from the most impoverished neighborhoods of the Bronx, Brooklyn, and Queens, early hip hop artists cobbled together their crafts from available materials not only for pleasure, but also to earn local fame and opportunities to make money.

The high priority placed on authenticity, or rather authenticating strategies, limits acceptable differentiation even as the authenticated individual seeks to stand apart in a memorable and marketable way. In his discussion of mainstream US hip hop's preoccupation with performative



racial authenticity, John L. Jackson theorizes sincerity as an alternative to authenticity which privileges “each subject’s individual ability to determine the contours of the real” (2004: 192). Jackson argues that it is “analytically useful to extricate sincerity from authenticity” without abandoning our exploration of authenticating strategies, or what Jackson, following philosopher Kwame Anthony Appiah, terms “scripts” (12-13). While authenticating strategies display communally determined markers, sincere expressions—which can include the “‘serious’ unseriousness” of signifyin(g) and satire—have no predetermined contours (Potter 1995: 84). Jackson notes that sincerity can be invoked to “police and subvert entrenched expressions of hip-hop authenticity,” but also to reinforce authentications (175).

Increasingly, to be an authenticated hip hop subject is to foreground one’s neoliberal values. These values remain even when the authenticated subject criticizes neoliberal institutions. The tension between resistant politics, or the potential for them, and self-commodification drives a continuing fascination with hip hop in the US and elsewhere. Insight into and insistence on the shared foundations of political and economic violence against the marginalized characterized the “conscious” hip hop my Moroccan interlocutors frequently cited as legendary, including acts like KRS-One, Public Enemy, Black Star, and Dead Prez. Beyond these and similar artists, the discursive association of African-American agency and creativity with resistance keeps open the possibility of hearing inspiration and politicization in even the most “commercial” of hip hop.

### *unfreedom*

The hip hop arts have been read, like other predominantly African-American expressive practices, as expressions of unfreedom. I want to write “an expression in protest of unfreedom;” and certainly, some hip hop continues to audibly and rhetorically protest specific histories of being unfree that people of color and African-Americans in particular live with in the US. But framing hip hop, especially recorded hip hop music, as solely or predominantly in protest of unfreedom is too narrow for a full reading of its impacts. For some, hip hop is seen as a means of escape from some kinds of unfreedom, especially limitations on financial gain, wealth creation, and mobility that are an integral part of the experience of both the intentional and structural racisms of the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> centuries in the US. At the same time, hip hop’s very success has also enabled the continuation of a historic logic of representational unfreedom. Here, different images promote new but similar boxes in which our expectations for male and female African-Americannesses reside.<sup>12</sup> Different figures occupy similarly unique spaces in inverted discourses; for example, the figure of the African-American hip hop “mogul”—Russell Simmons, Sean “Puff Daddy” Combs, Jay-Z—depends upon the lack of wildly successful African-American businessmen in other industries for its rhetorical interest.

Circulation of discourses and affects via commodified musical products is, I argue, the dominant way that neoliberalizing subjects experience and work with discourses. Listeners and musickers (including both amateur and stylistically competent musicians) hear and use discourses associated with genres, and the sounds and gestures indexical of genre associations, through—not despite—their commodification. “Hypercommodification” makes possible not only the circulation of hip hop, but the continued renewal of discourses of resistance, creativity, and

transcendence of unfreedom that accompany hip hop in its travels throughout the world.<sup>13</sup> Those discourses are sustained and renewed in new locations precisely because, for some hip hop listeners, they resonate with local experiences of being unfree.

By the same token, creating one's own music within local logics of commodification, and seeking to commodify one's products in turn, is a dominant way to send one's expressions out into the world. My interlocutors experience no contradiction between creating the best musical expression they can, including their sincere thoughts and feelings in the process and product, and commodifying that recorded expression. Alongside the non-commodified expressions that receive a great deal of attention in our contemporary media ecosystem (e.g., YouTube videos of original songs and covers of popular songs), commodifying one's own expressions is, for my interlocutors, a perfectly commendable and sincere way to engage with moving music.

### *agency and resistance*

Having emerged along with neoliberalism in 1970s post-industrial US cities, hip hop is often seen to contest the failures of Western liberalism “from the inside,” on its own terms. Tricia Rose describes her book *Black Noise* as “examin[ing] the complex and contradictory relationships between forces of racial and sexual domination, black cultural priorities, and popular resistance in contemporary rap music” (1994: xiii). Here, agency is still identified through “resistance,” and carving a space for self-determination results in “complex and contradictory” arrangements.<sup>14</sup> Rose acknowledges that some choices both constrain and enable agents. Rose's concept of agency leaves room for subjects who hold multiple positions, compromise, and strategize among imperfect options (even if they strategize for resistant purposes only).

In a move mirroring the selection bias of early jazz scholars working to legitimate their object of study within the academy, scholarly work on hip hop in the 1990s and 2000s concentrated on “conscious” or resistant musical documents (e.g. Keyes 2002). The association of agency, especially African-American agency, with resistance continued to be upheld by hip hop scholars throughout the 2000s, strengthened by the growing scholarly interest in hip hop as sites of resistance outside the United States. Studies outside the US have depicted hip hop as essentially liberatory, regardless of its diversity of expressions, and present it as a tool adopted strategically by the marginalized.<sup>15</sup> Alternately, studies suggest that secularism and individualism, assumed essential to hip hop, dominate through American cultural hegemony (Mitchell 2001). H. Samy Alim asserts that “Hip Hop Culture, *as evidence of Black American youth's agency*, provides global youth culture with incredible resistive potential in what has become an uncertain and unsettling geopolitical landscape” (2006: 49, my emphasis). For those with a prior commitment to reading hip hop as potentially political, non-oppositional expressions can be read as *unintentionally* reifying or glamorizing certain inequalities, even as artists retain the ability to signify on other inequalities, oppositional agents, or themselves.

Central to the formulations of agency which I have quoted here is an association of agency with freedom—not only freedom from oppression, but freedom of choice, as constitutive of a rational, utility-maximizing self. This same self is imagined by economists (notably Milton Friedman and Friedrich von Hayek), rational-choice theorists, and game theorists, and produced

by neoliberal applications of classical economics; it can be read as a direct descendent of liberal humanism's celebration of self-interest. Construing certain rational behaviors as the most fundamental freedoms leaves liberalism and neoliberalism unable to imagine being non-liberal, non-rational, or non-secular as an exercise of freedoms.<sup>16</sup>

The effects of the adoption of hip hop arts for implicit or explicit resistance have been and will continue to be demonstrated by scholars. In addition to this research, a balanced vision of hip hop studies can and should include inquiry into expressions that support, are indifferent to, or try and fail to change existing inequalities in their home communities. An understanding of agency respectful of the full spectrum of interpretations and beliefs held by individuals will acknowledge the efficacy of both those moves which liberate and those which are complicit with existing hegemonic practices, even as it teases them apart. The popularity of hip hop in the US alone from the 1990s-present has led an enormous mass-mediated body of listeners to interpret hip hop without explicitly oppositional lyrics, or which do not signal opposition through musical references, without the cultural training which dedicated hip hop fans bring to bear.

In exploring shifts in subjectivities under neoliberalization, I am not attempting to discredit or ignore the potential for political solidarity and action that the hip hop arts might hold for Moroccan musickers. Indeed, to ignore this potential and the hope it engenders is to ignore a persistent theme amongst my interlocutors. Rather, I argue that as scholars we must temper our enthusiasm for this potential with the realization that it is still mostly potential, with few or invisible pathways to conversion into actions and effects. Thus, it is important to see the potential for change and solidarity *within* the regime of value that neoliberalization sustains, even if those potential changes are not what we expect people to do or to want.

In Jocelyne Guilbault's discussion of discourses on Calypso and their connections to historically significant forms of nationalism, the terms of the discourse are largely set by factors external to the genre (Guilbault 2008: 283 n. 26). Critiques from within such discourses, no matter how insightful, do not necessarily escape the broader discursive frame. In the case of Moroccan hip hop, these include neoliberalization as a set of policies and as governmentality. Alongside this, however, discourses of pan-Arab solidarity, nationalism, and modernity from the Independence era still circulate. They retain much of their former importance, even if the stakes of the outcomes they imagine have changed under neoliberalization. I attempt to show these discourses at work, in their many combinations and contradictions, throughout the following chapters by tracing forms of connection between musickers over time (chapter two), in their local and translocal networks (chapters three and six), and in musicking events (chapters four and five).

### **Neoliberalization: Economic Orthodoxy, Political Ideology, Lived Experience**

#### *historic relations of dependency*

Neoliberalism is the currently reigning orthodoxy in economic and political thought in the developed world. It has been variously defined through ideological, historical, political, or anthropological frames. As an ideology, "neoliberalism" refers to a particular vision of what

constitutes a free and just society expressed through a flexible set of economic and social policy prescriptions (Harvey 2005). From an ethnographic perspective, ideologies of neoliberalism expressed through both political and economic regimes of value bring with them relations of governmentality and of subjectivation.<sup>17</sup> Morocco has practiced a form of neoliberal economic and political orthodoxy since agreeing to an International Monetary Fund structural adjustment program in 1981. Its relations of dependency, while characteristic of developing economies under neoliberalization, also follow patterns established as early as the first half of the 19th century.

In the free-trade era of the mid-1800s, Morocco signed a trade agreement with Britain (1856) even as France gained influence at the Moroccan court and small-boat piracy attacked international shipping on the Mediterranean coast (Miège 1963: 314, Pennell 2001: 56). Between 1860, when Morocco lost half its annual customs receipts in an indemnity to Spain following the Tetouan War, and 1904, in which Morocco took a major loan from a consortium of French and Belgian banks formed for the purpose, it became simultaneously weaker and more attractive to the colonial powers (Burke III 1977: 20-21, Pennell 2000: 130). Combined with the changes wrought by Morocco's place in the world economy—urbanization, increasing numbers of European landowners and speculators, debased currency, trade imbalances, and rival political factions—this decline allowed France to provide further loans, and with the acceptance of other colonial powers after the 1906 Conference at Algeciras, eventually to establish a Protectorate in the 1912 Treaty of Fès (Wright 1991, Gilson-Miller 2013: chapter 3).

After the end of the French Protectorate in 1956, King Mohamed V ruled until his untimely death in 1961. His son, King Hassan II, followed both the approach of the French and the choices of other recently post-colonial nations in centralizing control over major industries, education, and arts production. Through the 1970s and 1980s, financial planning was led by the State and King Hassan II in a series of Five-Year Plans (Pennell 2001). Among other factors, a fundamental reliance on phosphates and agricultural exports, along with policies such as subsidies on key foods and free admission for those qualified to enter the university system, led to substantial deficits by the late 1970s. Abdelislam Maghraoui and Guilain Denoeux pinpoint the period from 1973-77, when the combination of a rapid rise of phosphate prices on the world market plus an over-ambitious spending program created conditions for a suddenly swollen deficit once prices returned to 1973 levels (1998: 56).<sup>18</sup>

### *neoliberalization in Morocco*

Many post-colonial states' experiences with neoliberalization, especially on the African continent, are tied together by the similarities of the development and structural adjustment prescriptions they received from the International Monetary Fund and World Bank (Ferguson 1999 and 2006; Hilgers 2012: 82). By the end of the 1990s, the IMF was moving away from its one-size-fits-all approach to structural adjustment towards a more nuanced focus on countries' distinct human and economic needs, without losing faith in the market-centric philosophy expressed in the "policy instruments" of the Washington Consensus (Williamson 1990).

Along with several other states in the region in the 1980s and 1990s, Morocco was asked to open capital and consumer markets, increase foreign direct investment, privatize state-owned industries, deregulate, lower taxes on enterprise, shed public sector jobs, cut domestic subsidies, and other tasks in exchange for loans and expertise (Cohen and Jaidi 2006, Maghraoui 2001, Pfeifer 1999). Maghraoui periodizes the government's economic liberalization strategies since Independence in three stages, describing "1) a period of monetary stabilization (1965-83); 2) a structural adjustment program (1983-92); and 3) a program of *mise à niveau* (or "upgrading") intended to restructure Moroccan firms so as to increase their capacity and competitiveness in preparation for free trade with Europe (1995 to the present)" (2002: 25). Morocco has continued to work with the IMF and other, latter-day neoliberal institutions, including US-funded development organizations such as the US Agency for International Development (USAID), the Millennium Challenge Corporation, and the US-Middle East Partnership Initiative (MEPI). These assist in creating, funding, and executing social-service programs that were formerly the sole province of the state.

In accordance with Peck and Tickell's description of "roll-back" and "roll-out" neoliberalisms, we may characterize the structural adjustments required by the IMF as part of that institution's mandate to intervene, or cause the Moroccan state to intervene, in "roll-back" neoliberalization—the *construction* and maintenance of free markets via the *destruction* of state-owned capital. Typically, privatization is the most characteristic of "roll-back" moves. In the Moroccan context, privatization proceeded slowly and perhaps confoundingly—the state spent money to upgrade firms before attempting to sell them off, held on to the most financially sound companies until the last rounds, and refused to fully privatize in strategically profitable sectors like phosphate mining and fisheries (Khosrowshahi 1997). Like other neoliberalizing initiatives, privatization was ultimately most beneficial to the *Makhzen*—the royal family and its social and political intimates.<sup>19</sup> Likewise, the "upgrading" Maghraoui cites may correspond to what Peck and Tickell consider the later "roll-out" phase of neoliberalization, the "radical, emergent combination of neoliberalized economic management and authoritarian state forms" (2002: 384). As I discuss in chapter four, the public-private partnerships encouraged under the state's tourism plan also correspond to "roll-out" neoliberalization.

In linking hip hop arts to this multi-decade process, I argue that rather than a comprehensive re-creation of socio-economic life, neoliberalization has led to a shift in approaches and values—the abandonment or alteration of some practices, the rise of others, and new meanings for some continuing ones.

### *neoliberalization as lived experience*

Recent ethnography of subjectivation under neoliberalizing regimes, in places as diverse as Dubai, Jakarta, and southern Ethiopia, tracks the sometimes subtle ways that self-understanding, values, and relationships shift in response to new rhetorics and forms of governance.<sup>20</sup> In its role as not just a defender but a producer of "free" markets, the neoliberalizing state helps to produce subjects whose available choices are geared towards their participation in and identification with a free market and its values. Scholars are beginning to address some of the signs that a form of

neoliberal rationality is taking root in Morocco. Denoëux and Maghraoui assert, “Today, many people in Morocco adhere to the view that the state’s economic role should be limited to guaranteeing the respect of market rules and to providing services that the private sector cannot deliver” (65). Sonja Hegasy contends that youth, including significantly more women than men, produce and accept “modern” arguments for the continuation of the Moroccan monarchy that are consistent with neoliberal rationalities (2007). Taieb Belghazi cites “the dynamic hypertrophy of ephemeral and informal jobs” in “the context of globalization” as a force in the increasing popularity of Islamist ideologies in Morocco (2009: 149).

Neoliberal governmentality effects a “change in perspective” that “allows for a reconceptualization of one’s self as one’s practices” [rather than ...?] (Dilts 2011: 144). More than one musicker, during my fieldwork, repeated to me New York emcee KRS-One’s dictum that rap is something you do, and hip hop is something you live. In a multi-lingual spoken-word interlude on his 2009 album *Byad u Khal*, emcee Don Bigg asserts that “hip hop is a way of life, *y’anni, thaqafa, y’anni, culture.*” In other words, fully appreciating hip hop culture means appreciating an ensemble of practices and, behind those, skills and perspectives. In the following chapters I explore the ways that hip hop musickers exhibit a sense of oneself as one’s practices, a sense that accords with the political and economic ideologies of neoliberalization.

I am not arguing that this subjectivity entirely effaces earlier and/or alternative definitions of the self, including the self’s obligations and to whom one has obligations, present in Moroccan culture. Philosophies about competition, self-improvement, and mobility exist alongside older ideas about achievement, such as those embodied by the *diplomés chômeurs*, in which collective well-being and collective action by a defined class is the ideal, instead of the neoliberal goal of individualized socio-economic mobility.<sup>21</sup> Someone who is *majnouna*, that is, in a relationship where a jinn exercises domination over the subject, may have a rather different understanding of the field in which she exercises choices and whether those choices are practices of freedom.<sup>22</sup> Likewise a practicing Sufi adept might define himself (usually himself), at least in part, by his practices of worship and contemplation, but is not encouraged by his training to see those practices as investments in “human capital” that produce a “return” in a “market.” If they are investments, they are like all investments oriented towards the future, but that future is the possible arrival at a state of full understanding and experience of the oneness that is God (*tawhid*). Conceptualizing that as a “return” on an investment would needlessly—inaccurately--supplant another historic and deeply felt doctrine.

## Musickers

I derive the noun “musicker” from Christopher Small’s gerund “musicking”:

*To "music" is to take part, in any capacity, in a musical performance.* That means not only to perform but also to listen; to provide material for a performance-what we call composing; to prepare for a performance[...]; or to take part in any activity that can affect the nature of that style of human encounter which is a musical performance. We should certainly include dancing, if anyone is dancing[...], and we might even on occasion extend

it to what the box-office clerk is doing when he sells tickets, and the person who tunes the piano, and the cleaners who clean up afterwards” (Small 2001: 343, italics in original).

Additionally, the verb “reminds us that musicking[...]is an activity in which all those present are involved, and for whose nature and whose success or failure all those present bear a measure of responsibility” (2001: 344). Live musical performance in a wide variety of contexts is essential to Moroccan hip hop musicking. However, I expand Small’s concept of musicking beyond the performance event in order to account for the efforts people put into their hip hop networks before, during, and after performances—or even towards potential performances.

During my fieldwork, as I sought to map social ties and nodes of social and aesthetic influence, I met or worked with hip hop musical artists, including emcees, deejays, singers, beatmakers, and dancers; hip hop visual artists, including graffiti artists, graphic designers, and videographers; organizers, including festival and concert organizers and musicians’ managers; communications personnel, including radio and television personalities, reporters, and web designers; and of course, listeners and fans. All of these roles were needed for the largely informal circulation of musical recordings, musical knowledge (i.e., stylistic trends, skills, and aesthetic values), and social capital to function. Moreover, many of these roles were filled by the same person at different times. For example, most of the emcees I interviewed about their introduction to the hip hop arts started as dancers (or b-boys) before attempting to write and perform rhymes (cf. chapter three).

Sometimes the same person took on many roles in different settings or moments. For example, Fouzia, whose history is discussed in chapter six, was simultaneously acting as a manager, a website designer and forum moderator, an organizer of online musical competitions, and an aspiring emcee throughout 2009 and 2010. She has been more successful at some of those roles than others, but work in each role assisted her in pursuing success in the others over time.

While some distinct skills are needed for each role, some skills and approaches apply across roles. More generally, all the people in the hip hop networks I describe here are also listeners, audiences, and fans, no matter how prestigious or competent they are. Describing individuals as “musickers” helps me to keep constantly in view Small’s argument that listening is essential to the musical performance. “Musickers” merges audiences with performers precisely at the moments that it is helpful to refer to both as partners in the musicking event. This formulation also accurately reflects the ways hip hop practitioners socialize and learn, as many audience members and organizers are simultaneously amateurs working towards performance-ready competency. In this work, I use “musickers” when speaking generally about hip hop networks or making observations that apply to across roles, but I also use it to indicate individuals who act in many different capacities in their networks. When I discuss a single practice (e.g., emceeing) or a person who occupies a single role in the context under discussion (e.g., beatmaker), I use specific terms.

I chose to concentrate on what I call first-wave musickers, those who were involved with adopting and adapting hip hop from their early adolescent years in the early 1990s. In 2009-2010, these musickers ranged in age from their late twenties to their early thirties. A second

wave of musickers who had grown up with both transnational and Moroccan hip hop productions ranged from their early teens to their twenties.

Though expectations that unmarried young people will live at home until married are not as rigid as they used to be (particularly for men), the majority of musickers that I worked with, including some in their early-to-mid thirties, were not yet married and still lived at home.<sup>23</sup> At the same time, within hip hop networks, first-wave musickers frequently seek to mentor younger musickers and enjoy respect from them in a manner reminiscent of other Moroccan youth-adult relationships.

I spend a great deal of time in these pages with the few female musickers I worked with, not because they are numerically, aesthetically, or politically representative—and indeed they appear to disagree frequently on matters of politics and aesthetics—but because their participation highlights the contradictions and stakes of hip hop musicking, especially in regards to both changing expectations of women and changing performances of class positioning.

### *socio-economic positioning*

While the most celebratory discourse on hip hop subjects, both from within and without the transnational hip hop tradition, often locates authenticity and purpose within impoverished communities, many of the hip hop musicians, fans, and tastemakers that I worked with are from what musickers themselves recognized as comfortable and secure socio-economic positioning. Most—not all—of the musickers I discuss come from backgrounds that would be described in US terms as “middle class” or “upper middle class.”

The boundaries of this term are fuzzy, as befits a concept encompassing dispositions, values and ways of life--habitus--as well as wealth. Rarely did musickers name individuals as members of socio-economic classes, beyond describing the truly elite using the term *bourgeoisie*. A robust body of Moroccan hip hop songs discusses relative positioning, but usually in terms of specific and historically rooted attributes such as jobs, family connections, or education rather than with class labels.<sup>24</sup> In order to avoid associations that adhere to class terms from the US context, I limit my comments below to information about socio-economic positioning considered relevant amongst urban youth. My interlocutors refer to positioning relative to their own cities and milieus, not the national population.

Urban youth are, in general, more affluent and educated than their rural counterparts, but a view from that scale obscures vital differentiations made within cities. For example, some estimate 27% unemployment amongst urban youth with a baccalaureate, compared to 11.3% amongst urban youth without, the latter of whom are more likely to come from low-income families (Cohen and Jaidi 2004: 139). Sociologist Shana Cohen, referring solely to urban families, uses educational achievement and stable employment (often in the public sector) to define the “middle class” of the post-Protectorate era (2006). Since the advent of structural adjustment in 1983, shrinking public sector employment and a lack of the expected growth in industries requiring high levels of education have led to chronic unemployment, underemployment, or informal employment for many urban youth whose families belonged to this “middle class.”



Additionally, historic means of differentiating social groups continue to have material effects on individuals' present and future mobility. These include discursive naturalization of the "urban" character of Arabs and the "rural" character of Imazighen, the importance of one's lineage ('*asl*, Ar. lit. root, origin) to one's social capital and access to resources, the cultivation of specific families and leaders as members of a ruling elite known as the *Makhzen*, and the elevated status of *shurafa*, or members of a lineage traced back to the family of Prophet Mohammed (such as the ruling 'Alaouite family).<sup>25</sup> Increasing internal migration to major cities since the early 1900s, especially to Casablanca, has only partially weakened these factors for youth born and raised in urban settings; in fact, each of these was reinforced during the Protectorate era under General Lyautey's (1912-1925) general principle of maintaining the surface forms of Moroccan life (cf. Abu-Lughod 1980, Hoisington 1995). Factors such as these continue to be important under neoliberalization, but their continuing significance can obscure how the stakes of the situation have changed for younger Moroccans.

For urban youth, access to and comfort with certain "Western" influences maps onto socio-economic positioning in a complex way. Achieving stylistic competence in hip hop arts (as defined by one's peers) allows musickers to claim some access to English-language facility and a certain Anglophone demeanor. For some, this is a way of sidestepping, or repudiating, social hierarchies expressed through the display of Francophone cultural capital.

For musickers, the tools and approaches needed to become a competent practitioner are both material and affective, and require not only financial but social and cultural capital. Beyond funds, musickers need socialization into a positive perspective on the moral significance of music in general and Western musics in particular; a location in which to consume or make music; feedback in the form of social connections with other musickers; and the leisure time to pursue finding and listening to hip hop music. Consistent access to hip hop media and technologies of consumption and production requires reliable Internet access and in some cases a personal computer or other equipment in the family home. These factors are not limited to affluent young Moroccans, but they are more likely to be found together amongst "middle class" and affluent Moroccans.

In addition to these, the high costs of equipment such as turntables, microphones, speakers, music production software, and even the latest hip hop fashions mean that skill acquisition and network membership requires significant time and energy if not wealth. When a practicing musician lacks materials, he or she can turn to friends or colleagues in the network. However, cultivating those connections also requires time, attention, and a reputation for competence and trustworthiness.

Most Moroccan musicians—hip hop or otherwise--only earn money from musicking through performances. Even then, not every performance pays. Most of the appearances on radio and television that I discussed with artists were unpaid. Live concerts at local festivals or staged events, especially those that were small-scale and unique, were also often unpaid. Out of my interlocutors who seek income from their activities, only the rarest few make a living from musical performance alone. Lower-income musickers, who need more time and social capital to access the same connections higher-income musickers already have, are less able to focus on their music long enough and intensively enough to break even through performances. In

addition, the number and quality of performance opportunities has varied annually since 2003 based on the interest of NGOs and state festival organizers. Artists strive to circulate recordings as physical CDs, on the internet, and on radio and television, but several factors ensure that artists see little to no profit from their recordings. The majority of musickers to whom I spoke about the issue accepted piracy as a fact of life without which they could not access the tools of their practice, including the majority of what they listened to, beatmaking software, or instrumentals (cf. Alaoui et al. 2007). In addition, the cost of making a CD is borne by the artist in almost every case. Radio singles ostensibly incur royalties for the artist, but the Moroccan Bureau of Authors' Rights (BMDA) is notoriously ineffective at collecting and distributing royalties (cf. Saadi 2012).

### **Translocal Circulation**

I conceptualize hip hop musickers' social and musical connections as a network, rather than a scene or an art world, in order to emphasize the fluidity, translocality, and constant circulation characterizing these connections.<sup>26</sup> In Will Straw's canonical definition of a scene, spatial thinking grounds the idea of a scene in a place. For Straw, the "cultural space" of scenes is characterized by the negotiation of questions of style and genre at the scene's boundaries (1991: 373). The emergence and maintenance of hip hop "scenes" is both a local and a translocal phenomenon. As David Hesmondhalgh remarks, "scene is a confusing term. It suggests a bounded place but has also been used to refer to more complex spatial flows of musical affiliation; the two major ways in which the term is used are incompatible with each other" (2005: 23). I assumed initially that such placehood was at the heart of scenes, and that Internet-based network-building could only be additional to live, face-to-face musicking and socializing. But as I discuss in detail in chapter three, the ways members of Moroccan hip hop networks meet, communicate, and collaborate with each other have shown my assumptions to be unfounded.

As a result of the ways I have observed and participated in Moroccan musickers' formulation of interpersonal ties, I find the network concept better at capturing translocal connectivity and collectivity. In this network, physical and virtual spaces are equally likely sites in which to form relationships. Unlike the popular use of "scene," which might imply that everyone knows everyone else in a given point in (real) space and time, the Moroccan hip hop network is built of many limited sets of relationships, and many actors who are connected to just a few others. At the same time, some musickers and (physical and virtual) places act as "hubs"—points in the network which connect sub-networks, or form the single point around which many other musickers eventually meet each other. Drawing from an extensive literature on social organization from outside music scholarship, Benjamin Brinner has theorized both the shape of networks under distinct circumstances and the possibilities for musical fusion between members of networks with different competencies (2009). In chapter six in particular, I draw upon his formulation to discuss the role of networking practices in musickers' entrepreneurship.

I have tried to build upon this use of concepts and terms from network theory by specifying how different institutions and policies affect musickers' networks. In some cases, I can identify

one or more people who make decisions at an institution and discuss their socio-musical networks. In other cases, I discuss the aggregate effects of institutions, policies, laws, or important events.

Brian Larkin attributes material effects to multiple embedded networks through an expanded notion of infrastructure. “*Infrastructure*,” in his framework, “...refers to this totality of both technical and cultural systems that create institutionalized structures whereby goods of all sorts circulate, connecting and binding people into collectivities” (2008: 6, italics in original). Larkin emphasizes that “soft” technologies, such as the circulation of media (and the media itself), can prompt new reactions and connections between people, just as physically implanted grids of electricity and water connect neighbors and municipalities. This is more than a metaphor for Larkin, however, as he discusses the patterns of circulation and daily habits that are enabled by both built environments (buildings along ordered streets, rail lines, radio towers) and unbuilt ones (satellite television, internet portals, mobile phone networks). These are interrelated sorts of institutions, and both change over time, in part because people’s innovations take the institutions in directions that were not originally intended—in a hip hop-relevant example, cables hooked up to “steal...electricity from neighborhood pylons” (4). In turn, the social expectations that arise around new technologies form their own established patterns of being, moving, and interacting, becoming another layer of infrastructure, albeit one constantly subject to change.

Larkin’s use of this term allows me to consider networks and their social ties as infrastructure, identifying important spaces and actors as nodes in a network, while simultaneously articulating them to physical and historic factors in the urban environment whose importance must not be underestimated. Additionally, this use of infrastructure enables me to link different analytical scales, discussing them as musickers experience them—constantly interacting with one another.<sup>27</sup>

Regardless of where they are, hip hop musickers connect via shared practices that accommodate some degree of deviation, variation, and external inspiration. Musickers position themselves and others through these differences, associating them with broader issues of status and authenticity and producing a politics of inclusion and exclusion that revolves around both stylistic and personal affiliations.

### *Moroccan hip hop styles*

Like the movements of individuals within and between sub-groups in the larger Moroccan hip hop network, songs, sounds and stylistic preferences circulate translocally. Whether physically transported by musickers, or sent via email, facebook, or any one of several filesharing websites, the musical sounds circulated are backed by the cultural capital of tastemakers in or beyond the Moroccan network. Focusing on this movement tends to orient one towards music as media, rather than music as sound. Jonathan Glasser discusses music as a circulation problem, suggesting that music is consumed during listening “like textiles or food.” Unlike these, however, consumption does not destroy musical objects, but renews them; they are both displayed and exchanged in the moment of performance or listening (Glasser 2008: 9-10).<sup>28</sup>

Finding the place of sound and musical form in my research has been difficult, for at least two reasons. For one, in trying to keep the unity-in-diversity of the hip hop arts and musickers' networks at the forefront in my writing, I have often found it difficult to clarify the work that specifically musical attributes do, rather than socializing and discourse around those attributes. For another, it was more difficult to elicit opinions on musical indices versus opinions on mic technique, lyrical prowess, recorded sound quality, and the like. Musickers had well-developed discourses on recording technology (more specifically, the lack of high-end technology and technicians) and performance practice, but lacked explicit discourses on other musical aesthetics. I believe this is due, at least in part, to musickers' lack of familiarity with technical vocabulary and concepts in hip hop or any other genre.<sup>29</sup> To the best of my knowledge, none of my interlocutors had formal training in any musical tradition.

By the end of my main period of research in 2009-2010, I found that a wide variety of hip hop styles were circulating. Not surprisingly, the dominant styles displayed the same kinds of translocal connections that individual musickers did. Musical ideas were likely to be taken up in different cities or in different sub-networks at or near the same time. In an interview with Casablanca emcee Don Bigg in 2008, ethnomusicologist Jeffrey Callen followed Bigg's characterizations to lay out a city- and region-based typology of hip hop styles. Casablanca's style was "'hard, in your face.'" Fes and Meknes, according to Bigg, had "a bouncy 'jump, jump' style."<sup>30</sup> Finally, Marrakech was indelibly known for a "fusion [of] traditional Moroccan styles and hip-[hop]," or what the leading Marrakesh group Fnaire promoted as "rap *taqlidi*" (traditional rap) (2009). This geographic orientation, so integral to the idea of a scene, obscures the patterns of circulation characteristic of the translocal network I found myself in.

Some of the most successful first-wave artists sound the most like "mainstream" US hip hop. This is in part because they have the deepest and broadest listening knowledge and share key beatmakers and studio personnel. They also responded the most quickly to changes in style coming from top-40 radio. But other sub-networks' music was strongly influenced by the preferences of individual beatmakers. In Fes, different sub-styles were represented by three beatmakers I knew. JP, the French-born beatmaker and producer living in Fes and working with the group Syndi-K, prided himself on competency in a wide variety of sub-styles. DJ Sekhfa (Ar. silly, ridiculous; Moroccan Ar. weak, girlish) was strongly influenced by the timbres of house and other electronica, and the melismatic post-soul vocals of Chicago house. His friend, impresario Amine Idrissi, and their friend, a Texan and longtime Fes resident, enjoyed remixing "mainstream" or Top 40 hip hop into slower tempos, with vocals drastically dropped in pitch--a style from the American South known as "chopped and screwed."

In Casablanca, DJ CasaFlayva was, like Sekhfa in Fes, strongly influenced by the fast tempi, metronomic drum patterns, unchanging harmonies and harmonic rhythms, and cyclic patterns of intensification that characterize house music (or the latter-day umbrella category Electronic Dance Music, EDM). The category of "rap *taqlidi*" ("traditional rap") created by Fnaire in the early 2000s also had its adherents, not just in Fnaire's home city of Marrakesh.

Stylistic innovations spread quickly through the network, but were shaped by the limitations of equipment and expertise. For example, in early 2009, a number of songs using the same synthesized trombone sounds were released in Morocco.<sup>31</sup> Ableton Live, an expensive, state-of-

the-art music-making software, had released improved brass sounds for version seven of its software in late 2007.<sup>32</sup> Nearly all of the beatmakers I worked with used a program named FL Studio, formerly known as Fruity Loops, for their compositions. Neither FL Studio, Ableton Live's brass add-on, nor competitor versions of the brass sounds are free from the manufacturers. However, these and many other resources are available as free downloads that would be illegal (though still available) in the US. By 2009, Moroccan beatmakers were able to download and use the same or similar packages of brass samples in their own programs.

In addition to routinely drawing on pirated software, samples, backing tracks, and commercial releases circulating on the internet, musickers put together home recording studios from the materials available to them. I know of a handful of studios in Casablanca and Marrakesh at the professional quality of JP's Fes studio. I visited four other studios cobbled together from old and repurposed hardware; three of these were in musickers' apartments.<sup>33</sup>

## **Methods and Sites**

### *where and when*

This fieldwork was multi-sited in multiple interconnected ways. I attempted to achieve a place in multiple sub-sections of a larger national network in order to grasp the network at the scales of the neighborhood, the city, and the central and Atlantic regions of the country. I also attempted to trace connections between the sub-networks I knew, and then to theorize how their translocal links affected the sociality and artistry of Moroccan hip hop musicking as a whole. While this often meant traveling with my interlocutors, it also meant I was set apart through my efforts to negotiate geographic and social distances between sub-networks.

During my longest period of fieldwork, from September 2009-September 2010, my research focused mostly on men and women born and raised in three cities in the central and Atlantic regions of Morocco: Fes, Rabat-Salé, and Casablanca. A combination of network affiliations and logistics prevented me from spending much time away from these regions, even though hip hop musicking flourishes in other cities and smaller towns all over the country.

I began my fieldwork year with two months of intensive Moroccan Arabic study in a Fulbright-organized program in Fes, where I was initially surprised to find a small but dedicated network of hip hop musickers. Immediately, I found that instead of cultivating a distinctive musical style within their local network, my interlocutors were focused on connecting translocally, to Casablanca and abroad. Musickers from Fes and Rabat, where I continued my language study part-time between November 2009 and April 2010, introduced me to musickers from other cities big and small, including Meknes, Salé, and Mohammedia. But Casablanca was universally acknowledged as the center of a nationally connected supra-network. By the time I moved there in May 2010, I had already met most of the Casablancon musickers I would get to know, either from visiting or from performances in other cities.

Even while in Morocco, I spent much of my time in the virtual field constituted by my interlocutors' actions, promotions, comments, and conversations on facebook and other sites. I think of this "field" as a place, in the sense of having social, emotional, temporal, and musical

associations—all but geographic associations. And yet this “field” is also many fields, as each of us, while online, was also in a material place and time with specific conditions.

Participating in the network through facebook and other purpose-built “local” hip hop fan sites was by no means unusual—rather, it was required of the competent and knowledgeable musicker. What was unusual, by my interlocutors’ standards, was my willingness to hop a train to a city hours away on a moment’s notice. Offline events were rare compared to the rate of internet-based interaction, yet critical to continuing online connections. Mapping the seemingly improbable translocal bonds I describe in chapter six meant being present for offline events whenever they occurred. I would spend five hours on a train from Rabat to Fes to see a concert, only to return to Casablanca the next day for a deejaying lesson. Similarly, I was deeply intrigued by the structuring and impact of festivals during my research, and would travel to see hip hop performances at festivals wherever I could get to them.

This habit was met with incredulity by many of my friends and interlocutors, who would plan such a trip over weeks. They felt the distance between cities; trips were freighted with memories of crowded stuffy taxis, negotiations for suitably inexpensive places to stay, and a profound awareness of different cities’ histories and self-characterizations. I was accustomed, with the breathtaking naïveté of the foreigner, to thinking of the whole central-Atlantic region as my “field.” Such a broad conception had its promises and drawbacks. I gained the ability to compare individual and local histories and artistic trajectories between neighborhoods, cities, and socio-economic positions, but I lost the depth of vision enabled by the idealized “classic” fieldsite, a long residence in a bounded place. Fortunately, whenever I returned to Fes, Rabat-Salé, and Casablanca, I was welcomed by the people I had most connected with (and was perhaps jokingly chastised for staying away so long).

When I traveled with a group of young men to another city for a concert, or sat in the downtown Casablanca café known for its *kif* and marijuana smokers with a table full of male emcees, or attempted to pay for an interviewee’s coffee or tea, I knew I was doing things seen as male. In these contexts I liked to think of myself, following Carol Babiracki, as the “ungendered researcher,” whose strange self-described role and foreign nationality allowed her to avoid the expectations held for Moroccan women in the network (1997: 132). Now, I would instead focus on the generous, and occasionally amused, young men who allowed me to hold that fantasy—who spent time with me in public, patiently corrected my *Derija*, and refrained from expecting the control over my movements some young men described as appropriate to male-female relationships (whether familial or romantic). It was clear that some young men felt they had a duty to shepherd me, both out of a sense of ambassadorship and one of brotherly protectiveness. I had a different role than some of my female network peers, who did not get this same courtesy (and I experienced it as courtesy, not condescension), but it was a female role nonetheless.

My time in each city was also structured by seasonal patterns of musical performance, themselves determined by overlapping calendars. The best opportunity to see live performances is in the late spring and summer, when students are out of school and big and small festivals compete for audiences every weekend. At the same time, Islamic holidays, calculated on the lunar calendar, circulate around the Gregorian calendar year by year. Few performances are scheduled during the month of Ramadan, which is traditionally a time for families to spend time

with each other in the evenings after *ftour* (the fast-breaking meal at sundown).<sup>34</sup> Ramadan fell at the beginning and end of my fieldwork year. In August 2010, while living alone in downtown Casablanca, I gratefully accepted invitations to friends' homes for *iftar* (sing. *ftour*), and marked my appreciation for my own networks by holding a *ftour* at the US Embassy's library in Casablanca's Gautier district.

In a translocal, Internet-enabled network, one does not leave the field site definitively. Follow-up conversations and interviews took place in June 2011, during a three-week stay in Morocco, and intermittently since 2010 over facebook and email.

### *research methods*

As a non-Muslim United States citizen, producing representations of Muslim subjects requires awareness of the stakes those subjects have in how words and images intended to portray them impact relations of power and of violence in the international arena. The dual nature of representing, that is, the simultaneous presentation of information and the witnessing and re-absorption of that information, takes on greater significance under such circumstances. Representations are constantly being reworked and reinvested with meaning as musickers reconstruct the feedback loop, individually and within networks. At the same time, representations, once public, enter streams of circulation outside practitioners' immediate control, jostling for space nationally and transnationally with other representations even as new feedback loops operate upon the original image. Opening up "representation" this way means attending simultaneously to multiple levels of media circulation, noting but not overestimating the apparent differences between national and transnational media.

These considerations promote the idea of "listening in, feeding back" as an overall methodological strategy. A concept developed by Steven Feld, in his Bloch Lecture Series of Spring 2009 at UC Berkeley, "listening in, feeding back" functions as an organizing metaphor for my ethnographic approach.<sup>35</sup> First, it accurately captures the dynamic of working with consciously critical collaborators who are not only capable of, but actively engaged in, interpreting their own culture. Musickers invited—better, expected—me to function as an active member of the network, in that my presence or absence from an event was noted, and my opinion was sought on a wide variety of issues. Merely listening, taking photos, or observing a debate was not enough; I was expected to physically show my enjoyment of the music, to post those photos to facebook, and to have and defend an opinion in order to demonstrate my investment in the social and musical dimensions of the network.

Second, "listening in, feeding back" returns the ethnomusicologist's attention to the musical event. It evokes the cyclical, loop-based structure of most hip hop music, as well as the layered process of listening, critiquing, and adjusting that goes into production of backing tracks and musical rehearsals. Third, it evocatively describes listening as a social practice, whether this takes place among artists in the process of creation or among concert-going fans.

Finally, returning to the notion of competing representations of Muslims and Muslim piety, "listening in, feeding back" describes a possible depiction of the ways hip hop musickers engage with neoliberalizations by observing and responding to policies' effects through musical

expression. Ethically and methodologically, I find it very important to consider my interlocutors' diverse devotional practices and expressions of piety as part of the conditions of possibility for their musicking. In practice, this translates to questions about values, ideals, actions, and future goals, rather than about Islamic doctrine or international terrorism. In order to demonstrate my good faith as a researcher—as someone interested in musical practice rather than the fetishized Muslim status of the musickers themselves—I consistently deferred initiating conversations about faith until the third or fourth encounter. A wide spectrum of adherence and beliefs existed amongst my interlocutors.

In the following section, I enumerate the research strategies and techniques I used for each of these dimensions of “listening in, feeding back.” My ethnographic practice incorporates 1) formal and informal interviews, 2) participant observation in social, studio, concert, festival and competition settings, and 3) written, audio, video, and photographic documentation. In addition, I 4) convened group conversations around recordings; 5) participated in musickers' preferred social networking websites; 6) tracked debates around hip hop and festivals in Moroccan media; 7) studied hip hop lyrics with fans and my teachers; 8) built an archive of CDs, Internet-released recordings, and local journalism; 9) presented two papers to scholars in Rabat and Tangier; and 10) studied hip hop deejaying. Informal interactions also constituted a rich source of insight.

I conducted structured and unstructured interviews with a variety of musickers, including professional and amateur rappers, beatmakers, and deejays; fans; and people in other important roles, whether professional or amateur, such as artist managers, webmasters, concert organizers, radio DJs, and members of the press. In each interview, I asked questions based around five core components: musickers' introduction to hip hop, material access, and training; stylistic preferences and musicking relationships, i.e., the composition of their networks; socio-economic and religious background; topical socio-economic issues; and the urban environment. I learned to be contented if major themes in each of these components were discussed at some point in the interview, and to balance competing narratives about styles, other musickers, and claims to authenticity.

In order to corroborate assessments of network composition, to get accurate information about events and music releases, and to interact as was expected of me, I joined facebook. Facebook has replaced myspace.com since 2009 as the pre-eminent site where Moroccan hip hop (and rock, fusion, and electronica) musickers connect locally and translocally, advertise upcoming shows and releases, circulate videos and mp3s, and hone their image through visual media. Facebook's place as a center for this information cannot be underestimated, and demonstrates the vital role emergent Internet infrastructure plays in the lives of hip hop musickers, even those with limited access to computers. I used this and independent Moroccan hip hop sites as one indication of artists' and songs' popularity and of the activities that sustain and grow networks. Since the makeup of online audiences is difficult to determine, I focused on musickers' preferred sites, discussing my observations with them in order to portray accurately the role of such sites in the formation of local and translocal circuits.

In the meantime, I was also physically present at local sites of network formation. In 2010, during the festival season, I attended fourteen festivals encompassing hundreds of performances;



three hip hop-only music and dance competitions, as well as a national competition with contestants in multiple genres; and many more singular concerts. At each, I took photos and video of the performers and the technical dimensions of concerts, including the sound and stage equipment and audience layout. Through these observations, I built an understanding of the preferred material arrangements, pacing, programming, and organization at concerts by different groups and for different intended audiences. I also amassed a recorded corpus of what John Bealle refers to as “stage talk”—moments where musicians address the audience or each other to guide the interpretation of their performance (1993).

In addition, I regularly sought out sites where hip hop musickers were known to socialize. Through interviews and time spent in different locations, I learned that only Casablanca could claim the physical infrastructure and frequent cycle of events to put a small group of musickers in constant, face-to-face social contact. Combined with the presence of the offices of major press outlets, the studios of well-regarded producers and radio stations, and the city’s group of hip hop pioneers from the 1980s, Casablanca forms a node in hip hop networks which is unparalleled in the rest of the country. Aspiring musicians from other cities often seek to arrange collaborations with Casablancon artists to access materials and prestige found nowhere else.

In Casablanca and elsewhere, however, I also visited musicians in home studios, watching as they arranged backing tracks, recorded other artists’ vocals, or critiqued different versions of a song with their friends and band members. In this way I elicited aesthetic preferences for elements such as song structure, stylistic references, sample choices, and flow (word placement in relation to the beat). At these and other moments, sparking group discussions was often the best way to introduce sensitive topics or simply determine the range of viewpoints on an issue.

In Morocco as elsewhere, hip hop verses are rich historical documents, filled with culturally specific allusions, metaphors, and wordplay. Shared aesthetic preferences are highly relevant to an analysis of hip hop as musical poetry which depends on rhythmic control and accent for much of its significance. I studied lyrics with my Moroccan Arabic teachers, who taught me to note regional slang, religious references, and the impact of the introduction of words and sentiments not to be used in polite company. Lively discussions of the merits of self-censorship during class provided insights into views of what it meant to be a good person and a good citizen.

Finally, I studied darbukka (a goblet-shaped drum widely played across the Middle East and North Africa) and turntablism (deejaying techniques) with expert teachers in Fes and Casablanca. In addition to improving my skills on both instruments, I began to learn how students of each genre (or cluster of genres, in the case of the darbukka) are expected to learn and to improve. Deejaying lessons especially offered a venue for discussions of the practical, moral, and familial aspects of aspiring to professionalism in a genre which receives little appreciation outside a select network and offers few stable opportunities for work.

## **Chapter Outlines**

Chapters two and three situate Moroccan hip hop practice in the context of social, economic, and political changes affecting urban life between the 1970s and today. In chapter two, I identify aspects of popular music production from the 1970s that continue to influence hip hop musicking

today. Using the enormously influential Casablanca band Nass el-Ghiwane as my primary example, I show that hip hop musicians often sample lyrical, musical, thematic, and conceptual resources from 1970s fusion bands. This legitimates hip hop musicians to those who might reject them on the grounds of “Westernization” while continuing to support a discourse, officially legitimated since at least 1962, that equates expressions of Muslim faith with Moroccan identity and citizenship.<sup>36</sup>

Chapter three provides the first written social and musical history of Moroccan hip hop practices, focusing on my research sites in Rabat and Casablanca. I divide the emergence of hip hop arts in Morocco into a period of “first contacts,” from 1990 to 1996; a period of growing popularity and competency, but relative isolation, from 1996 to 2003; and a current period characterized by state interventions and the rise of second-wave hip hop musickers, 2003-2011. Using musicians' personal narratives, I foreground the processes by which they acquired competencies, circulated their techniques and products, networked, and debated the meaning of various styles to form the field of hip hop production and the socio-musical networks that exist today. I also point to the beginning of a conversation on the ethics of style in hip hop practice.<sup>37</sup> In this way, I locate musicians' activities in relation to changes resulting from neoliberalization, both as economic policies and as an ideology of governance, throughout the 1990s and 2000s.

Chapters four through six theorize Moroccan hip hop musicking as an expression of a particularly Moroccan, Muslim, neoliberal subjectivity. Chapter four argues that music festivals act as sites of neoliberal governmentality, where a discourse on the qualities of particularly valorized youthful Moroccan citizens emerges from the structuring requirements of the tourism industry and the interactions between performers, audience members, press, and festival organizers. I explore the sponsorship, programming, themes, and impact of summer festivals, the most common performance contexts for Moroccan hip hop musickers. This preferred vision of contemporary Moroccan youth bears thematic resemblances to the “modern” subject of the post-colonial and pan-Arabist narratives popular after Moroccan independence, but also expresses the pressures of the neoliberal present.

In chapter five, I begin to theorize musickers' socio-musical networks as a counterpublic<sup>38</sup>, an arena of exchange that exists within the nation-state's general arenas of public discourse, but also cuts against those in certain ways. The critical voice musickers encourage in themselves and others indicts the state for socio-economic problems, but simultaneously locates the solutions to those problems at the level of the individual in a discourse of personal responsibility. I show that musickers integrate local expectations of Muslim ethics around listening, participation, and social responsibility into their composition and performance as a condition of their vision of an active citizenry fully educated in its rights and responsibilities. The affective and discursive world constructed within the counterpublic offers to the ongoing national conversation an alternative representation of a pious youthful Moroccan subject. In the Moroccan context, this demonstrated ability to redefine what “the national” represents amongst one's group in the public sphere registers as a seismic shift of conceptual control, of rights to discourse and to definition, from the political elite to a broader and deeper range of urban voices.

The final chapter draws upon musicians' personal and interpersonal conduct in hip hop networks to explore modes of subjectivation in the neoliberal moment. I argue that hip hop

musickers undertake self-management, or entrepreneurship of the self, in ways that valorize professionalization and translocal mobility, and that they conduct themselves in ways that enhance their entrepreneurial status and competitive advantage. Examples of valorized entrepreneurship of the self include professionalism discourses deployed by musickers in relationship to varied types of performances. I contrast the activities of amateur musicians with the professional and aesthetic history of MC Bigg, possibly the nation's best-known solo emcee, and ostensibly a model of entrepreneurial savvy. I also compare and contrast two non-musicians' articulation of their networks across several physical scales and their attempts to establish professional selves within an increasingly closely connected web. Finally, I conclude the chapter by discussing how these examples contribute to theorizing on neoliberal subjectivation in a post-colonial context. Anthropologists have long highlighted the importance of cultivating hierarchical networks, especially with links to the powerful, in Moroccan society. Here, the range and quality of one's network, and the extent to which one leverages it for professional gain, indicate success not only in one's musical career, but in the constitution of a valued self.

## Notes

<sup>1</sup> Like all Muslims who could afford to do so, the family slaughtered a sheep and shared it with relatives, friends, and the poor.

<sup>2</sup> See <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2b7boVycwwY> and <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Z59wmodSQRc>, last accessed June 16 2013, my translation.

<sup>3</sup> Schuler continues, “We will be shooting a lot in the Medina during the Eid festival - we were in the market to buy the sheep and we will be there when they cut their throats. In other words, we will have all the traditional shots. But we want to break the cliché. So, in the middle of the film *when you think you are in the middle ages* you will suddenly see and hear Hip Hop music on the rooftops” (Ranger 2009, my emphasis). Like Fassa itself, I am of course operating within this hegemonic discourse through (and despite) my attempts to critique it.

<sup>4</sup> This is, in part, influenced by the enormously important role of foreign tourism and foreign NGOs’ support in the Fes economy and the Moroccan economy more generally. I discuss this in more detail in chapter four.

<sup>5</sup> I call Morocco’s uptake of neoliberalizing economic orthodoxy “selective” because, as in other places where neoliberal doctrines appear to take hold, the state embraces some key initiatives (e.g. slashing public sector employment, encouraging foreign direct investment) while adopting others partially or not at all (e.g. withholding the most profitable companies in the state’s portfolio from its privatization scheme). For more on this, see Khosrowshahi 1997, Maghraoui 2001 and 2002.

<sup>6</sup> By subjectivation, I refer to both “the way a human being turns him- or herself into a subject” and the external forces that structure that human being’s ability to do so (Dreyfus and Rabinow 1983: 208). I derive the noun “musicker” from Christopher Small’s gerund “musicking”: “*to take part, in any capacity, in a musical performance*” (Small 2001: 343, italics in original). See also page 22.

<sup>7</sup> According to Fouad Ajami, this term was popularized by journalist and Muslim Brotherhood affiliate Muhammad Jalal Kishk in the late 1960s, and subsequently circulated by other Muslim Brotherhood authors (1999[1981]: 62-64). The idea bears a bedrock similarity to Samuel Huntington’s “clash of civilizations” narrative, in that it theorizes bounded and discrete cultures and grants agency to them in order to describe them as competing characters in a drama of good and evil. Both concepts are in widespread circulation in Moroccan discourse, as much from the legacy of 1960s and 70s leftists as from Islamists of the same era.

<sup>8</sup> These policies included the creation of the Cross-Bronx Expressway, 1948-1972, which cut through existing neighborhoods, lowered property values, and led to an exodus of residents who could afford to leave (who were disproportionately white). This in turn influenced the borough’s neglect by an indebted city government in the 1970s.

<sup>9</sup> For “glocalization” as a “mutual exchange” of influences between “the global” and the local, see Condry 2006. For glocalized case studies, see Alim 2009, Basu and Lemelle 2006, Marshall 2007, Perullo 2005, Saucier 2011.

<sup>10</sup> cf. Daoudi 2000: 34, Jones 2011: 181, Dennis 2012: 21, Bennett 1999: 81.

<sup>11</sup> William Jelani Cobb writes, “hip hop has intentionally not produced the equivalent of blues standards like ‘Stagger Lee’ or ‘C.C. Ryder,’ because hip hop has no room for ‘standards’ in the traditional sense” (2007: 27). One references or signifies upon famous older songs, rather than covers them, in part because one cannot inhabit and claim authenticity through older lyrics in the same way one can through the realist narratives of personal experience so valued in hip hop lyrical aesthetics.

<sup>12</sup> This is not a new point amongst those who argue that the self-presentations of hip hop’s leading commercial artists bears metaphoric or historical similarities to the history of African-American minstrel performers. Scholars who make this argument frequently point to the high percentage of suburban white male teenagers in the music industry’s tallies of hip hop consumers (e.g. Rose 2008: 89). Artists making this argument in their art have included Little Brother, the North Carolinian hip hop trio whose album *The Minstrel Show* (2005) is organized in the minstrelsy-descended frame of the musical variety show, and Spike Lee’s *Bamboozled* (2000).

<sup>13</sup> “It is, however, precisely through rather than despite its hyper-commodification as a global cultural form that hip hop has managed to signify a blackness of emotive force that resonates with others in the diaspora” (Perry 2008: 639).

<sup>14</sup> Agency is not necessarily found only in resistant acts, but also in volitional activities that agents (or academics) might not perceive as resistant. Focusing solely on demonstrably resistant examples of hip hop practice impoverishes our notions of agency and de-legitimizes the study of implicitly political or non-political musical practice (see, e.g., Guilbault 2010: 17).

<sup>15</sup> cf. Kahf 2008, LeVine 2008, Mitchell 2001, Osumare 2007.

<sup>16</sup> As anthropologist David Harvey argues, “the freedoms [a neoliberal state] embodies reflect the interests of private property owners, businesses, multinational corporations, and financial capital” (2005: 7).

<sup>17</sup> Unsurprisingly, neoliberal approaches are articulated to a wide variety of political structures (Plehwe and Mirowski 2009: 3) and deployed at several scales (Peck et al. 2009, Brenner et al. 2010). Precisely because scholars desire to keep visible the links between theory and practice, or between neoliberalism's pluralistic ideologies and actual economic policies, the term's scholarly use encompasses significant variations in real-life approaches and outcomes (cf. Mirowski 2013: 48). As an object of study, neoliberalization occasions a similar flourishing of approaches. Mathieu Hilgers sees anthropologists approach neoliberalization as "culture," as a "system," or as governmentality (2011). For Loïc Wacquant, researchers across disciplines think neoliberalism as either "a hegemonic economic conception anchored by (neoclassical and neo-Marxist) variants of *market rule*, on the one side, [or] an insurgent approach fuelled by loose derivations of the Foucaultian notion of *governmentality*, on the other" (2012: 68, italics in original). Both fail to adequately theorize the central role of the reformulated state in remaking political and social, as well as economic, institutions under neoliberalization (ibid). Plehwe et al. invoke Gramsci's early formulations of productive power, reminding readers that neoliberal hegemony needs consent or indifference (2006: 3). From my perspective, influenced by Foucault's 1979 lectures (2008) and early "Anglo-Foucauldian" formulations of agency and subjectivation under neoliberalization (e.g. Rose 1999), research into local neoliberalizations' intellectual and moral foundations inevitably leads to questions of governmentality and affect (Ferguson 2009: 173).

<sup>18</sup> The patterns of unequal trade agreements and market exploitation that affected Morocco in the deflationary 1970s bear historic similarities to its indebtedness at the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

<sup>19</sup> "Wealthy Moroccan investors were encouraged to buy into these formerly state-run companies, exaggerating even more an already distorted concentration of capital within the elite strata" (Gilson Miller 2013).

<sup>20</sup> cf. Ellison 2009, Kanna 2010, Richards and Rudnycky 2009, Rudnycky 2010.

<sup>21</sup> There are many *diplomés chômeurs* (Fr. lit. unemployed university graduates) in Morocco, but in context, the term refers to organized collectives of those graduates. Multiple groups have held sit-ins in front of the national Parliament in Rabat every weekday since the early 2000s, demanding public-sector jobs and a return to post-Independence policies of full employment (cf. Cohen 2004).

<sup>22</sup> *Jnun* (sing. *jinn*) are non-human beings, described in the Qur'an as made of fire and smoke, who occasionally have relationships of domination and possession over humans. To be *majnoun/a* is, in this context, to be currently possessed or in a continuing relationship of this kind with a *jinn* (cf. Kapchan 2007, Jankowsky 2010).

<sup>23</sup> In the Moroccan context, marriage is the pre-eminent rite of passage from youth to adulthood. Traditionally, both men and women live at home with their parents until they marry, at which time they establish a physically separate household and take on adult privileges and responsibilities within their communities. As in other post-colonial nations with similar economic patterns and demographic changes during the 1980s-2010s, men and women in Moroccan cities are marrying later, on average, than in their parents' generation. Financial instability, un- or underemployment, post-baccalaureate studies, and changing expectations for women all contribute to this pattern. As men and women stay in their parents' homes, stay unemployed, or stay in school, they occupy youthful roles for longer periods of their lives.

<sup>24</sup> E.g., "Fin Ḥaqna?" ("Where Is Our Share?") by Chaht Man feat. Muslim, 2010.

<sup>25</sup> For discussion of the "concentric circles" surrounding the monarch and the constitution of the *Makhzen*, see Waterbury 1970. For reviews of the literature on the "Islamic City" and its role in perpetuating a narrative about urbanized Arabs, see Abu-Lughod 1987. On the *shurafa*, see e.g. Hammoudi 1997. On the importance of *ʿasl*, see Rosen 1984.

<sup>26</sup> Howard Becker's formulation of an "art world" shares with Small's "musicking" a focus on all the practices that make the most prestigious and most visible practice of live performance possible. Like the rock and jazz musicians Becker describes, Moroccan hip hop emcees and deejays both compose and perform their work (Becker 1982: 10-13). But they and their fellow musickers must adapt an entrepreneurial approach, becoming reasonably competent at other "bundles of tasks" (Hughes 1971 in Becker 1982: 9) such as creating posters and album art, recording their own and others' vocals, or convincing a radio station to play their songs.

<sup>27</sup> For example, one can argue that Casablanca's annual festival, *L'Boulevard*, could not have been so successful originally without the network of theatre and arts practitioners who supported young musicians, without the building in which they helped the musicians to hold concerts, and without the print media and word-of-mouth on which they relied to bring audiences to the first festivals. Likewise, the huge multi-day version of the festival that occurred each May between 2005-2010 relied on the ease with which public transit and broad boulevards can carry audiences to the site; on corporate and government sponsors whose assistance is sought through the festival organizers' personal connections; and on the huge concrete walls that surround the two main sites of the festival, limiting foot traffic to a single gate and limiting the sound that escapes. And in the most immaterial use of the term, *L'Boulevard* forms an important node in a network of festivals that stretches through the country and throughout the spring and summer seasons each year, and the temporal and social center of the broad, multi-genre Casablancon music network.

<sup>28</sup> "I speak of circulation rather than exchange in recognition of Jane Fajans' insight that exchange is a particular form of circulation characterized by the changing of hands. This is in contrast to display, an alternate form of circulation in which the object itself does not change hands. It is display that more neatly fits the musical realm that I deal with in these pages. We can in fact think of performance as a form of display: performance of the song allows it to circulate to the listener, but does not exhaust the good" (Glasser 2008: 9-10).

<sup>29</sup> As in other tight-knit musical networks, slang developed to designate good sounds, recordings, or performances. A well-liked backing track might be called *sda'* (Ar. noisy), especially in Fes, where I heard the term most frequently. As an attribute *sda'* emphasizes a preference for layering, buzzy and electronic timbres, and sudden explosive shifts in volume; however as a term of praise it and other words would be used globally, to indicate approval of an entire composition, rather than singling out specific musical attributes or moments.

<sup>30</sup> Callen remarked to me that he expected more serious subject matter from rappers in Fes, given the city's reputation as Morocco's intellectual and religious capital (p.c., Casablanca, June 2008).

<sup>31</sup> The earliest song using this sample, to my knowledge, was H-Kayne's "Jil Jdid" ("New Generation"). The song's track was created by a hip hop artist of Moroccan descent living in the US. "Jil Jdid" takes advantage of idiomatic samples to simulate the brass section of a marching band, using long tones in parallel octaves in the chorus and a distinctive syncopated descending gesture to punctuate 16-measure cycles. "Jil Jdid" was quickly followed by another popular song called "Gangster 'Arabi" by beatmaker, producer, and emcee Nores. Nores used trombone samples to carry the melody throughout his song, and highlighted the sound by featuring teenagers pretending to play brass instruments in the song's video.

<sup>32</sup> Ableton Live currently sells the "orchestral brass" sample add-on package for \$159 US. A competitor released similar brass packages, Cinebrass Core and Cinebrass Pro, in 2011. I thank Ilya Rostovtsev for educating me on Ableton Live.

<sup>33</sup> One had removed all his clothes from his bedroom closet to create a recording booth. Another had lined an old armoire with styrofoam panels, creating an extremely dry, narrow, pitch-black environment for the vocalist during recording. 'Othman Benhami, an emcee, beatmaker, and de facto manager from the Meknes quartet H-Kayne, uses a spare bedroom with a self-built recording booth in the corner. Nores rented a small unmarked storefront next to a barbershop on a quiet residential street for his studio, lining the concrete walls and floor with styrofoam covered with silver tarps for soundproofing.

<sup>34</sup> In addition to fasting, it is also traditionally a time to rededicate oneself to Islamic proscriptions on such things as smoking or drinking. While most Moroccans find music to be permissible in Islam, generally speaking, some musickers are still ambivalent about their participation in hip hop or unsure of their own opinion on various genres' permissibility.

<sup>35</sup> This term is perhaps drawn from a Columbia University conference held in February 2009 at which Feld presented. During his 2009 seminar in the Music Department, Feld noted that he did not coin the term, but he did actively develop its use by deploying it during seminar meetings.

<sup>36</sup> The 1962 Constitution confirmed the "Arab" and "Islamic" character of the Moroccan nation, a move supported by the then-powerful Arab nationalist party that had led the resistance against the French, al-Istiqlal (Ar. lit. "Independence"). In addition, significant numbers of Morocco's Jewish population left Morocco starting in the 1950s, with the pace of departure accelerating after the Arab-Israeli War of 1967.



<sup>37</sup> Here I am thinking of Timothy Rommen's use of "ethics" in relation to musical style: "the ethics of style focuses analytical attention on the process by which style becomes the vehicle for a multifaceted, communal discourse about value and meaning" (2007: 27).

<sup>38</sup> As I describe in chapter five, I am drawing from Charles Hirschkind's (2006) and Michael Warner's (2002) work on the concept of a counterpublic.

## Chapter Two

### The Urban Soundscape: Nostalgia, Recontextualization, and Nass el-Ghiwane

*In the late nineteen-sixties, early nineteen-seventies, some phenomenal thing happened in Morocco. ... Overnight, literally overnight, we woke up in the morning, we [all] found ourselves on the streets humming the lyrics to this piece that we had heard the night before on Moroccan television. That was the beginning of a...subcultural movement. And that was actually the beginning of Nass el-Ghiwane.*

--Dr. Said Graioud, Professor of Communication and Cultural Studies, University Mohammed V, Rabat<sup>1</sup>

*I don't believe in political parties. Make sure you get that straight: I've never belonged to any political party.*

—‘Omar Es-Sayed, founding member of Nass el-Ghiwane<sup>2</sup>

In June 2011, I watched Morocco's most beloved “fusion” band, Nass el-Ghiwane, perform their 1979 song “Lebtana” (“The Sheepskin”) in front of well over a thousand fans.<sup>3</sup> Surrounded by the walls framing Boujeloud Square, just outside an entrance to the oldest part of Fes, the band took the stage with a team of Gnawa musicians dressed in long, satiny robes, traditional cowrie-decorated beanies, and bearing a full complement of percussion. Midway through the set, the band concluded a song and let a few moments of silence hang in the air. Then, from his seated position centerstage, his *bendir* (frame drum) balanced on his knee, vocalist and founding band member ‘Omar Es-Sayed leaned towards his microphone and spoke the words everyone in the crowd was expecting to hear.

“Slaves of enslaving money, you hearts of stone,” he intoned.<sup>4</sup> A roar of recognition went up from the audience, then just as quickly hushed, as Es-Sayed continued to recite the famous poem that begins “Lebtana.” Soon he reached the lines which give the song its title. Already, many closest to the stage were chanting along, overrunning Es-Sayed's measured pace as they gathered momentum.

“This is the twentieth century  
We're living the life of the fly in the sheepskin  
There's the great difference between the apple and the pomegranate  
What's the difference between you”—crowds of young men behind me yelled along syllable by syllable—

“and you”—the chanting was deafening now—

“and you and me?”

The guimbri (bass lute) player launched into a familiar melodic phrase, dense layers of percussion clicked into place, and the audience cheered, whistled, and clapped their approval.

The Casablancon band Nass el-Ghiwane is regarded in popular and academic consensus as the single most important ensemble to emerge in the post-Independence era. In both popular and academic discourses, the band's lyrics are evidence of political courage, as they spoke eloquently but allusively of the state's violence towards its citizens during an era in which critique was

prohibited. Less often, fans and academics note the band's innovative combinations of musical elements from Sufi, ethnic, and regional traditions from across the country. The band's synthesis of these was itself Afro-diasporic, fundamentally shaped by both the aesthetics of the Moroccan Gnawa and mass-mediated folk and rock from the US and UK, and represents an earlier generation's adaptations of both local and international musical trends.

In their heyday during the 1970s, Nass el-Ghiwane's music simultaneously evoked nostalgia for the recent past and reaffirmed the discursive bond between Moroccan identity and Muslim faith. Today, Nass el-Ghiwane's most popular songs may be said to be part of the nation's patrimony, heard and sung by two generations of Moroccans and increasingly well known outside the country. In addition, hip hop artists, especially those from Casablanca, invoke the discursive and musical legacies of the band in their own original compositions. Indeed, hip hop, rock and fusion musicians are seen by their advocates, including Nass el-Ghiwane's founding member and spokesman 'Omar Es-Sayed, as "children" of the Ghiwanien generation. This chapter attempts to historicize the role Nass el-Ghiwane plays, as both a symbol and a musical resource, in contemporary Moroccan hip hop.

Out of all the bands of the 1960s and 1970s, how did Nass el-Ghiwane come to stand for so much? What does it symbolize? In the epigraph above, Professor Said Graioud defines "the beginning of Nass el-Ghiwane" not as the moment the band was founded, but as the moment in which the nation first heard itself reflected in their music. In the first half of this chapter, I set out twin frames of reference: the dominant narrative of why Nass el-Ghiwane matters to contemporary Moroccaness, and my own arguments about the band's impact on hegemonic discourses regarding the political, Muslim identity, urbanity, and modernity. I argue that though the band's reputation for resistance is discursively located in its lyrics, that reputation is enabled by its *sonic* indexing of key marginalized subjects, including the Gnawa, the 'Aissawa, and the *sheikhat*, female singers of 'Aita. Through invocations of these groups, whose locally specific practices diverge from the prescriptions of state-sponsored Sunni Islam, Nass el-Ghiwane voiced a nostalgia which re-imagined the local, pious past subject.

In the second half, I depict some ways in which hip hop musickers draw upon Nass el-Ghiwane's legacy. Armed with hip hop's aesthetic and critical approaches, musicians legitimate themselves to defenders and detractors alike by quoting cherished lyrics, imitating the band's arrangement practices, and invoking their narratives of loss in contemporary critiques of socio-economic change. I argue that hip hop musickers' methods of mixing sacred character into their ostensibly secular musicking are modeled after Nass el-Ghiwane. The uses to which the band's musical techniques and its reputation are put reveal some of the similarities and differences between two generations' ways of engaging with their respective forms of social, political, and economic instability. Limiting a reading of Nass el-Ghiwane or hip hop musicking to moments of apparent resistance obscures the spectrum of work that both do today—their roles in representing, resisting, coping with, *and* advancing the changes Morocco faces in the neoliberal moment.

## Popular Musicking in the 1970s: Nass el-Ghiwane

The notion of a youth-oriented version of Moroccan musicking that could resonate with and unify an entire nation was introduced in spectacular fashion in the early 1970s through the impact of Nass el-Ghiwane and the bands that followed. It was into this field of sonic production and participation, in which musical choices and their circulation were held to represent the nation at the same time that they provided space for counter-narratives against the state, that hip hop and other "Western" popular musics would emerge under changing socio-economic circumstances in the early 1990s.

Due to a combination of political, socio-economic, and infrastructural factors, a new type of nationally-available musicking emerged in the 1970s. Not confined to a single existing genre, this musicking instead differed from past and ongoing types of music production in two major ways. It was produced mostly by working-class urban youths with little formal training, instead of by highly specialized professional musicians or regionally specific rural ensembles. Despite this, it achieved national diffusion to an extent that had previously only been possible for musics that the state encouraged as national patrimony, such as Andalusian orchestral music (known in Morocco as *al-Ala* or *al-musiqa al-andalusyya*).

This new type of musicking was "popular" in multiple senses of the word. It was appreciated, and imitated, by young people throughout the country (Zoulef and Dernouny 1980: 11). Since it mixed together recognizable elements from several distinct groups, it also expressed the concerns of "the people"—considered, in nationalist discourse, as a citizenry recently energized and united by the country's 1956 independence from France--more than the isolated musical traditions of geographically, culturally, or linguistically different groups could do. It was also performed in contexts without explicitly religious connotations, including large concert halls, radio and television, and folkloric festivals (rather than *muwasem* (sing. *mousseem*), festivals and pilgrimages around saints' anniversaries).

Nass el-Ghiwane is by far the most successful band from this moment in urban popular musicking—so much so that people routinely refer to a group of ensembles as "the Ghiwanien generation."<sup>5</sup> According to the dominant discourse, during the period known as the "years of lead" (roughly between 1960-1980) (cf. Slyomovics 2005), Nass el-Ghiwane's lyrics cleverly disguised protests against the state's corruption and violence in its allusions to and reworkings of Morocco's rich store of oral tradition. While the band still performs today, the band's founding members, four of whom have since passed away, have achieved the status of legend for their creativity and political courage.

Despite the prevalence of this narrative, 'Omar Es-Sayed, the band's surviving founding member, has continually rejected the notion that his band's music opposed or resisted the Moroccan state's abuses of power. Instead, he argues that Nass el-Ghiwane's 1970-79 hits aimed at a socio-cultural inquiry, asking towards what future the rapidly changing society was moving and mourning the losses the band members perceived. In what follows, I take seriously Es-Sayed's assertion, his sense of the limits of "political" intervention, and his implication that the band's invocations of a valued, vulnerable past had no "political" valence. Nass el-Ghiwane's

musicking did produce a politics of nostalgia that continues to have profound consequences, however unintended, for the discourse around the band and for contemporary hip hop musicking.

I aim to describe two intertwined dimensions of this politics of nostalgia below. Nass el-Ghiwane's mixing, reframing and revalorizing of elements from regionally popular musicking brought traditionally Moroccan expressions of Muslim piety into a non-sacred performance context. The band members' ethnically diverse urban milieu in working-class Casablanca enabled five young people with distinct regional traditions to combine the disparate musical elements of their respective heritages. This same milieu bore a heavy representational load in emergent discourses on the city and the nation's future. In the midst of profound political, economic, and cultural instability, their musicking voiced a nostalgia which imagined a certain kind of pious past Moroccan subject.

Expressed by young men born and raised in the most Western of Moroccan cities, Nass el-Ghiwane's nostalgia betrays a deep engagement with a discourse of modernity, perpetuated by both French Protectorate officials and the pan-Arab modernists of the Independence era, in which rural origins were fetishized and rendered always already in the past. It also aligns neatly with the discourse, central to both post-Independence and 21<sup>st</sup>-century debates around Moroccanness, in which national identity was conflated with Muslim faith. Like all forms of nostalgia, this one addresses critical questions of what forms, beliefs, and practices would best serve Moroccans in their disorienting present.

#### *musical infrastructure and markets*

At the end of the Protectorate, in 1956, several recording companies with home offices in France continued to run satellites in Morocco. Throughout the 1960s, Barclay, Pathé/Marconi, and Phillips (and perhaps others) kept small integrated services in the country. These offices served to import and distribute 45s and LPs from these labels' overseas operations, but also to record and distribute singles by Moroccan artists within the country.

During the 1960s, the content, production, and circulation of radio and television were controlled by Radio-Television Marocaine (RTM), centralized in Rabat. Musical programming on the radio focused on "classical" traditions, including suites of Andalusian orchestral music, *melhun*, and the contemporary but well-respected form known as *ughniya* ("song," but translated more specifically as "long song") from Egypt, in which star vocalists like Umm Khulthum, 'Abd al-Halim Hafez, and Muhammad 'Abd al-Wahhab sang lovestruck poetry atop innovative orchestral accompaniment (Marcus 2007: 118). Like their fellow listeners across North Africa, the musicians of Nass el-Ghiwane learned and appreciated *ughniyat*.<sup>6</sup> In the documentary film *al-Hal* (1981), 'Omar Es-sayed recalls that in his first attempt to pursue music as a career, he auditioned for a position at RTM radio as a staff vocalist whose job would be to interpret Egyptian songs live.

Though these genres were well-liked, they did not represent the full spectrum of musics Moroccans enjoyed, as this programming left out less prestigious Arabic-language popular song (including varieties of *cha'abi*, "popular" song, from the central Moroccan plains and other primarily Arabophone areas). In addition, radio and television programming deliberately avoided

broadcasting traditional Amazight musical practices, even though recordings of these were available, having been made by French ethnographers and multinational companies from as early as the 1930s.

In addition to this musical soundscape, the newest styles of rock and soul were followed and performed by young amateur musicians, especially Casablancans. The new “fusion” and rock bands from Casablanca were enabled by the city’s greater access to non-Moroccan musical influences through its status as a commercial hub, as the home of the French recording companies’ satellite offices, and the home of the greatest number of Francophone and Anglophone residents. While the buying audience for these bands’ records was probably quite small by multinational recording company standards, they promoted a sense that Casablanca’s youth especially were linked into transnational circuits of youth culture then dominated by US and UK musicking.

On March 2, 1973, a law known as “Moroccanization” required all foreign-owned companies to have at least one Moroccan citizen sharing half the ownership of each enterprise. While this may have been intended as an investment in the Moroccan workforce and a broadening of its capabilities, it had the effect of reducing the total amount of foreign investment in the country’s industries. This resulted in more enterprises becoming state concerns (Nsouli et al: 6). Relative to musical production, the major French recording companies chose to leave at this time, opening the field for smaller Moroccan companies who mostly specialized in producing tapes and LPs of the cha’abi stars of their regions (Callen 2006). Labels such as Atlassiphone, Fassiphone, and Nabilophone started with little capital and in order to press and circulate the producers’ favorite musicians. Bands on the model of Nass el-Ghiwane, such as Jil Jilala and Lem Chaheb, as well as lesser-known ensembles, were also produced by these companies at some points, though both of the latter would also hold recording contracts with multinationals at different points in their histories.

In the mid-to-late 1970s, state control of the media was undermined by a new technology: cassette tapes. Introduced through imports, interpersonal circulation between Moroccans abroad and those at home, and the local branches of multinational recording companies, tapes’ compact durability and re-recordable potential meant that music could be quickly and easily shared between friends. Without mentioning the 1973 “Moroccanization” law, Tony Langlois writes that by the end of the 1970s “cheap cassette technology effectively wrested control from major international and state record companies” (2009: 74). Cassette tapes were widely available, and players were widely in use in homes, in small cities and towns across Morocco by 1982 (Davis and Schaefer Davis 1995).

Unlike radio and television, the state had no mechanism to control the diffusion of cassette tapes. Because they were less expensive and more portable than LPs, tapes spread new--and continuing--musical expressions with a heretofore unknown speed. They also opened a space for informal reproduction of cassette music which was more responsive to market trends than recording companies themselves could be. Armed with a tape deck built for high-speed dubbing and a supply of disposable cassettes, small-scale entrepreneurs could make and sell copies of albums according to what was selling best in their boutiques.

*economic and cultural instability in the 1970s*

The long transition from the centrally-planned Protectorate economy to the partial privatizations and other requirements imposed by the IMF at the beginning of the 1980s began, unavoidably, with the French colonial legacy. By the end of the Protectorate era in 1956, the French had invested significantly in roads, ports, and other physical infrastructure designed to help certain sectors of the economy. Général Lyautey and the colonial governors who followed him derived from the elitist discourse of colonialism a policy of developing and depending on rural notables to govern the agriculturalist majority. Moroccans had few opportunities to train for and create industrial employment (Rabinow 1989: 285-288).

In the post-Independence period as well as before it, agriculture was by far the largest sector of the economy. Overall, the economy grew by an average of around 4% throughout the 1960s (Pennell 2001: 327). Yet by the end of the 1960s, the aspects of Morocco's economic fragility that had always haunted the government and its citizens—trade imbalances, droughts and poor harvests, and concomitant increases in urban populations through internal migration—were again threatening economic security (Pennell 2001: 324-327).

Like other postcolonial nation-states of the era, many resources were aimed at building up Morocco's own fledgling industrial sectors through the extraction, processing, and export of raw materials. The goal was to reduce or replace imports of certain finished goods, a strategy known as import-substituting industrialization (Nsouli et al: 3). From the 1960s through the mid-1970s the state heavily invested in phosphate mining, fisheries, logging, and other industries and protected them, as the logic goes, against "shocks" from quick price changes in the world market, despite their comparative inefficiency (ibid). Unlike during the Protectorate, when Morocco's own economy could be propped up by French funding (depending on France's political climate), the Moroccan state had to rely on its own reserves during poor agricultural seasons or other temporary shortfalls.

Among other factors, a fundamental reliance on phosphates and agricultural exports, along with policies such as subsidies on staples and petroleum and comparatively high public-sector employment, led to substantial deficits by the late 1970s (Denoeux and Maghraoui 1998: 56; Nsouli et al: 6). Both the urban worker, whose biggest source of formal employment was now the public sector, and the rural farmer experienced the state's economic troubles as rising food costs and general inflation. In 1974-75, the state provided wage increases in several public enterprises as a response to inflation, but this only exacerbated its debt burden.

In addition to this, major droughts occurred in 1973 and 1977 (Swearingen 1988: 9 n.13). Each of these droughts meant crop failures, malnutrition, a loss of agricultural jobs, and in turn, higher prices for staple foods in the local markets, despite subsidies on oil, sugar, tea, and bread. The amount of migration from rural to urban centers correlated with the agricultural season; after each drought, new masses of former farm workers moved to the nearest city or to Casablanca, which received by far the largest numbers of new immigrants over the period.

The social and spatial fabric of the city was stretched as migrants, mostly young, single, male, and with an elementary education, found or built housing and looked for work. Cultural expectations for Arabic-speaking urbanites and Tamazight-speaking rural dwellers, exacerbated

by the explicitly differentiated treatment each group had received during the Protectorate, made adjusting to the hardships of life as urban working poor more difficult for recent migrants. After 1968, when the Moroccan state made a conscious decision to shift funds away from housing “towards agriculture, infrastructure and tourism,” a tacit policy of “autoconstruction” allowed for informal housing to expand the bidonvilles into new areas, consistently pushing Casablanca’s footprint outward (Pennell 2001: 329; Abu-Lughod 1980: 257). Though many were able to move into more permanent housing over time, the city was still unable to absorb the waves of new migrants, and new informal housing continued to expand Casablanca’s perimeter throughout the period.<sup>7</sup> These were highly unstable sites, not only because migrants-cum-urbanites were constantly circulating through this informal housing on their way to housing closer to the city center, but also because without state permission they could be subject to forced removal and their homes destroyed.

### *Nass el-Ghiwane’s musical innovations*

Nass el-Ghiwane’s articulation of specific instruments, rhythms, and practices from various Moroccan traditions was made possible by the massive urbanization and waves of internal migration that had brought people from all over the country, including most of the group’s parents, to Casablanca’s central working-class neighborhoods between the 1930s and 1950s. The original members of the band included Larbi Batma (tbila, lyrics), Omar Essayed (bendir), Boujemaa Hagour (tar’ija, lyrics), Allal Yaala (‘oud, banjo), and Abd al-Aziz Tahiri (guimbri), who was replaced soon after the band’s founding by Abdelrahmane Kirouch (guimbri, known as “Paco”).<sup>8</sup> All of them lived in the section of Casablanca known as Hay Mohammedi, which extends from the industrialized port on the Western coastline inward to the train station Casa-Voyageurs and from the downtown neighborhoods of Liberté and Gironde in the south to the suburb of ‘Ain Seb’a in the north.

Created during the Protectorate as the city grew by leaps and bounds, Hay Mohammedi housed some of the poorest citizens and most recent immigrants in the 1950s and 1960s, and was already famous amongst Casablancans for its resistance to French domination and Leftist groups during the height of the Independence movement in the early 1950s (Slyomovics 2005: 108). It also included some of the city’s chief sites of economic activity and engines of growth, including the municipal abbatoir, a swath of French-owned factories on what was then the northern edge of the city, and the *bidonvilles* or *qaryanat* factory workers built to house themselves and their families.<sup>9</sup> Thus informal housing butted up against the limits of French-created formal housing stock in this neighborhood on what was then the outskirts of Casablanca.

The story of Nass el-Ghiwane’s origins has become a fondly repeated legend, especially amongst those hip hop musickers raised in Hay Mohammedi. Each member of the band, or their parents, came from a different region of the country.<sup>10</sup> Essayed and Hagour had grown up in a section of Hay Mohammedi known as Derb Moulay Cherif. Earlier, Hagour’s family had first lived amongst immigrants from outside of Taroudant, a small city in the Sous Valley, some ten hours south of Casablanca (Hamdouch 2011). Larbi Batma’s parents had moved to the city from the countryside to its east known as the Chaouia. The son of an employee of the Office National



des Chemins de Fer (ONCF, the national railway system), one of eight children, Larbi was raised in a neighborhood known as Karian Jdid (New Quarry) (Boukhari 2006). Abdelrahmane “Paco” Kirouch was a practicing Gnawa from Essaouira, a traditional Gnawi center, who moved to Hay Mohammedi just before Nass el-Ghiwane’s debut and was brought into the band in the mid-1970s (Schuyler 1993; 292). Allal Yaala taught ‘oud and maqam theory at the state-run *dar al-chabab*, or youth house, in the neighborhood. According to Es-sayed, he was the only member of the band with formal musical training (Muhanna 2003).

Living in close proximity to migrants or second-generation migrants from all over the country, who still maintained ties to and traditions of their tribes or lineages, provided the members of Nass el-Ghiwane with first-hand opportunities to hear and study other Moroccan musical practices. It also made clear the national character of what appeared to be increasing instability and impoverishment as the national economy was buffeted by sudden rises and drops in the price of its phosphates and agricultural products in the international markets. Hay Mohammedi had been, and still is, renowned for its inhabitants’ tenacity during the Independence struggles of the early 1950s; the neighborhood received its current name after the re-enthroned King, Mohamed V, who had returned from exile in Madagascar the year before official Independence in 1956, visited the area and had a mosque built in recognition of the neighborhood’s role in the movement (Ragoug 2006; p.c. Barry, Casablanca, 21 October 2009; interview, Caprice, Casablanca, 24 June 2010). Residents’ attitudes toward the increasing authoritarianism, repression of speech and media, and outright state-sponsored violence of the 1960s and 70s were a direct continuation of this history. The continuous fresh arrivals of migrants supported a view from within Hay Mohammedi of the residents’ historic status as a microcosm of an imagined diverse, proactive citizenry—a view that rendered the neighborhood dangerous from the perspective of the state.

Hay Mohammedi’s reputation for activism, but also for an uneducated subaltern populace with rural ties that dominant cultural and political perspectives considered primitive and/or subversive, rendered Nass el-Ghiwane’s allusive lyrics more susceptible to politically oppositional readings. In the early-to-mid 1970s, when national rates of adult literacy averaged below 25 percent (World Bank 2008: 337), facts, opinions, and arguments related through easily disseminated and remembered oral transmission were not only alternatives to state-run news and information services, but a crucial and initial source of any information. In this context, Nass el-Ghiwane’s lyrics were often heard (and continue to be interpreted) as an alternative form of media (cf. Dernouny and Zoulef 1980: 14), one that valorized the ongoing retrenchment of the rural in the heart of the urban.

Each musician brought knowledge of at least one specific musical tradition to their new ensemble, in addition to shared expertise in the mass-mediated Egyptian orchestral songs popular at the time. In addition to Yaala’s knowledge of Arab art music, and Kirouch’s knowledge of the Gnawa repertory, Batma had grown up in a musical family whose roots in the Chaouia lent him familiarity with *‘aita*, a genre of song known for female vocalists (*sheikhat*) whose profession placed them outside of both the restrictions and the approval of Muslim society.

All of the musicians also shared some degree of familiarity with orally transmitted poetry and proverbs popular throughout Morocco, such as the quatrains of 16<sup>th</sup>-century Sufi Sidi ‘Abd el-

Rahman el-Mejdoub, and *zajal*, a form of Derija poetry dating back to the 17<sup>th</sup> century that was produced and circulated through oral transmission until the mid-twentieth century.<sup>11</sup> Batma's father and brother were well-known for their expertise in *zajal* (Boukhari 2006). Hagour, the other lyricist of the group, was described by Essayed as "born in a quarter inhabited by people originating from the region called 'Arib,' situated some kilometers outside Taroudant. These people were known for their capacity to communicate with very suggestive words, which in art is considered a very important quality" (Hamdouch 2011, my translation).

All of the band members met in a local theatre troupe run by playwright and director Taieb Saddiki. Saddiki's performances were experimental for the time, adapting traditional performance practices such as *al-ḥalqa* to the proscenium stage.<sup>12</sup> Known in Derija as "bsat," this form of theatre intercut pre-rehearsed poetic or theatrical scenes derived from *al-ḥalqa* with songs accompanied by instruments one might find played by various *ḥlayqi*, the itinerant musicians of *al-ḥalqa*, such as the bendir, lotar and rebab (both spike fiddles) (Caubet 2004: 196, Schuyler 1979: 109-128). The songs would appear in between the longer verbal performances in a form similar to the entertainments of the *rwais*, itinerant musicians of the Tashelhit-speaking Atlas mountains, in the traditional *ḥalqa* (Schuyler 1979: 99).

The band members' knowledge of oral tradition was enhanced by Saddiki's decision to set poetry from el-Mejdoub as song texts and to adopt *melhun* texts and melodies created by the 18<sup>th</sup>-century Sufi Sidi Qaddur el-Alami (Schuyler 1993: 288, Amine 2001: 60). In this formative period before the band's public launch, Es-sayed, Batma and Hagour were able to rehearse their songs with the theatre troupe; short plays and performances often included songs such as "Es-Siniyya" ("The Tea Tray") and "el-Hassada" ("Envy"), which would become standards for Nass el-Ghiwane (Ragoug 2006: 92). After a brief stint in Paris with the theatre ensemble, the actors of the band decided to leave the troupe and concentrate on music full-time in 1969 (Fernandez and Parrillas 2009).

From most accounts, it appears the band was already well-known outside Casablanca by the summer of 1971, when they appeared in concert in Rabat's now-defunct Vox Cinema with a star of Moroccan Andalusian song, Abdelhadi Belkhatat. The concert was filmed and broadcast on the state's RTM television channel (Joseph and Marchesani 2011: 391, Batma 1995). After the 1973 "Moroccanization" law, Nass el-Ghiwane recorded their 1975 album *Hommage à Boujema* with the Disques GAM studio and label in downtown Casablanca. According to producer Maurice El Baz, Disques GAM, which is active as a store and studio to this day, had formerly been the headquarters of Polydor's Moroccan branch (p.c. Casablanca, June 12 2011).

Like the songs of *ḥlayqi*, Nass el-Ghiwane's lyrics directly referenced or evoked well-known poetry, proverbs, and codified rhetoric to create "an entertaining social commentary" (Amine 2001: 56). Unlike the *ḥlayqi*, they are not known for parody and satire. Part of the widely-held belief that Nass el-Ghiwane's lyrics were consistently critical of the repressive government of the 1970s stems from, and is sustained to this day by, their vagueness. The lyrics' allegories, allusions, outdated vocabulary, and other means of obfuscating the texts promoted speculation about their political meanings, even as the use of traditional textual material allowed them to avoid censorship or punishment.

This openness to multiple interpretations is enabled in part by skillful use of *Derija*. Because the language varies so widely between generations and regions, and because one altered syllable can change the object or direction of a sentence, obscurity was perhaps inevitable. According to the mythologizing done by both fans and band members themselves, Nass el-Ghiwane turned the potential for misunderstanding into an asset. In an interview with the linguist Dominique Caubet, Essayed characterized their language as “*la derija de nos parents*,” reminiscing about the ways his parents’ generation had a proverb for any situation, however mundane (2004: 196).<sup>13</sup> Here, he cites one particular inspirational phrase overheard from the mother of a band member:

And in truth our *derija* is very powerful. Take only the example of the late Boudjemaa’s mother, who lives in a piece [we wrote,] and she said: “I worry only for the men if they are lost,” and we, we transformed it into “I worry only for those men *who are* lost” in the song entitled “*Ma hemmuni*” [“my great sadness”] (ibid: 198-199, italics mine).<sup>14</sup>

While Es-sayed limits his discussion here to the formal means by which one of the band’s most famous lyrics was transformed from offhand remark into poetry, in popular interpretation of this text, people generally assume this song to refer to the forced disappearances of oppositional figures. However, Essayed consistently refuses to engage with popular exegeses on Ghiwanien texts, arguing that the band was and continues to be scrupulously apolitical, even within the song cited above:

You know...I don’t think the average listener thought of us as a political group. ...the only time we because the chorus was a bit ambiguous...everybody thought we were trying to make trouble. ...We tried to explain, but they didn’t understand, and they kept giving us trouble. So in the end I just went to the police station and said, “All right, look, the song is about Palestine.” ...And it made it easier for everyone, because that was a recognizable political cause that people could rally behind. But I really think that that’s the kind of thinking that turns artists into cannibals (Muhanna 2003: 146-7).

In recorded conversations, Es-sayed consistently defines the “political” as explicitly oppositional, concerned with the nation-state, its leading figures, and its international relations. These limits allow him to deflect the continuing consensus about the band’s oppositional content and intentions. Instead, for Nass el-Ghiwane, dramatic contrast to the present is indexed through narratives of loss, of nostalgia for former spaces and times. Es-sayed does not acknowledge the political import for audiences of these personal reflections, in the broad sense of “political” dealing with socially constructed relations of power both in and outside the realm of the state.

At both lyrical and musical levels, Nass el-Ghiwane acted as curators, or perhaps folklorists, of Moroccan traditions. As youth in an urban milieu that mixed lineages and groups strongly identified with places and narratives of place, the band members were well-placed to collect, compare, and reflect on diverse expressions. But in order to perform select aspects of these expressions as a whole, the band members required a bird’s-eye view, a prior acceptance of the legitimately national character of each instrument, melody, rhythmic pattern, or proverb. In a

sense, the band's adaptations reflect the influence of French approach to and evaluation of local cultural practices epitomized by the Festival Des Arts Populaires, an annual folkloric showcase founded in 1965 and held in Marrakesh until today.

Contrary to the consensus which locates the band's "resistant" agency in its lyrics, I argue the band obtains credibility for the argument of "resistant music" through its *sonic* indexing of key marginalized subjects, including the 'Aissawa, the *sheikhat*, female singers of 'Aita, and the Gnawa. These three groups' musical practices form the basis of several of the band's early hits. Yet each has been discursively rendered oppositional because the groups' Muslim practices diverge from the prescriptions of state-sponsored Sunni Islam.

Each of the band's foundational musical and lyrical influences indexed a location and, at the least, an Arab or Amazight (Berber) affiliation. Each also indexed a particular religious affiliation, as I describe in more detail below. By articulating influences from multiple Moroccan traditions, Nass el-Ghiwane in effect produced a non-sacred music with a local, specifically Sufi and Gnawi, sacred orientation. For example, the words sung in the second half of some performances of their song "Allah ya Moulana" ("Allah, oh Our Lord") evoke the Sufi practice of *dhikr* (lit. "remembrance," chanting litanies or names of Allah) through the rhythmic repetition of "Allah":<sup>15</sup>

*the people visited Muhammad and I housed [him] in my heart*  
*Allah, Allah, Allah*  
*the people visited him by conveyance and I went to him on foot*  
*Allah, Allah, Allah*

These lyrics also allegorize the means by which Sufi practitioners attempt to reach a state closer to Allah, contrasting a Sufi's devotional labor with that of Muslims outside the *tariqa* (lit. "path;" religious fraternity).

The band's oeuvre blends sacred and profane sounds together in a single musical performance. Their mix of elements aligns the faith practices that these sacred sounds index within a national frame. However, this alignment is distinct from that established in the Moroccan constitution, in which the monarch is simultaneously the head of state (*sultān*) and the head of the state religion (*amir al-mu'minin*, or commander of the faithful). That state religion, supported by a council of 'ulama and state guidelines for religious schools and colleges, is Sunni Islam of the Maliki legal school. While Moroccan Sufis, and the Gnawa, generally consider themselves to be Sunnis whose practices add to rather than compete with those prescribed by the 'ulama, Sufi *turuq* (sing. *tariqa*) historically served and continue to serve as counterweights to the religious power held by the state and in the person of the monarch. The alignment celebrated here is between "authentic" Moroccan Muslim practice and the citizenry, rather than between the citizens, the official Islam, and the state. While the consensus view claims the band's lyrics should be read in opposition to the state, the band's choice to invoke marginalized groups *musically* has been comparatively overlooked, and in fact supports that reading better than the lyrics themselves can do.

early recordings: 'Aita and 'Aissawa

Nass el-Ghiwane self-consciously created a new blend of sounds which defies easy categorization. Sonically, the band represented multiple cultural influences through their layering of instruments, each with its characteristic playing style, and through their juxtaposition of different musical textures or lyrical structures in sequence. Much of Nass el-Ghiwane's repertoire is structured in three sections; Schuyler describes it as giving the effect of a mosaic (1993). Frequently, songs begin with a short *taqsim* (improvisatory solo) by the banjo. A set of lyrics (not necessarily the lyrics of the rest of the song) is sung, or sometimes declaimed, in an unmetred introduction. At times, this is a cappella; at times, it is accompanied by drone. In the next section, the banjo and/or guimbri sound out the key melodic line of the song, followed by consecutive percussion entries building up the texture part by part, after which one or more verses are sung, frequently in a call-and-response fashion. This section could be repeated in performance, and in some songs a verse with contrasting melodic or textural interest is included. In the last section, the tempo and sometimes underlying rhythm of the song often become faster and more dense, and the lyrics reduce to frequent repetitions of short phrases. This feature, called a *leseb* when it occurs in *cha'abi*, is common to Moroccan styles of musical and/or sonic performance that seek to induce one of the altered states along an accepted continuum.<sup>16</sup>

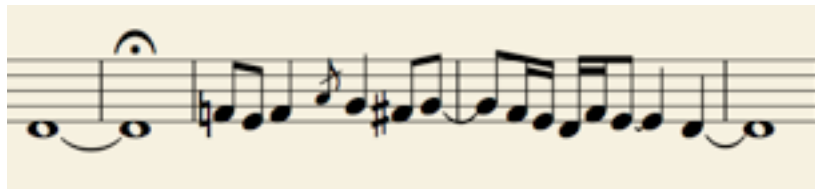
Nass el-Ghiwane's early recordings were strongly influenced by the musical backgrounds of their chief lyricists at the time, Larbi Batma and Boudjemaa Hagour. Batma's family, many of whom were musicians, emigrated to Casablanca from the Chaouia, the central plains between Casablanca in the west, Meknes and Fes in the north, and the mid-Atlas mountains in the east. They brought with them familiarity with the vocal traditions of 'aita and other Arabic-language song from the region. In *al-'aita* (lit. "cry" or "call"), professional female vocalists (*sheikhāt*) sing strophic poetry and dance, supported by male musicians, for male or female audiences.

*Sheikhāt* of Nass el-Ghiwane's generation were still mostly drawn from families of musicians, though today sheikhat are likely to have embarked upon formal training in one of the nation's conservatories (Ciucci 2005: 188). Traditionally, and for many today, *sheikhāt's* behavior in public—that is, amongst non-family, mixed-gender audiences—is considered revealing and morally disreputable, and places the *sheikha* in a category similar to that of prostitutes (Langlois 1999). The ensemble includes 'oud, *kamanja* (violin), *darbukka*, *bendir*, *ta'rija* (a small clay goblet drum), and *tar* (a small frame drum with attached cymbals) (Ciucci 2005: 188). Less frequently, 'aita ensembles include the *swisdi* (a pear-shaped lute, cf. Schuyler 1979: 128); newer ensembles sometimes follow *rai* in including an electric piano (ibid, Ciucci 2003). Like other Moroccan popular genres, many regional styles exist. *Al-'Aita marsawiyya* from the Casablancon region is characterized by slower tempi with room for elaboration by the *kamanja*, 'oud, or *swisdi*, and a sudden shift to a closing section in a fast 6/8 or 2/4 meter.

Early Nass el-Ghiwane songs also reflected familiarity with the 'Aissawa, a Sufi *tariqa* based in Meknes whose influence extended throughout central and northern Morocco. During public processions, such as the annual procession to the Meknessi *zawiya* in celebration of the Prophet's birthday, the 'Aissawa are known for the use of *ghaita* (double-reed instruments) and a characteristic rhythm on the *tbila* (cf. chapter five). During *dhikr* the 'Aissawa accompany their

chanting with flutes and percussion. Like the Hamadcha, another Sufi *tariqa* whose rhythms are borrowed by Nass el-Ghiwane, some ‘Aissawa adherents reportedly perform feats of strength and endure self-inflicted injury in trance-like states during *dhikr* (Spadola 2008, Langlois 1999).

Nass el-Ghiwane’s song “Es-Siniyya” (“The Tea Tray”), one of the band’s earliest compositions, was released in 1970 under their first name, The New Dervishes. By 1971, it was already famous as a lament of separation and the passage of time, full of nostalgia for an unspecified earlier age. The opening two stanzas are sung out of time in a fashion distantly evoking the improvised melismatic elaborations characteristic of *‘aita* (or, more distantly, the “*ya layl*” improvisation at the beginning of a *muwashshah* suite), in alternating solo and group phrases. Unlike the *‘aita* it imitates, in which stringed instruments play a drone or occasionally reinforce the melodic contour between sung phrases, the first five stanzas of “Es-Siniyya” are sung unaccompanied. In performance, audience members routinely sing along with the extended tones of the responsorial phrase “Oh, ya es-siniyya” (“oh, you tea tray”), jumping in at the end of the stanza despite the free tempo (fig.s 1 and 2).<sup>17</sup>



Oh, wah, wah, oh



Fin illy yejm’a ‘aik ahl al-niya?	Where are the people of intention that gathered to me?
Oh, ya es-sinia!	Oh, [you] tea tray!

Fig. 1. Solo and antiphonal singing in the first two lines of the first stanza of “Es-Siniyya.”



Fig. 2. Nass el-Ghiwane in concert, Fes, June 5 2011. Es-Sayed with arms raised “conducting” “Es-Siniyya.” Left to right: Hamid Batma, guimbri; unnamed Gnawa musicians, bendir and ta’rija; ‘Omar Es-Sayed, bendir; unnamed Gnawa musician, tbila; Rachid Batma, tbola; unnamed Gnawa musician, tbila; Allal Yaala, banjo.

Zoulef and Dernouny state that melody of “Es-Siniyya” was inspired by ‘Aissawa chanting (1980: 17). I take this to reference the antiphony, syllabic singing, and conjunct contour of the third and fifth stanzas of the opening verses, and of the sung verses in the second, accompanied half of the song. In the third and fifth stanzas of the opening, the lead vocalist sings the first half of each of the first three lines alone, and the rest of the band members sing the second half of each line as a response. The whole ensemble sings the fourth line of the stanza, “Oh, ya es-siniyya.” The unadorned syllabic melody reaches a dominant, implying a half-cadence feeling, at the end of the first line as in the elongated solo stanzas. It then stays on the sub-dominant reached in the second line throughout the third, as a leading tone to the dominant at the end of the third line (the “ba” of “ash-shiba”), finally falling to the tonic at the end of the stanza.

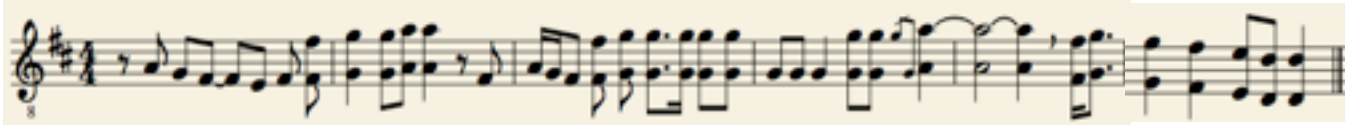


Fig. 3: Antiphonal singing in the third stanza of “Es-Siniyya.”

“Es-Siniyya” is frequently cited as evidence of the band’s cleverness in burying their oppositional intent well below the surface of their work. Explaining the consensus view of elliptically resistant lyrics, Schuyler summarizes that “when the singer demanded to know why his glass had not been filled, listeners understood that he was accusing the king of monopolizing rights and material goods in the country” (1993: pg 292 n. 5). Yet before and after this point, the text evokes the loss and dislocation central to the experience of migrants. Plainly, “Es-Siniyya” posits an earlier time when people were more closely connected and supported each other more than in the song’s present. The opening stanza asks where the past, presumably a happier time, has receded to, along with the speaker’s lost intimates. Without his friends and family, the speaker’s sense of self (“where is my life?”), his sense of place (“where is my neighborhood?”), is also lost to him.

In the third through fifth stanzas, the speaker expresses his loneliness all the more vividly by personifying his glass.<sup>18</sup> Traditionally, taking tea at home meant involving multiple people in the process. These might include the mother, wife, sister, daughter, or female servant who made the tea; the elder, male or female, who performed the familiar ritual of pouring the first glass of tea from as high as possible without splashing into the glass, then returning that glass of tea to the pot, three times; and the family members of all ages who shared tea together. The image of the glass standing amongst other glasses readily invoked an idealized discourse of family size, presence, and intimacy. The image of that glass unable to connect with the other glasses suggested not only a loss of that idealized family situation under the constraints of economic stress and migrancy, but also the psychological dislocation and valorization of privacy which, in this view, constituted the characteristic emotional and mental conditions of the modern urbanite.

Further, the political resonance of the lyrics, while noted early and continuously in the history of the song’s reception, would not seem particularly urgent without the expressions of loss and grief palpably rendered through the vocal techniques used by the band. Boudjemaa Hagour’s solo, beginning in the fourth stanza, links multiple sonic aspects with the text. His high tessitura, keening timbre, and skillful use of vocal breaks on the “ah” vowels of “ndamti” (“my regret”) and “kasi” (“my glass”) and the “i” vowel of “hzin” (“sad”) reinforce the sense of mourning and loss evoked by the text. The melody of Hagour’s lines follows the *‘aita*-influenced contour of the earlier stanzas, but his singing style also recalls the decorations and forward, stressed timbre of female vocalists from the southern (*Sahraoui*) song repertoire known as *Hassaniyya*.

In 1974, Hagour passed away under mysterious conditions. Known as the band’s frontman and its primary lyricist, Hagour’s role in singing the main melody in the upper octave in the chorus of songs like “El Madi Fate” (“The Past is Past”) and “Fine Ghadi Biya



Khouya” (“Where Are You Taking Me Brother?”) was sorely missed in recordings and performances. The band chose not to replace his vocal contributions in order to honor his memory (Muhanna 2003). In later years, when Batma, then later Es-Sayed, replaced Hagour’s line an octave down, the repeated and dramatized absence of Hagour added a new collective dimension to the sense of loss originally evoked by “Es-Siniyya” and other songs.

*late 1970s: Gnawa influence*

Gnawa music and ritual have been the subject of much North American and European research in the last two decades, but until very recently, were not considered a suitable subject for musical or scholarly interest in mainstream Moroccan society. Gnawiiyin, or Gnawa people, trace their ancestry back to sub-Saharan Africans brought southern Morocco as slaves between the 16<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries. Their ethnic composition, distinctive rituals, and social class formerly marked them as one of the most marginal groups of Moroccan society (cf. Kapchan 2008). While the impact of tourism to Essaouira and Marrakesh, both home to lineages of Gnawi, and the overwhelming popularity of the Festival of Gnawa and World Music in Essaouira since 1997 have helped change attitudes about the Gnawa, Nass el-Ghiwane began a process of recuperating the Gnawa through music from the beginning of their tenure as a band.

The 1979 song “Lebtana” (“the Sheepskin”) is considered one of the band’s most openly oppositional songs because of its famous opening text. However, its oppositional and counter-cultural significance is grounded in the thoroughly Gnawa-influenced performance which follows the opening poem. “Lebtana” was originally the b-side to a 7” single released in 1979. It backed “Taghoundja” (“Scarecrow”), a song which begins with a strong resemblance to traditional Arabic-language song from the Chaouia, the central Moroccan plains from which Larbi Batma’s family came. “Taghoundja” opens with a short *taqsim*, the melody is conjunct with a small range, and there is no percussion, so that the words are paramount. It transitions to a Gnawa-style performance roughly one-third of the way through the song. Tbola (sing. tbila), the large two-headed drums played by the Gnawa, enter; the melody loses its melismatic qualities, becomes pentatonic, and moves from solo declamation to call-and-response. The second half of “Taghoundja” quotes a Gnawa song named “Zid al-Mal.”<sup>19</sup>

In a similar fashion, the b-side “Lebtana” begins with poetic and musical improvisations, then re-creates a Gnawa invocation. After reciting the opening verses, Kirouch launches into a new tempo and is eventually joined by the banjo and percussion. Eight minutes into the performance, the band transitions into a new meter, and the banjo and guimbri introduce a melody that the group will use for the invocation and the following call-and-response, a standard feature of Gnawa songs (Fuson 2009: 170).<sup>20</sup> The invocation, which occupies the last seven minutes of the recording, begins with unison singing on the phrase “Ah, ya marhaba, wallah ya sidi marhaba” (“Welcome, oh Allah, oh sir, welcome”). Next, the band trades new call-and-response lyrics using the word “marhaba” as the response. While the invocation is melodically, texturally, and textually similar to typical invocations sung in parts of the Gnawa *lila* (ritual ceremony), the call-and-response is an original text. Throughout this section, the *bendir* and other percussion play the rhythm normally performed by the *qraqeb*, or metal castanets, used by

the Gnawa. Finally, the recording concludes with unison choral singing (*lazima*) (Fuson 2009: 172). The entire progression of the fifteen-minute piece displays some of the characteristics of a connected sub-suite of Gnawa songs, including a steady acceleration from beginning to end and an increase in the pace of call-and-response (Fuson 2009: 160).<sup>21</sup>

In the original recording of “Lebtana,” Abdelrrahman “Paco” Kirouch freely recites the famous fourteen-line opening text. In some versions, as in the recording outlined above, it is recited over a plucked drone; in others, such as the performance I witnessed May 2011 in Fes, it is spoken (now by ‘Omar Es-Sayed) on a silent stage before any instrumental introduction. This second option forms a contrast with the structure of most of their songs, as described above. Thus out of their corpus, either rendition of the song begins in a particularly solemn way. The text of “Lebtana’s” opening verse epitomizes the qualities prized in Nass el-Ghiwane lyrics, including older, more allusive ways of describing situations; a sense of nostalgia or loss; references to inequalities of power and to the violence of exercised power; and seemingly unlinked images building up to outline a whole.<sup>22</sup>

abid šnk al-m’abud, ya qlub al-ħjar	slave of enslaving money, oh you hearts of stone
qlub řaisha mliana bil-ghdar	thoughtless hearts full of treachery
silsiltu qabbur... ha al-ħaq u ha al-munkar	you chained up the graves...there is the truth and there is the falsehood
al-khaz lil-řkhar mn hm al-bħar shka	the mosses on the rock from the ocean complained
u al-riah al-‘ařfa hajrat al-barq u al-r’ad	and the strong wind left the lightning and thunder
ma bin řkhrat jamda u ‘awafi zamda	between the frozen rocks and the blazing fire
l řhd al-riħ hamda.	to calmness [went] the hot wind.
heda b mahmaz ynghouz heda ma yrd ‘alih	this one is spurred to action, this one contains himself
la duwa ydawi	there is no drug that can cure you
ħsbt ‘ashra u ‘ashra, ‘arřtha řħal tsawi	I added ten and ten, I knew how much it added up to
al-qaran al-‘ashrin hedi	this is the twentieth century
ashin ‘aish al-dbana fil břana	We’re living the life of the fly in the sheepskin
rah al-farq ‘athim bin al-tfaħ u al-romana	you know there’s a great difference between the apple and the pomegranate
wash min farq bin nta...u nta...u ana?	what’s the difference between you and you and me?

As with other songs perceived as a critique of the Moroccan government, Es-sayed maintains that considering this text as the band’s “most political song” is in fact a rather reductive reading, and that commentators are missing the point.

They thought we were saying that the flea was sick of living in the sheep's hide, that it wanted something else. ...But that wasn't it. After all, a sheep's hide is the natural home for a flea, right? ...However, that is where it is supposed to live when the sheep is *alive*, not dead. We were trying to say that this hide that the flea is living in was once a sheep. ...We--Moroccans, our generation--were living within the remains of something that no longer exists (Muhanna 2003: 146; italics in original).

For Es-sayed, "Lebtana" allegorizes the passage of an older socio-economic order. Whether this order is a pre-Protectorate tranquility, long since hollowed out, or the presumed harmony and stability of the immediate post-Independence past is not made clear. In characterizing the socio-economic order of the 1970s in terms of lack, dislocation, and death, the band by definition criticizes King Hassan II's regime for its inability to maintain or restore Moroccans' standard of living and cultural continuity. In this reading, the prevalent "political" reading of the song, it doesn't matter who killed the sheep; merely admitting the sheep is dead points out that the emperor has no clothes. The only way to read the song as apolitical, in this sense, is to view it solely as an intensely personal lament, to locate its meaning in the band members' separation from their rural roots and *asl* (lit. origin; lineage), the traditional, metonymic source of Moroccan identities.

The prevalent use of Gnawa signifiers in this song is open to interpretation. On the one hand, the marginalized position of the Gnawa underscores the powerlessness central to the conventional "political" reading of the lyrics. On the other hand, the trajectory of Gnawi dislocation and forced migrancy from West Africa, remembered and commemorated in the non-ritual songs known as *fraja* that would be familiar to the wider public, resonates with a reading in which Nass el-Ghiwane was instead mourning its own dislocation from the band members' ancestral regions and lifeways.

Tim Fuson remarks that within Nass el-Ghiwane's music, Gnawi musical indices—and especially the guimbri playing of Abderrahman "Paco" Kirouch—signified "the coded voice of the subaltern" (2009: 13). For the Gnawa, during the ritual suites that follow the *fraja*, the sounded guimbri "speaks with the voice of the *mluk*" (possessing spirits) (110). Recast in Nass el-Ghiwane's mix, the guimbri "speaks" with the voice of an imagined national subject, one who plays and is heard in all of Morocco's musics. I suggest that, at least in the 1970s, it is only in combination with signifiers of other Moroccan voices, musics, and regions that the Gnawi indices so fundamental to Nass el-Ghiwane's sound became appreciated by mainstream listeners. Gnawa music was integrated into what was heard as a deliberately national mix, and the outsider status of the Gnawa was appropriated to serve as a vantage point from which to critique.

### *Afro-diasporic frameworks*

Despite, or rather in addition to, the predominance of Moroccan traditional culture adapted or signified in Nass el-Ghiwane's musical practices, the band also represents a particularly Moroccan manifestation of the trends in popular music and youth culture current in the US and UK during the 1960s and 1970s. As 'Omar Es-sayed recalled, "The hippie revolution arrived in

Morocco by way of Casablanca. We were listening to Western music, the Beatles, Jimi [Hendrix], the Stones” (Muhannas 2003: 140). The first incarnation of Nass el-Ghiwane outside of their theatrical roots was as a “hippie”-inspired group called The New Dervishes, which Es-Sayed called “a Western-style rock band” (149). Archival images of the band show the musicians dressed in the embroidered tunics and flared trousers popular amongst counter-cultural youth in and out of Morocco in the 1970s (e.g. Es-Sayed 2010, Joseph and Marchesani 2011: 62-63). The band was also potentially influenced by the presence of Jimi Hendrix, Julian Beck’s Living Theatre Group, and other US and UK countercultural youth, who visited the resort and surfing towns of Essaouira, Diabet, and Agadir in 1969. It is possible, though not documented, that the guimbri player and Gnawa Abderrahman “Paco” Kirouch interacted with Hendrix and other tourists, as he moved to Casablanca in late 1969 or 1970 (Schuyler 1993: 292, n. 4).

Philip Schuyler points out that Nass el-Ghiwane bore a conceptual debt to trans-Atlantic rock bands in several ways that set them apart from more traditional Moroccan ensembles. These included the use of a group name for the band, instead of a star vocalist’s name; a rock-band format in which each performer spread out in a line on stage, rather than a tight circle of musicians; the replacement of the ‘oud or *rebab*, both stringed instruments found in Andalusian music, with the louder and more timbrally distinct banjo (known in Moroccan Arabic as *snitra*); and the adaptation of the guimbri and traditional percussion to the interdependent roles of electric bass and drum kit (1993: 289-290). I would add that in several songs, such as “Es-Siniyya,” the banjo takes on at least two roles: that of the ‘oud or *rebab* in their native Moroccan settings, where they lead or follow the singer’s melodic phrasing, and that of the electric guitar in a typical rock band, where the lead melodic instrument re-presents and elaborates upon the main melodic material soloistically for the length of a verse. Those who analogize Nass el-Ghiwane as the “Bob Marley” (Fuson 2009), the “Bob Dylan” (Davis 2011, Braude 2010), the “Beatles” (Muhanna 2003), or the “Rolling Stones of Morocco” implicitly recognize this recuperation, as their analogies compare the band to famous musicians of varying oppositional significance who incorporate the sounds of outsider groups into their own successful formulae.

The band’s popularity also gave them a hint of the allure surrounding Western rock stars. “Es-Siniyya,” Nass el-Ghiwane’s first single and one of their most beloved songs, was released in Casablanca under the New Dervishes name by Polydor in 1971. Vinyl records and record players were not common, both because they were expensive and because relatively few Moroccan musicians made recordings (cf. Schuyler (Oxford)). Polydor originally pressed just 500 copies of the 45rpm record, but quickly received word that boutiques had sold all of them and made further copies (Callen 2006: 95 note 16). Estimates of their many imitators reached as high as 2,500 new amateur bands (Zoulef and Dernouny 1980: 11). In addition to their performances in Morocco, they packed concerts on three continents throughout the 1970s and early 1980s, in Paris, Brussels, Montreal, and Carthage (Es-Sayed in Joseph and Marchesani 2011: 114).

Yet despite their avowed enjoyment of “Western” rock and popular musics, Nass el-Ghiwane and bands which took their musical and sartorial cues from them were not seen as threatening in the way that their predecessors, the pop and rock bands of the late 1960s, had been. “In effect,” writes musicologist Allal Ragoug, “this [Ghiwanien] trend refuted the new era which had,

according to itself, upset our traditional values and affected our authenticity” (2006: 95). Perceptions of the band as a “subcultural movement,” in the words of Said Graiouid quoted at the start of this chapter, are a more current explanation of Nass el-Ghiwane’s appeal. This analysis depends on an understanding of youth and youth culture derived from the activities of young adults in “the West” during this period, as well as an adoption of the vocabulary and perspectives of the Birmingham school of cultural studies.

Nass el-Ghiwane combined gestures, instruments, rhythms, and lyrics from disparate sources to create a sound that at once unified its listenership into a characteristically modern national body and evoked a recent past felt to be rapidly fading from daily life. I have focused here on songs from the two ends of Nass el-Ghiwane’s most important decade, artistically speaking. In concerts by Nass el-Ghiwane today and by other bands covering their material, and in songs played in public places, the band’s pre-1975 recordings are generally appreciated the most; as I have described above, these draw heavily from ‘aita, the ‘Aissawa, and the Gnawa. Post-1975 recordings build upon this with the addition of Amazight melodies, but with the exception of the Gnawa-focused “Lebṭana,” the second half of the 1970s is not held in the same zealous esteem (Zoulef and Dernouny 1980: 15).

Today, singing along to Nass el-Ghiwane songs brings together three generations of Moroccans in a way few other expressions can. In addition to the concert I witnessed during the Fes Festival of Sacred music in June 2011, I also attended multiple concerts by a cover band, Hbab el-Ghiwane (“Lovers of the Ghiwane”), which is led by a graduate student at University Mohamed V in Rabat. In a concert that followed a professional conference in an auditorium on campus, Hbab el-Ghiwane incited an audience of soberly dressed and seated professors and college students to the front of the stage to dance and sing together (fieldnotes, Rabat, December 12 2009). The experience of knowing and singing along to Nass el-Ghiwane songs in public along a wide cross-section of people, including youth and members of one’s parents generation, may spark not mental or spiritual transcendence, but another dimension of *dhikr*, that of deeply-felt, sonically-enacted community (cf. Kapchan 2009).

Because the band drew upon several explicitly spiritual traditions for the basis of its sound, Nass el-Ghiwane’s musicking allowed audiences to hear and imagine the place of these Islamic expressions in popular music media, further blurring already-shaky boundaries between non-sacred and religious practices. Significantly, these expressions, drawn primarily from the ‘Aissawa, Hamadcha, and Gnawa, were historically subject to recurrent episodes of repression at the hands of state religious authorities. In particular, successive governments considered the actions of practitioners during *dhikr* in the ‘Aissawa and Hamadcha *turuq* excessive or primitive (Spadola 2008). Sacred performances thus associated with resistance to state control—and, implicitly, a critique of the monarch’s dual function as head of the state and of the state religion—were articulated by Nass el-Ghiwane in an era in which critique was prohibited. Thus the band, whatever its political intentions, brought the socially supported weight of local Muslim sonic expressions to bear on widely held questions of the state’s ethics and powers.

## Hip Hop After the “Ghiwanien Generation”

For some listeners, Nass el-Ghiwane represents a successful engagement with the forces of cultural globalization of the 1960s and 70s. Their innovative blend of several Moroccan traditions within a frame influenced by transnational folk and rock forms provides an example of how to retain one’s local difference in the face of globalizing logics. Yet even the previous sentence suggests a frame of reference at the level of the nation, rather than the village, neighborhood, or lineage. In the 1960s and 70s, this frame of reference may have been particular to those urbanites, especially Casablancans, who were raised at a geographic or temporal remove from their families’ narratives of rootedness or belonging. For contemporary hip hop musickers--predominantly but not exclusively urban Moroccans--the globalizing frame of reference, in which the national is the locally specific form of the global, is commonplace.

In the second half of this chapter, I depict the ways in which hip hop musickers evoke and invoke Nass el-Ghiwane's legacy. Like many musicians from the “Ghiwanien” generation, including some members of Nass el-Ghiwane, contemporary hip hop musickers rarely have formal musical training. Like other fans of Nass el-Ghiwane, many hip hop musickers hold the band in high esteem as makers of courageously oppositional art.

Several aspects of Nass el-Ghiwane’s musicking which were considered revolutionary during the band’s mid-1970s heyday are frequently cited by my interlocutors as important to the emergence of hip hop musicking in Morocco, as well as to the emergence of a similarly youthful and urban genre known as fusion (Callen 2006). These include the use of Derija, instead of Modern Standard or Egyptian Arabic, the two forms widely broadcast during the 1970s and through the 1990s; the idea of a musical genre created by and for youth; and the aforementioned, perhaps universally held notion that Nass el-Ghiwane’s lyrics critiqued the injustices of the Moroccan state in a way that was all the more effective because it was so ambiguous, obscured in self-defense. For fusion bands in particular, the legacy of Nass el-Ghiwane’s musical mixing becomes important to their own efforts to blend musical indices from a wide variety of genres, including Moroccan cha’abi, gnawa, and Amazight instruments, with flamenco, punk, rock, and reggae.

For hip hop musickers, as I argue below, the ideals elaborated in the prevalent reading of Nass el-Ghiwane’s lyrics and musical practices inspire their own performances in multiple ways. Armed with hip hop’s aesthetic and critical approaches, musicians legitimate themselves to defenders and detractors alike by quoting cherished Nass el-Ghiwane lyrics, imitating the band’s arrangement and performance practices, and invoking their narratives of loss in contemporary critiques of socio-economic change. In addition, some contemporary urban youth valorize the band members’ roots as second-generation immigrants to the new world of Casablanca in the post-Independence moment.<sup>23</sup> Hip hop musickers invoke the authenticating presence of Nass el-Ghiwane as they use a foreign genre to express a particular kind of Moroccan identity, one which is not before or outside of urbanity, but constitutes itself through that urbanity as it proudly claims the urban environment.

*lyrical references: “Lebtana”*

Like Nass el-Ghiwane before them, Moroccan emcees primarily rap in Derija. Many of the pioneers of Moroccan hip hop that I interviewed, who started listening to and making hip hop as teens in the 1990s, learned their craft by memorizing and imitating raps in French or English before attempting to write rhymes in their native language. But several also mentioned that rapping in Derija was important to them because they could reach the greatest number of people in that language. Hip hop musicians frequently cited Nass el-Ghiwane’s use of Derija, instead of Modern Standard or Egyptian Arabic, the two forms widely broadcast during the 1970s and through the 1990s, reminding me that the band spoke to—even on behalf of—ordinary Moroccans without extensive educations.

The metaphor of the sheepskin may be Nass el-Ghiwane’s best-loved and best-remembered image—even if, as Es-Sayed complained, it is continually misinterpreted. On November 15, 2009, the band Hbab el-Ghiwane covered “Lebtana” in a concert on campus. The graduate student recited the opening verse in the fashion of the original recording while a band member supplied a drone on the guimbri. When he arrived at the appropriate line, he changed the words to “al-qaran al-wahed u ‘ashrin heda/ma zal ‘ashin ‘aish debbana fi lebtana” (“this is the twenty-first century/we’re *still* living the life of a fly in the sheepskin”). He was rewarded with several seconds of claps, cheers and whistles from the student audience.

The common, or consensus, explanation of “Lebtana” has only gained in interpretive force since the early 2000s, when Moroccan hip hop music first started to be available on CDs and occasionally in festivals and on radio. As musickers learned to adapt the direct, accusatory rhetoric of 1980s and 90s African-American emcees like Public Enemy’s Chuck D and KRS-One into Derija, they drew on two generations’ experience with the allusions and ellipses of Nass el-Ghiwane songs to legitimate their new mode of address. At the same time, the consensus interpretation of “Lebtana” in particular and the band’s political intent in general continue to inspire hip hop musickers. Like Nass el-Ghiwane, they wish to imagine a more stable and equitable future through the resources of the past; unlike Nass el-Ghiwane (as they are perceived), they are openly concerned with the economic dimensions of that future, though well aware that these reach into the realm of the political.

*Fieldnotes, 2 August 2010: Café Yasmina, downtown Casablanca*

Rapper Amine Snoop, a.k.a. Al-Kayssar, has asked me to meet him and a friend that he made through Facebook at Café Yasmina, the pre-eminent physical gathering place in Casablanca’s hip hop network. Upon arrival I learn that his friend, Nes, is a German-Moroccan woman with family in Tetouan, a small city in Northern Morocco. Among other things, she works as a television presenter for a German show focused on hip hop, and while she is visiting, she’s taking the opportunity to interview Moroccan hip hop artists for an upcoming episode.

Parc Yasmina next door to the café, with its neatly maintained gravel paths and towering palm trees, makes an excellent backdrop for their interview. In front of the camera, Nes’ questions are short and factual. When is your new album coming out? This week, before

Ramadan, inshallah. You have a song on the soundtrack to the movie CasaNegra, right? Yes, in 2008 I worked on the soundtrack with the director. And that was a very successful film here in Morocco, wasn't it? Yes, it really shows people what real life is like in the city.

After Nes and her assistant finish the interview and take their leave, I ask Amine more about his experiences. I've known him for over ten months, and by now I know the outlines of his trajectory from working-class kid to respected pioneer of Casablanca hip hop. I ask him how he went from dancing "the Smurf" and other 1980s b-boying trends to becoming a rapper. He and his friends used to practice rapping along with their favorite American songs on cassette, he answered. Someone had a two-deck cassette player, and they would record their own voices rapping over the songs and play them back to listen and improve. It wasn't until a few years later that he started trying to write lyrics in Derija.

"I used to rap the lyrics from Nass el-Ghiwane," he remarks. He had practiced them along with his first Arabic rhymes with friends, and eventually recorded his "first album, a solo," in 1994 or 1995. Since he only had this album on tape, it was lost long ago.

"Can I hear that?" I ask. I reach for my recorder. Into the microphone, he announces "This is the lyrics of Nass el-Ghiwane."

"From what song?" I ask.

The name had escaped him. Gazing out at the boulevard, Amine mumbles the words under his breath until he arrives at the right line. "It's called al-qaran al-'ashreen," he says. "The, the..."

"The twentieth century," I supply.

Amine recites the lyrics to one of Nass el-Ghiwane's most beloved songs, rearranging the original freely declaimed poetry to fit a quadratic beat inside his head:<sup>24</sup>

1				2				3				4			
															a-
yo							ma	bin	skh	rat		jam	-	da	u
3a	wa	fi		zam	-	da	l	shd	l	ri7		ham	-	da	
he	da	mah	ma	zan	-	ghuz		he	da	ma	yrd	3lih			7sbt
3sh	-	ra	u	3sh	-	ra		3a	rft	ha	s7al	t3a	wi		
						l	qa	ran	l	3sh	rin			had	a
3i	sh	een		3ish	ldu	ba	na			fi	lub	ta	na		
dar	ou	far	q3	thi	m	bin	l	tu	fa7	wal	ru	ma	na		
wa	sh	min	l	far	q	bin	nta		u	nta	u	An	a?		

Fig. 4. Time Unit Box System (TUBS) notation for Amine Snoop's rap of "Lebțana."



<i>ayo</i>	yo
<i>ma bin škhrat jamda u ‘awaḡi zamda</i>	between the mute stone and the blazing fire
<i>l šhd al-riḡ hamda</i>	to calmness went the hot wind
<i>heda mahmaz ynghouz heda ma yrd ‘alih</i>	this one is spurred to action, this one contains himself
<i>ḡsbt ‘ashra u ‘ashra, ‘rftha shḡal tsawi</i>	I added ten and ten, I knew how much it added up to
<i>al-qaran al-‘ashrin hedi</i>	this is the twentieth century
<i>ashin ‘aish al-dbana fi al-bṡana</i>	We’re living the life of the fly in the sheepskin
<i>darou farq ‘athim bin al-tfaḡ u al-romana</i>	they make a great difference between the apple and the pomegranate
<i>wash min al-farq bin nta u nta u ana?</i>	what’s the difference between you and you and me?

While Amine remembers this song as named after the phrase “the twentieth century,” it is titled “Lebṡana” (“The Sheepskin”), from the most famous metaphor in the text. Amine’s recalled rap starts in the middle of the verse, and skips a line which frames the shift from poetic abstractions into first-person declaration (“la duwa ydawi,” “no drug can cure you,” precedes the line “I added ten and ten, I knew how much it added up to”). Even if he had originally memorized the entire verse for his rap, it is not surprising that this version focuses on the second half of the verse. This section is more direct, closer to contemporary everyday Derija, more easily remembered, and consistently spoken along with the vocalist in live performances.

Amine was not explicit about why he chose to memorize and reframe this particular Nass el-Ghiwane verse. Its iconic status undoubtedly influenced his decision. His subtle changes to the text illustrate the extent of the more explicitly oppositional stance hip hop musickers feel empowered to take against the current order; instead of the original’s penultimate line, “you know [about] the great difference between the apple and the pomegranate,” Amine says “they make (darou) a great difference” between the two. As in earlier times, “they” go unspecified; as in earlier times, in the audience discourse of hip hop insiders and casual fans alike, “everybody” knows who “they” is.

In the following example, “Lebṡana” is invoked again in direct response to the increasing inequality of the neoliberal era. In 2006, MC Bigg (aka Bigg tha Don, Don Bigg, or al-Khasser [the loser]) released Magharba Tel Mout (Moroccans Until Death). His album quickly became a sensation for its sustained attack on wide swaths of Moroccan society. Lyrics from “Al-Khouf” (“Fear”) and “Bladi Blad” (“My Country is the Country of”)<sup>25</sup> included detailed litanies, in the literal sense of repetitively structured naming, of the problems faced by those without elite power or wealth. Without crossing what are known as “red lines”—critiques not publicly leveled as a result of a combination of laws and politesse, including those directed at the person of the King or his family, at the practice of Islam, or at the status of the southern region known internationally as the Western Sahara—Bigg skewered those benefiting from the neoliberalizing order, those traditionally close to the Makhzen, and Moroccans of any socio-economic level unwilling to challenge the status quo.

Like Amine’s slight change to “Lebtana” above, and consistent with the pattern established by Nass el-Ghiwane, Bigg rarely names living people or groups; he does, however, describe them more vividly than past musicians, and through a musical form already visually and discursively connected to rebellion and critique. In “Bladi Blad” he overcomes a friendly but long-standing rivalry between citizens of Rabat and Casablanca by featuring Rbati rapper Kolonel. Together, as members of the largest urban area of the country, they direct their critique at the government and members of the elite by personifying the nation. Their frequent repetition of the phrase “bladi blad” at the beginning of lines underlines their powerlessness to enforce their own claims upon their country, and turns the potential for patriotic expression on its head. It is Kolonel who, in the third verse, alludes to Nass el-Ghiwane’s song “Lebtana” in multiple ways.

Bladi blad, fik al-flous ‘andk ḥassana duwwuz waqtik hani wakha ttiḥ al-bṭana U hena zaman tkhatana U il faqir zid rashana Kif ma galou al-ghiwane, ‘aich al-dbana fi al-bṭana mwima, hdarna rah oulad al-blad u anghirou hip hop tqafa sllouna ash ndirou	Country, my country, to you the money you have is well hidden You pass your time calmly though you’re destined for the sheepskin And we [are in] the era of our mistakes And our bribes drive us to poverty Like the Ghiwane said, the fly lives in the sheepskin Mothers, our talk’s about the nation’s children and we’re changing Hip hop culture is our escape, that’s what we’re doing
nifdou al-blad bi al-mout hnaya shbab al-youm u magharba tel mout	They shook up the country until it died Here are today’s youth Moroccans until death

By building up allusions throughout his verse, Kolonel treats “Lebtana” as Nass el-Ghiwane treated its own textual inspirations. At the same time, in the best hip hop tradition, Kolonel’s verse pays respect to its source through creative reuse. In the first line, he indicates that the “you” to whom the verse will be directed, the country personified, has “well hidden,” possibly illicit, wealth. This person or people live “calmly, even though you’re destined for the sheepskin.” As in the popular interpretation of Nass el-Ghiwane’s opening stanza, the “sheepskin” here is not a desirable place to be, but an end result invested with moral weight, signifying punishment at the end of a life poorly lived.

After two lines dramatizing the depth of poverty the majority of Moroccans face, Kolonel references “Lebtana’s” most famous image. Instead of quoting it verbatim, he drops the human subjects from the phrase and situates it in an eternal present tense, effectively refashioning the line in the form of a traditional proverb (e.g. Westermarck 1931: 15). Following the rhetorical shift from “you” to “us,” the shift from people to flies, and their squalid, rotting home, vividly illustrates the growing social and economic distance between elites and the less-fortunate.

Importantly, he prefaces this with a direct reference to the band; having invoked the consensus interpretation of the song, he then legitimizes his use of the image by drawing upon Nass el-Ghiwane's prestige.

Next, Kolonel's "us" moves from referring to the entire non-elite population to referring to his own generation. Finally, the last image of the verse is of a country shaken "until it died." Here, Kolonel recalls the metaphor from "Lebțana" more subtly by comparing "today's youth" to the flies living in the "dead" country. The changes represented by death have not allowed young, hungry Moroccans more mobility within the country, or ability to leave it; instead, the youth of the 21<sup>st</sup> century are stuck without other choices, Moroccans not for life, but "until death".

After the final iteration of the chorus, "Bladi Blad" closes with a sample of a recording of "Lebțana." It indexes the entire famous spoken stanza by telescoping together and lightly remixing the first and last sections. The sample begins with Batma intoning the first line of the opening poem with an edited-in repetition, "'abid ţnk, 'abid ţnk al-m'about, ya glub al-ħajar"; it then immediately skips to the final four lines, including the iconic sheepskin metaphor and rhetorical question "What's the difference between you, and you, and me?" As Kirouch continues, the reverb applied to the vocal sample intensifies, giving an approximation of a live recitation in a large arena or outdoor concert setting. The pulse provided by the backing track falls apart; the synthesized organ chords responsible for the harmonic underpinning stop, and the refrain melody, also in synthesized organ, wheezes to a halt. As the recording of Kirouch's verse finishes, echoes of the tbila played by Batma sound under the last two lines; only the attacks are audible, as if the beatmaker could not fully separate the vocal sample from the mixed recording, or as if the sound of the drums bled through onto the wrong side of a sampled cassette tape.

This echo of Batma's instrument reinforces the connection between the late, iconic vocalist and lyricist of Nass el-Ghiwane and MC Bigg; it hints at the electric atmosphere surrounding the live performance of this song up to the present day; and at the same time, to the extent that it is only a ghost of the drums' original sound, it suggests the song and its resonances belong to a fading past. In effect, Bigg's choice to end "Bladi Blad" with a sample from "Lebțana" reproduces the dramatized nostalgia pioneered by Nass el-Ghiwane. In 2006, "Lebțana" held some of the same significance for Bigg's generation as the then-marginalized Gnawa did for 1970s youth, in that Nass el-Ghiwane could still be claimed as a musical legacy uncorrupted by the failings of the present.

### *musical arrangement*

Fnaire ("Lanterns") is a group from Marrakesh that made its name from 2003 on the basis of its unusual combinations of Moroccan musical instruments and samples with cultural-nationalist raps avowedly tailored to mainstream listening mores.<sup>26</sup> Fnaire avoids slang, cursing, and controversial statements in its raps in order to create music that a whole family can listen to in a multi-generational, mixed-gender home setting (Ijork 2008). Their particular sound, which they branded as "rap *taqlidi*" ("traditional rap"), was enabled by the talent of their fourth, non-rapping member, the beatmaker Hicham Belkas, who died in a car accident involving the whole band in the summer of 2008 while the group was promoting its recently released second album. Their

second album, *Yed el-Henna (Hand of Henna, 2007)*, featured collaborations with composer Richard Horowitz, Dutch-Moroccan emcees Salah Edin and Cilvaringz, and Wu-Tang-affiliated DJ Sueside.

Like Nass el-Ghiwane, the late Belkas and the other members of Fnaire act as urban-originated folklorists of rural Moroccan traditions, combining textual references, melodies and melodic contours, instrumentation, and rhythms from a variety of locations and traditions around the country to produce a “national” sound. Unlike Nass el-Ghiwane, Fnaire’s original texts do not offer much potential for multiple interpretations; in general their songs celebrate, rather than critique, the status quo and the actions of the Moroccan state. For example, “Matkitsch Bladi” (“Don’t Touch My Country”) (2003) rejects the actions of the 2003 Casablanca suicide bombers, “Yed el-Henna” urges Moroccans to “participate in development with good intentions,” and “Tarikh (Maroc 1200 Ans)” (“History [Morocco 1200 Years]”) (2009) celebrates the 1200<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the founding of the city of Fes by recasting this date as the founding of the modern nation-state. Fnaire is not the only group with this cultural-nationalist perspective, but it is still the best known, despite largely falling out of the public eye since 2009. A brief exposition of textual and arrangement strategies in the song “Lalla Mennana” (2007) will show how the group adapted the techniques pioneered by Nass el-Ghiwane to digital composition.

One of Nass el-Ghiwane’s earliest songs, “Qitati” (“My Cat”), is based on the text of a children’s song, and uses not Moroccan Arabic (Derija) but Modern Standard Arabic (MSA). Linguist Dominique Caubet collected a version of the song text that mixes Derija and MSA, specifying that she heard it performed by children in a round (1996: 352). She does not record the melody, but if performed in a round, the version she heard was likely syllabic and, like most Moroccan melodies, diatonic.

Qitati saghira	My cat is small
Ismuha Namira	Her name is Namira
Dekhlat li l [ila] al-kouzina	She came into the kitchen
Srqt li[ya] sardina	She stole a sardine
Glt liha “shub! Shub!”	I said to her “shoo! Shoo!”
Galet li[ya] “myaw! Myaw!”	She said to me “Meow! Meow!”

Nass el-Ghiwane’s version unites a Modern Standard Arabic text that hints at a flirtatious double entendre with the elaborately ornamented, crisply enunciated solo melody and sung group responses characteristic of Moroccan *melhun*, and with the long phrases, darkened vowels, and heavy glissandi of Egyptian *ughniya*.

Qitati saghira	My cat is small
Ismuha Namira	Her name is Namira
L’abuha yselli	Her game amuses me
Wa hiya li kaṭhelli	And she is like my shadow
tuthhirun al-muhara	She shows off her skill
Ki tṣid fara	At hunting mice

Shekluha jamilun  
Sh'aruha ṭawilun

Her shape is beautiful  
Her hair is long

Similarly, Fnaire use the melody and lyrics from a traditional song, “Lalla Mennana,” as the foundation for their song of the same name about the Moudawana, or Family Code, which was rewritten amid much media coverage for and against the changes in 2004. Among other changes, the new Code allowed for women to initiate divorce proceedings, expanded potential for women to gain custody of their children in a separation, and enabled first wives to have a legally protected say in whether their husbands take further spouses. The revised Moudawana was officially announced February 5, 2004, approximately two weeks before the beginning of year 1425 on the Islamic calendar (al-Hijra). Caubet collected this text, among others, in the small northern city of Tetouan; she notes that it is normally “sung for ashura, the new year’s holiday,” which falls on the 10<sup>th</sup> day of the new year. According to Caubet, it is sung by children and “accompanied by the bendir” (1996: 343).<sup>27</sup>

Ya lalla mennana  
Agi tkuni binti  
Nabni lik dukkana  
Al-khokh wa al-rumana  
Saqya tasqena  
Wa el-wadi ma yaddina!

Oh Lalla Mennana  
Come, be my daughter  
I’ll build for you a courtyard  
[with] peaches and pomegranates  
A fountain will give us water  
And the river won’t carry us off!

Fnaire use these lyrics, with only slight changes, as the basis of their chorus.<sup>28</sup>

Ya lalla mennana  
Agi tkuni binti  
W ndiri lik ḥumala  
Min al-khokh wa al-rumana  
Ya lalla mennana  
Agi tkuni binti  
W saqya tasqena  
Wa el-wadi ma yaddina!  
[first six lines repeated]  
N’aido al-moudawana  
W n’aisho jma’ fil hana

Oh Lalla Mennana  
Come, be my girl  
And I’ll make you a basket  
From the peaches and pomegranates  
Oh Lalla Mennana  
Come be my girl  
And the fountain will give us water  
And the river won’t carry us away  
  
We’ll celebrate the Moudawana  
And we’ll live together in peace

The backing track does not include the bendir that Caubet observed played with this song. Instead, a sample of interlocking handclaps, such as those that audiences use to accompany cha’abi, and a goblet drum provide a rhythmic background. Over this, a sampled handclap sound often used in place of a snare in transnational hip hop musicking falls on the “four” of the six-beat unit. The kamanja contributes an elaborated version of the melody during the introduction,

bridge, and choruses, while a synthesized version of the same plays the melody in a simpler fashion throughout each verse.

The use of a children's song, with its associations with a new year and new beginnings, fits the twin goals of Fnaire's "Lalla Mennana." The song's verses are alternately addressed to women and to men, and simultaneously educate listeners on the main points of the revised Moudawana while attempting to reconcile them to its logic from an Islamic perspective. In the first verse, which addresses women, Fnaire raps "We [men and women] are the same and God created us as we are." In the second, which addresses men, they ask "You want rights for yourself and not for women? You're not the only one entering development." Since the controversy over the Moudawana stemmed from the politicization of specific changes as replacing Sharia-inspired law with civil law, as de-Islamicizing the Code, Fnaire's move to defend the new Code as acceptably Islamic also defends the right of the state to continue to define what properly Islamic laws can be.

While Fnaire deploy Nass el-Ghiwane's curatorial techniques in this song and throughout Yed el-Henna to great effect, they are not accorded the same respect as Nass el-Ghiwane by other hip hop musickers. Musickers of my acquaintance scoffed at Fnaire's music, dismissing them as not actually hip hop despite the fact that the band makes its own beats (p.c. Hakim Chagraoui, Casablanca, 10 November 2009). Professor Said Graioui related an anecdote in which Fnaire's members were called "negeffa al-hip hop," explaining that a *negeffa* is a woman hired to dress, shepherd, and celebrate the bride during wedding celebrations. In the metaphor, Fnaire assist in the "wedding" of hip hop music to government rhetoric. Graioui wondered aloud at the practice of Fnaire and other bands to align themselves with the monarchy and the state, saying, "If you come from the Ghiwanien generation, you find it very difficult to make sense out of [patriotic statements in hip hop]. ... The Ghiwanien generation is--you want to go as far away from the state and the symbols of the state as you can." (p.c. Rabat, April 21 2010).

### *spiritual orientation*

Just as Nass el-Ghiwane used the music of the 'Aissawa and Gnawa to evoke a Moroccan sensibility unified by shared spiritual engagement despite Moroccans' diverse sacred practices, today's hip hop musickers invoke their Muslim faith as both a living resource and the symbol of a more secure past. Emcees address the nation (even if they only reach their mostly-youthful fans) from within an Islamic framework as a matter of course. As Abdellah Hammoudi wrote in a very different context, most hip hop musickers, including everyone with whom I have explicitly spoken about their own relationship to Islam, go about whatever they do "in the conviction that they do [it] as Muslims" (1993: 167). This includes people who are not currently practicing some of the obligatory actions, including daily prayers, or who are currently flouting uncontroversial rules, such as by drinking alcohol. The ways many young men spoke about their faith with me—usually outside of formal interview contexts—suggested that they might consider themselves good or bad Muslims, but always Muslim. Hip Hop musickers' arguments against poverty, corruption, powerlessness, and increasingly unequal distribution of wealth are rooted as much in Islamic ethics as they are in lived experiences of these or in any political ideology.<sup>29</sup>

However, unlike Nass el-Ghiwane, hip hop musickers are more likely to invoke a generalized Islamic sensibility, rather than musically or textually reference specifically Moroccan forms of Muslim practice, such as the Gnawa or Sufi *turuq*. Casablancon emcee Magma a.k.a. Lyriciste Ka'i ("Hungry Lyricist") uses his, and by extension the listener's, sincere reliance upon their Muslim faith in bad times to summarize his response to economic inequality in a song named "Kayn Allah" ("There is Allah") (2010):

Make money[profit] or die	jib rebħa wola mout
You big strong one, all you small ones, like the fish	yamenna lekbir yakol sghir kif l hout
[In] normal times you are brothers	'amar l 'edyan ykono khout
Your time of the businessman has not yet passed	'amark tlacha l'affaire mazal ma fat
	l'foute
[But] there is Allah	kayn Allah

In the chorus of "Kayn Allah," both big, wealthy people and small, struggling people are like fish, in that the big fish eat the smaller ones. In 2010, Magma was studying law in Casablanca, and planning to work at his uncle's law practice in the future (interview, Casablanca, 25 March 2010). Though he readily identified himself and his family as economically secure, noting that they reside in an affluent but not elite neighborhood of central Casablanca, he also stated that he was inspired to compose his music and embark on his future profession by the plight of the poor.

"Kayn Allah" features two other emcees, including Amine Snoop, who can claim with authority to speak for the least economically fortunate of Casablancon residents. As each verse describing the difficulties of life as a poor urbanite is followed by this chorus quoted above, the phrase "there is Allah" becomes both a talisman and a sort of punchline; the notion that the Muslim can return to his faith at once increases in importance and underscores that, in the context of Moroccan neoliberalization, reduction of safety net programs like publicly sponsored housing, and an increasing distance between the wealthiest and poorest citizens, this recourse to Allah is precisely all that is left.

As Bigg and Kolonel showed in "Bladi Blad," musicians perceive themselves to be following in the footsteps of Nass el-Ghiwane when they cite already-identified problems, whether or not they offer their own politicized alternatives to them. This resonates with a perception within transnational hip hop reception and aesthetics, consistent across hip hop styles, that musickers give voice to the ethics and epistemologies of the local community, metonymically represented by the "street." Hip hop musickers do not always use Nass el-Ghiwane's same techniques for bringing Muslim spirituality into their performances, but they do freely incorporate their own religiosity into their musicking, and invoke it as a basis for critique, in a way that was pioneered by the band.

Crucially, hip hop musickers demonstrate to themselves and non-musickers that they value and wish to cultivate critique, yet they do not appear to be perceived as subversive or dangerous by the state. In the first half of this chapter, I argued that the oppositional force of Nass el-Ghiwane's music stemmed in part from the band's articulation of Moroccan Muslim expressions that were marginalized in certain ways by the unification of state and religious authority in the

person of the monarch. Here, I suggest that hip hop musickers' more generalized use of references to their own sincere Muslim faith and ethics render them less suspicious, for different reasons, to those who fear Westernization and to the Moroccan state. At the same time, hip hop musickers are benefiting from Nass el-Ghiwane's wildly successful incorporation of the sacred into non-sacred musicking's forms and events.

## Conclusions

Is it not...surprising that [Casablanca] had birthed a phenomenon like Nass el-Ghiwane...this in an atmosphere of affronts and of perpetual crises of a culture placed between the difficult choices of withdrawal or westernization, of renovation or folklorization, of maintenance or disappearance, of authenticity or hybridization, of the national or the regional (Zoulef and Dernouny 1980: 12-13).

Nass el-Ghiwane's music, and past and present narratives about that music, made possible the field in which Moroccan hip hop is made and heard today. It frames the ways that hip hop musickers address the nation, and the ways that listeners expect to be addressed. Hip hop musickers' engagements with the global—whatever that is for them—are still played out on the terrain of the local and the national. Today, when hip hop musickers adapt the rhetorical strategies or logics of musical arrangement pioneered by Nass el-Ghiwane, they perform their own balancing act between globalizing and localizing pressures. When Amine Snoop practiced his flow by voicing “Lebțana,” when Kolonel alluded to “Lebțana” as if it were one of el-Mejdoub's quatrains, and when Fnaire built a new song from samples that spanned the nation's regions, each followed techniques pioneered by Nass el-Ghiwane's footsteps and legitimated their own addresses to the nation.

In sampling lyrical, musical, and conceptual resources from Nass el-Ghiwane, hip hop musicians not only authenticate themselves within the transnational hip hop tradition by representing their heritage.<sup>30</sup> They also situate their music-making within a distinctively Moroccan tradition of urban encounter, one with its own expressions of Muslim faith. As in the transnational hip hop tradition, Moroccan emcees express their allegiance to their street, neighborhood, and city in a nuanced politics of place. Here, that politics of place resonates not only within hip hop's practices of self-representation (e.g. Forman 2004), but also within Moroccan discourses that bind identity to lineage and lineage to land.

Seen from within the heritage of popular musicking left by Nass el-Ghiwane, Moroccan hip hop musickers' allegiances are also celebrations of urban and sometimes working-class creativity, praising *citadinité* (Geertz 1989: 291, 301) and claiming youths' rights to their cities. This is important because, as a recent city built through the economic and physical might of the Protectorate, Casablanca was, and to a lesser extent still is, coded as less Moroccan. As Philip Schuyler has pointed out, second-generation Casablancans were able to develop a “national” identity precisely because they were distanced from traditional forms that privileged the local and regional (1993: 288). That distance from traditional forms was a double-edged sword, as until recently, even people born and raised in the city were discouraged from seeing and naming



themselves as *from* Casablanca. For the first time, Nass el-Ghiwane's music and lyrics valorized the particularity of urban life and helped to make possible a positive imagination of working-class *Casaoui* (Casablancon) identity.

In 1980, Zoulef and Dernouny predicted that future "political-ideological" fights would take place on aesthetic terrain, and that ideological positions would map to urban and rural, as well as class-based, locations (6). Today the aesthetic of the urban, if hip hop can be called that in Morocco, and the aesthetic of the rural are both farther apart and closer together. On one hand, hip hop is seen as the expression of the urban by its practitioners and its critics alike. In Fes, Meknes, Rabat and Casablanca, hip hop networks are dominated by young men born and raised in the cities. The more recent arrivals are likely to have less contact with the lifeways of their home region than the members of Nass el-Ghiwane demonstrated in their music. Their expressions of the city as an ideological location are as much shaped by hip hop's narratives of the power and danger of urban life as they are by the deep-running notion of an "Islamic city" as the *locus classicus* of Arab art and culture (Abu-Lughod 1987). On the other hand, new means of accessing the hip hop arts produced in Morocco and abroad—not just the Internet, but increasingly on private and public radio stations and television, and live performances—mean that youth from the small towns outside of major cities can learn competence in some of the aspects of performance required to be a hip hop musicker.

Nass el-Ghiwane and its contemporaries dealt with the uncertainties and disorientations of the post-Independence era by attempting to re-integrate Moroccan expressive and spiritual sensibilities into music that thoroughly adapted mass-mediated Afro-diasporic genres, speaking to—but not in the voice of—international trends in the 1970s. In contrast, the generation that pioneered hip hop musicking in Morocco, that came of age in the first decade of the twenty-first century, adopts and invests with meaning a genre that positions them to make personal and aesthetic connections beyond their home in the wider world they can access via their country's continuing global market integration.

Along with rock, metal, and electronica musicians, hip hop artists are the current "Westernizers," yet they replicate the logic of their predecessors. The stakes have changed for Moroccans to some degree, but the patterns of circulation and the ways of responding to that circulation are similar. Simultaneously evoking narratives of resistance and fears of cultural invasion, first rock and now hip hop have traveled a circuitous trans-Atlantic route to Moroccan youth's ears. Like Nass el-Ghiwane—and as we have seen, with the help of Nass el-Ghiwane—hip hop musicians justify their critical speech and their adoption of a form coded as both "Western" and "urban" by authenticating themselves as appropriately Moroccan and Muslim. While hip hop cannot be analyzed without reference to local traditions, those traditions themselves are never without connections to transnational currents.

But both hip hop musickers' and Nass el-Ghiwane's output express profound ambivalence towards the future. Historically, political and economic instability at the national and international levels has often indicated continuing forms of violence against the majority of Moroccans. Any change in the 1970s and in the 2000s was shadowed by the twin discourses of "modernization" and "Westernization." In this way, 'Omar Es-sayed's preferred reading of his band's work—a reading that highlights much broader, more penetrating, more invisible processes

of social and economic change, and mourns the loss of what are perceived as authentically Moroccan lifeways—does support those who claim that Moroccan hip hop musickers are direct descendants of Nass el-Ghiwane. Their ranks include Es-sayed himself, who in a 2011 interview claimed that hip hop musickers in general were artistically “children” of his own generation of musicians (Fes, June 5 2011).

In this chapter, I have argued that proponents of this “direct descent” explanation for Moroccan hip hop musicking’s exponential growth are not incorrect. However, such proponents content themselves with an incomplete sense of all the ways hip hop musickers draw from their particularly urban and cosmopolitan heritage. The consensus interpretation of Nass el-Ghiwane as oppositional to the state is itself a nostalgic response, a way of making the past brighter, its characters finer, its motivations clearer, than they may have been at the time. Claiming Moroccan hip hop musickers as heirs to Nass el-Ghiwane in a discourse in which that band’s musicking is memorialized as merely politically oppositional overlooks the ways Nass el-Ghiwane embodied the new Morocco they analyzed with such ambivalence, and overlooks the ways hip hop musickers simultaneously represent, resist, and advance the changes they face today.

## Notes

<sup>1</sup> Quotation taken from the talk “The Particular and the Transnational in Moroccan Youth Music: Hip Hop Music and its Reception Among Moroccan Youth,” given April 21, 2010, at the Qalam wa Lawh Center for Arabic Study in Rabat, Morocco.

<sup>2</sup> Quoted in Muhanna 2003: 132.

<sup>3</sup> As befitting the rhetoric about their obscure, old-fashioned lyrics, Nass el-Ghiwane are not very clear about what “ghiwane” actually means. Es-Sayed once explained that they found their name in a verse from a *melhun*, Arabic poetry used in Andalusian song (Muhanna 2003: 143). Ethnomusicologist and Morocco specialist Philip Schuyler defines “Nass el-Ghiwane” as “The People of Love” or “The People of Temptation” (Oxford).

<sup>4</sup> My translation of “Lebtana” here is much indebted to that of Davis and Najmi (2008). I have transliterated from the Arabic in Es-Sayed 2010. The entire verse is on page 27.

<sup>5</sup> Frequently such comments also invoke the similar “fusion” bands Lem Chaheb, Jil Jilala, and Mesnaoua; less often, 1960s and 70s psychedelic-rock musicians Les Variations, the Megri Brothers, and Golden Hands; and soul singer Vigon (interview Nacim Haddad, Rabat, February 7 2010; Bensalmia 2008, Kabbaj and Mrani 2008).

<sup>6</sup> In describing how new media forms aided the wide regional popularity of *ughniya*, Marcus claims that “it became common...for Moroccans to know dozens of [Umm Khulthum’s] songs by heart” (2007: 118).

<sup>7</sup> In addition, it is not clear whether “informal” housing simply became considered “permanent” after a generation of construction, reconstruction, and improvement. As Koen Bogaert points out, before the bread riots of 1981, the municipal and national governments’ responses to informal housing were largely *ad hoc*; “During the 1970s[...]preference had usually been given to restructuring *in situ*” (2011: 716).

<sup>8</sup> Tbila (sing. tbola) can refer to several different kinds of drums; Batma played goblet drums mounted on a frame at waist height and played with sticks. The bendir is a frame drum with a string mounted under the skin for a buzzy timbre. The tar’ija is a small clay goblet drum. Both drums are found in a wide variety of sacred and non-sacred Moroccan genres. The guimbri (also known as the hajhuj or the sentir), associated primarily with the Gnawa, is a rectangular bass lute with a carved wooden body and a skin face.

<sup>9</sup> Jeffrey Callen writes that Hay Mohammadi was explicitly built based on a policy of siting low-cost housing next to industrial zones (2006: 41; see also Adam 1972: 86).

<sup>10</sup> According to Callen, “Boujemâa H’gour’s family is of Saharan origin; Omar Sayeed’s are *Tashelheit Imazighen* from southern Morocco; Larbi Batma’s family are Arabs from the nearby Chaouia region; Yalal Allal’s mother’s family are Arabs from the *Houari* tribe who relocated to Casablanca from southern Morocco” (2006: 91 note 10). No citations are given for this note, but some of this information can be found elsewhere.

<sup>11</sup> *Zajal* also denotes poetry in Derija created specifically as song text for *melhun*; in that guise it follows metric and rhyming rules that do not apply to *zajal* as an improvised oral poetic genre (cf. Kapchan 2000).

<sup>12</sup> Al-Ḥalqa (lit. “throat”) is a circular space demarcated by the audience in which performers address the audience with songs, drama, acrobatics, storytelling, or magic. Al-*halqa* is still seen in Marrakesh’s Jemaa el-Fna, and is the frame of storytelling, musicking, medicine, and other performances granted the title of Intangible Cultural Heritage by UNESCO (cf. Schuyler 1984, Haddad unpublished manuscript; Kirschenblatt-Gimblet 2007: 168)

<sup>13</sup> The interview quoted here was conducted and transcribed in French for the benefit of a Francophone audience. In Moroccan Arabic, this is “*derija dyal walidina*.”

<sup>14</sup> In both Derija and French, this is the difference of a single phoneme; in English the difference is less subtle. I have also drawn here on the same example originally given in Derija, rather than French, in Muhanna 2003. See also Es-Sayed, ‘Omar. 2010. *Klam al-Ghiwane*. Casablanca: New Success Press.

<sup>15</sup> My translation and transliteration from Es-Sayed 2010.

<sup>16</sup> This faster section can be in duple or compound meters.

<sup>17</sup> Lyrics transliterated from Essayed 2010; my translation. Muhanna translates “*ahl al-niya*” as “people of intention,” following the most common use of “*niya*,” he also translates “*ahl al-joud u al-rida*” as “blessed and principled people” (2003: 136). Zoulef and Dernouny (1980) translate “*ahl al-niya*” as “people of [the old] good times.” All five stanzas are translated in Table 1.

<sup>18</sup> Zoulef and Dernouny (1980) expound on the symbolism of each object mentioned, including the glass (*al-kas*), the tray (*as-siniyya*), and the mint (*n’an’a*), in great detail.

<sup>19</sup> I thank Tim Fuson for bringing this quotation to my attention.

<sup>20</sup> See Table 2.

<sup>21</sup> Some of the characteristics Fuson names do not apply; for example, the band moves from 6/8 to a duple meter, instead of the other way around, as is more common in both Gnawa songs and a range of Moroccan genres (Fuson 2009: 180).

<sup>22</sup> The verse is transliterated from Essayed 2010. My translation here is much indebted to that of Davis and Najmi (2008).

<sup>23</sup> Although not limited to urban youth, hip hop continues to be identified with urban settings by musickers as well as by local and international media.

<sup>24</sup> This transcription uses a variant of Time Unit Box System (TUBS) notation (cf. Krims 2000 and Marshall 2006 for examples applied to hip hop emceeing and percussion, respectively). Bold text indicates stressed syllables.

<sup>25</sup> Aomar Boum (2012) translates this song title as “My country is the country of.” Within the song, most of Bigg’s verses are structured as a litany, that is, with repetitive naming of things, people, and actions, so that every two-measure phrase begins with “*bladi blad*.” Kolonel’s verse, below, does not follow this pattern.

<sup>26</sup> Fnaire is not the only band to do this, but they are the only group that, at the time, was only producing music that fit this description. Other examples include H-Kayne’s “*Issawa Style*” (2005), which indexes the *ghaita* (a double-reed instrument) timbre and percussive patterns used by the ‘Aissawa in their processions as a link to their home city (and the home ‘Aissawa *zawiya*) of Meknes (cf. chapter five). More recently, Rwapa Crew’s “*Allah Ya Moulana*” (2010) celebrates the *zawiya* of Fes’ second founder Sheikh Moulay Idriss and the city of Fes in general.

<sup>27</sup> My translation of the Arabic to English; Caubet translates to French.

<sup>28</sup> The word “*bint*” literally means “daughter;” in Moroccan usage, it can mean “girl” in general, especially when used in the plural (“*bnat*”) or when not phrased in a possessive relationship.

<sup>29</sup> This is discussed further with reference to songs about the May 16, 2003 suicide bombings in Casablanca in chapter 3.

<sup>30</sup> “Representing their heritage” can also include commodifying their own difference, but that is another argument (cf. chapter four).

### Chapter Three The Emergence of Moroccan Hip Hop, 1990-2010

*salama kbir,  
hdiya min 'and al-Barry min Tanja  
l gwir l ga' al-magharba classe  
speciale dédicaces [...]  
heni jay, u jibou m'aya maheni  
klam u musiqa njitha bilghani  
salama kbir, li ga' al-ness li ja ghay  
musfina nsahb il-rock u il-hip hop  
u il-fusion u-il deejaya:*

Peace up,  
a gift from the house of Barry from Tangiers  
to give to all the classy Moroccans  
special dedications [...]  
be calm, come here, and bring you all with me  
[with] words and music I survived through song  
Peace up, to all the people who only come across  
friends of rock and hip hop  
and fusion and deejaying:

*Hoba Haoussa Askouri Batma  
Amiral go Darga Mazago Ganga  
Mouskil u drari dyal CasaMuslim  
Dar il-Gnaoua Double-A  
H-Kayne Casa Crew Bigg u Fnaire  
Fes City Clan Rap 2 Top u Would Chaab  
L'Moutcho Nores Oudjo  
Muslim al-Kachela  
Sabrou Stef u Hablo  
li ga' deejayet il-hadrin:  
DJ Van DJ Key DJ Roche u DJ Zion  
DJ Momo DJ Toto Youness B u zid ma zal*

Hoba [Hoba Spirit], Houssa, Askouri, Batma  
Amiral[,] Darga, Mazag[an], Ganga [Vibes]  
Mouskil and my boys of CasaMuslim  
the House of Gnaoua, Double-A  
H-Kayne, Casa Crew, Bigg, and Fnaire  
Fes City Clan, Rap 2 Top, and Would Chaab  
L'Moutcho, Nores, Oudjo,  
Muslim of Kachela [Records]  
all you friends of Stef and Hablo  
to all the leading deejays:  
DJ Van, DJ Key, DJ Roche and DJ Zion  
DJ Momo, DJ Toto, Youness B, and keep going

--Barry, "Dédicaces" (2009)

Mohammed Bahri, who goes by the name of Barry, was born in Hay Mohammadi in 1979.<sup>1</sup> The song "Dédicaces," the first track off his latest album, *Siba*, lists some of the founders of the four musical genres known collectively in Morocco as *musiques actuelles*.<sup>2</sup> In the first verse Barry moves from talking at a national level ("li ga' al-magharba classe," "to all the classy Moroccans") to those who are "friends of rock, hip hop, fusion and deejaying." The groups and individuals he names from all over Morocco include Casablancon rockers Hoba Hoba Spirit; fusion musickers Darga, Mazagan, and Ganga Vibes; internationally sought-after deejays DJ Van (from Marrakesh), DJ Key (from Agadir), and Youness B; radio hosts DJ Momo and DJ Toto; and hip hop musickers including his original group CasaMuslim, Double A (from Salé), H-Kayne (from Meknes), Casa Crew, Don Bigg (from Casablanca), Fnaire (from Marrakesh), Fes City Clan, Rap 2 Top (from Rabat), Would Chaab (from Rabat), Nores (from Salé), Muslim (from Tangiers), and more. In the next section (not reprinted here), he mentions the founders of the Casablanca-based L'Boulevard Festival. Finally, he mentions several neighborhoods in Casablanca at the end of the verse. By mentioning artists from Fes, Salé, el-Jadida, and

Marrakesh before narrowing to Casablanca's most famous festival and then to a few Casablancon neighborhoods, Barry draws relationships between the national, municipal, and local scales at which hip hop is heard and performed. Doing this serves to position Barry and his city at the center of the combined musical activity that he calls a "*mouvement*."

This chapter takes Barry's depiction of the "movement" that has spurred the growth of "Western" musical genres in urban Morocco over the last twenty years as a starting point for a social history of Moroccan hip hop. I integrate the changing trajectories of policies, technologies, and infrastructures with the personal histories of my interlocutors to argue that musickers' development of hip hop practices and networks since the 1990s both reflects and participates in the effects of neoliberalization.

It is important to distinguish my approach to the idea of neoliberalization from the outset of this discussion. "Neoliberalism" can refer to a moment in the history of economic and political thought, an approach known in the US as orthodox "neoclassical" economics, a set of policy prescriptions with its accompanying vision of what constitutes a free and just society, or a mode of governing.<sup>3</sup> Here, I use the latter two senses of the term to describe changes in (mostly domestic) policies over the last two decades, and to depict the values, rhetorics, and techniques associated with those policies from the point of view of the state or of the musickers with whom I worked. As an extension of the idea of neoliberalism as a mode of governing, a framing that I draw from Michel Foucault (2008), Jocelyne Guilbault (2008), Nikolas Rose (1996), and Rose et al. (1996), I follow Wendy Brown's argument (2003) that thorough neoliberalization in the United States has led to widespread socialization and institutionalization of neoliberalism as a "political rationality" in that country. This chapter, and this work as a whole, attempts to trace the contours of a similar political rationality, and its instantiation as governmentality, as it emerges from the lives of Moroccan hip hop musickers.

In conversation, Barry and other musickers his age referred to the emergence of hip hop and other "Western" popular musics as a "movement." This chapter will problematize some musickers' assertions that hip hop practice was or is a "movement" with political impact. Instead, I center my analysis on the emergence of hip hop networks, social and musical connections between people.<sup>4</sup> For example, Barry's opening to "Dédicaces" sketches out a network for the knowledgeable listener, implicitly describing himself as a hub between different individuals and groups.

This chapter focuses on Casablanca, though occasionally I reference supporting material from the histories of hip hop in other cities. I center my narrative in this way because, as Barry suggests, the city continues to serve as a center for and driver of national musical production. Designed during the Protectorate to function as an economic center, a showpiece of French colonial administration, and the place where the majority of French and Europeans would live, Casablanca is seen to this day as Morocco's leading cultural interface with the global North.

Methodologically, this chapter combines a history of neoliberalizing policies with interviews and conversations with hip hop musickers who recall their experiences with the genre. Drawing upon those interactions, I present the emergence of hip hop both as the formation of a socio-musical network, with its own etiquette and institutions, and as a set of musicking practices with a shared aesthetic, including rap, deejaying, beatmaking, graffiti, dance, and fashion. I am

particularly interested in the role of the emergent network in the recursive and interactive process through which musickers worked towards and defined competency in the hip hop arts.

Additionally, I write the history of Moroccan hip hop as a response to and engagement with the effects of neoliberalization. Brian Larkin uses “infrastructure” to describe not just the physical frameworks and conduits to which the term normally refers, but also the combination of these with social and cultural responses to them. Specific policies enacted as part of a deliberate program of neoliberalization have had traceable effects on housing locations and policies, city planning, media and Internet access, employment opportunities, post-secondary education, and other aspects of life with direct impact on urban youth. Regarding these as “infrastructural,” in Larkin’s expanded sense, I describe the effects of these policies in terms of how they constrain or enable the growing hip hop network. In addition, I consider not just the tools of network-building but also the socio-musical network itself as a form of infrastructure.

This chapter weaves together the responses of many hip hop musickers in both formal and informal contexts.<sup>5</sup> In our conversations, multiple interlocutors from Casablanca and elsewhere referenced moments that I came to see as central to the shared history of hip hop at the national level. Below, I describe 1990-1996 as a period of “first contacts,” in which musickers encountered hip hop for the first time, began to work toward and define competency in one or more dimensions of the genre, and started groups and associations based around hip hop musicking. Next, I break out 1996-2003 as a period of relatively isolated growth, in which the first local recordings were made and many groups came and went, but during which most of the country and the wider hip hop world was unaware of Moroccan hip hop production. Finally, I focus on Spring 2003 as the moment in which Moroccan hip hop became much more visible to the nation and, following this, to transnational networks, due to a confluence of factors including specific events, infrastructural growth, and state policies of and responses to neoliberalization.<sup>6</sup>

In retrospect, Spring 2003 can be identified as the beginning of a suddenly urgent conversation about what it means to be Moroccan and Muslim that continues to play out in the steadily converging realms of formal and informal, state-sponsored and private musical practice. Many of the rappers, deejays, radio personalities, and organizers that Barry mentions in “Dédicaces” will return during this chapter.

### **First Encounters: 1990-1996**

In 1981, as the state was preparing for its agreement with the IMF, it announced cuts to food subsidies, causing one of the labor unions to call for a nationwide strike. The riots that followed in Casablanca and other cities spurred a reorganization of urban space. In Casablanca, for the first time, the metropolitan area was divided into prefectures, and the already emergent class-based housing segregation became official government policy (Bogaert 2011: 715; Colás 2004: 235). As with other housing and planning policies in the city’s past, Casablanca was used as a test case for the state’s new neoliberalizing approach to housing policy (cf. Wright 1991, Catusse et al. 2005).

As decentralization became a political and administrative goal, similar prefectures were introduced in other cities, usually as a response to specific events seen as security problems. In



December 1990, when privatization had just been announced and structural adjustment's effects began clearly to be seen at the local level, riots occurred in Fes and other cities (Pennell 2000: 370). Following this, the urban spaces of Fes, Meknes, Marrakesh, Tangier and Oujda were divided up into more manageable chunks and their municipal governments reordered and streamlined (Catusse et al. 2005, Bogaert 2011: 716). Over time, the state reduced oversight, funding, and subsidies for housing at national levels; devolved responsibilities to regional governments; and simultaneously introduced targeted interventions designed to alleviate the effects of concentrated poverty without changing the spatial distribution of poor residents (Bogaert 2011: 712).<sup>7</sup>

From its beginnings, small-scale neighborhood socializing around hip hop (as small as two or three young people who lived on the same street) reflected and reproduced spatialized differences of class and origin in Casablanca. Hicham Abkari, the artistic director of *Le Festival de Casablanca* and the current director of Théâtre Mohamed VI, recalled that teenagers built their neighborhood identities and the class associations that accompanied those into their hip hop musicking from an early stage. He explained that groups or “cliques” from the housing estates outside the Casablanca autoroute, an area known as “04” from its *arrondissement*, started a mostly friendly rivalry against groups from within the auto-route nearer to central Casablanca (p.c., Casablanca, 28 July 2010). Today, a website named “Rap04.com,” where musickers can post their tracks or download songs, takes its name from this era's shorthand and valorizes the lower-income neighborhoods' roles in Casablanca hip hop history.

In the late 1980s and early 1990s, young urbanites most often accessed hip hop through cassettes, images, fashion, and expertise brought to them by their friends and family who lived or studied in the Francophone world. In interviews with musickers, I often began by asking “was there a single song, video, or other thing that made you crazy about hip hop?” or “do you remember the first time you heard hip hop music?”<sup>8</sup> I followed those with other questions about the process of acquiring competency as a dancer, rapper, dj or beatmaker. Musickers' responses often focused on vivid early memories and personal milestones in relation to the people, processes, and technologies that made these possible. Often, precise names, dates, and places were no longer clearly remembered, but the feeling of excitement and discovery was palpable in the retelling. Their beginnings, first as fans and then as amateur artists, were structured by the availability of recordings and the methods of circulation. Is it important to note that these circulations were, and are, not just the passing of physical objects between chains of people, but the transnational movements of people, objects, attitudes, and knowledge.

Most of my interlocutors, all of whom grew up in or just outside major cities, recalled satellite television coming to their homes or neighborhoods in the early 1990s. Susan and Douglas Davis report that the small northern town in which they worked had satellite access by 1994 (1995). Satellite channels brought a wide world of international programming to their homes in addition to the state-owned Moroccan channels, which at the time broadcast only in French or Modern Standard Arabic. The rapid proliferation of satellites and pirated international television channels had the effect of leveling access amongst youth of all socio-economic backgrounds, whether urban or rural, although lack of facility with Modern Standard Arabic and French still presented a barrier for uneducated youth and adults.

Patterns of seasonal circulation in which Moroccans who live abroad return for the month of Ramadan or summer vacations in late July and August were well established by the 1980s. At least two generations of Moroccans have lived with this ebb and flow their whole lives, as cities of all sizes swell every summer with returning family members. These families bring their children, who are born and raised abroad, and many gifts. In addition to money sent home from France, Holland, Italy, Spain, and other countries, Moroccans resident abroad return with objects that cannot be easily obtained in Morocco.<sup>9</sup> They also bring a great deal of social capital manifested bodily in the form of European accents, educations, fashions, and luxury items. In the 1990s and today, young people visiting Moroccan family and friends from abroad also bring musicking skills, attitudes about dress, comportment, and socializing, and an air of authenticity.

Nearly all the musickers in their late twenties or early thirties that I interviewed recalled a relative or neighborhood friend introducing them to hip hop. If the musicker's first contact had not traveled outside the country himself, he or she at least knew that so-and-so's older brother, uncle, or cousin had brought new tapes from Europe. Some cited French acts like IAM and MC Solaar as their first exposure to the genre. Others recalled US hip hop and r&b musicians and their iconic songs from the mid-1990s, including Tupac Shakur, Coolio's "Gangsta's Paradise," and Shawn "Puff Daddy" Combs' productions for Bad Boy Records (including Notorious B.I.G.'s two albums). The oldest musickers I interviewed were also more likely to note that their parents listened to international stars from the US and UK, mentioning acts like the Beatles, Aretha Franklin, Whitney Houston, and Michael Jackson. Just two emcees, both in their thirties, mentioned Algerian hip hop as influential in the 1990s. Slightly younger musickers mentioned R. Kelly, Usher, Jay-Z, and other internationally known hip hop and r&b musicians whose careers began in the mid-1990s.

Many recalled learning to dance to hip hop, acquiring b-boying moves from friends or from satellite television, before attempting to learn to rap, write rhymes, or deejay. Some, like Amine Snoop (a.k.a. Al-Kayssar, from Casablanca),<sup>10</sup> Barry, L-Tzack (from Fes), and the members of Fes group Syndi-K (pronounced as the French *syndicat*), were primarily dancers for three or four years before they began to perform music for their friends.

When asked what inspired him to pursue hip hop, Masta Flow, an emcee and member of a nationally renowned group named Casa Crew, said "First—I remember it exactly. First was actually Michael Jackson, and doing his steps. Just, after this, all the kids wanted to be b-boys... We would go with our friends to breakdance and I enjoyed hip hop culture" (interview, Fes, June 8 2010). These and other older musickers recall being taught "the Smurf," a dance trend of the 1980s similar to what is known in the US as "popping," by their visiting relatives.<sup>11</sup> Amine Snoop has stated that he learned "the Smurf" as early as 1985 (p.c., Casablanca, August 2 2010).

The physical sites of skill acquisition enabled and constrained different types of learning. One musicker, whose rap name is Fares Vox, spent the majority of his youth in suburban Ohio and Florida with his father and uncles, who had emigrated to the US for work. He returned home to Rabat after ten years in the US in Summer 2009 with a much wider perspective on US hip hop than other musickers his age, though much less experience with Francophone hip hop, and broader exposure to a variety of hip hop styles and African-American cultural expressions. Significantly, though, despite a much more heavily mediatized upbringing, his early experiences

in acquiring competency as a rapper and dancer were very similar to those of his fellow Moroccans in Rabat, Casablanca, Fes, or Meknes. As teenagers, both Vox and his future colleagues in hip hop gathered with small groups from their respective neighborhoods to listen and to form ciphers, dancing and rapping in an informal atmosphere where friendly competition was valorized.

A *cipher* is a hip hop term for the performance spaces bounded by a circular audience, in which members of the group take turns, competing against the performers before and after them (cf. Spady et al. 2006). In a discussion of freestyling—a term which, in US hip hop parlance, means to improvise lyrics over a beat—Fares Vox used his experiences in American ciphers to distinguish himself from other Moroccan rappers.<sup>12</sup> In his opinion, Moroccan ciphers lacked the same competitive atmosphere or stakes, and Moroccan rappers did not develop improvisatory skills in this or any other training ground. While rhetorical techniques such as similies (comparisons using “like” or “as,” often intentionally outrageous), extended metaphors and imagery, puns, double entendre, and metonymy are important tools in his English texts, Fares uses these less when rapping in Derija, even when he switches between languages in a single song (p.c., March 25 2010, Casablanca).<sup>13</sup>

Rapper Caprice, a Casablancon who first gained notoriety as a member of Mafia-C in 1996 and who later joined Casa Crew, compared his and his friends’ experiences in the cipher to *al-ḥalqa*, a similar circular performance format traditional to Morocco and still used for theatrical and musical presentations today in places like Marrakesh’s Jemaa el-Fna (Amine 2001, Haddad 2009). Significantly, *al-ḥalqa* lacks the competitive, participatory aspect of the hip hop cipher as it is understood in the US; instead, the boundaries between performers and audience are clearly drawn, and the performers are regarded as specialists in their musicking, acrobatics, storytelling, or other arts. Caprice described the *ḥalqat* that took place daily in the public meeting spaces of his neighborhood, Hay Mohammedi, in the late 1960s and 1970s, when the members of Nass el-Ghiwane lived there. When I asked whether they still occurred, he said no—but upon reflection, suggested that hip hop ciphers took their place for people like him who fell in love with hip hop as teenagers (interview, Casablanca, June 24 2010).

Abkari, Soultana, Barry, Amine Snoop, the members of Casa Crew, and other well-known actors in the Casablanca hip hop network were quick to mention a club named La Cage as the first place they made connections with hip hop musickers beyond their immediate circle of friends. La Cage held weekly hip hop nights where musickers could hear rap, r&b, and older soul and funk recordings. For all these musickers, it was a place to hear the latest songs “just as soon as they were released in America” (p.c. Barry, Casablanca, October 21 2009). A nightclub located near the site of the Casa Port train station today, just meters from the shoreline, La Cage was closed in 2002 (p.c. Amine Snoop, Casablanca, August 2 2010). From the early 1990s until its close, it formed a social hub and infrastructural node seconded only by the cafés near Parc Ligue Arabe in downtown Casablanca, collectively referred to as “Parc Yasmina,” where most of Casablanca’s hip hop musickers went to see and be seen during my fieldwork.

When asked about his education, Barry admitted that he never received his baccalaureate (equivalent to a high school diploma)—La Cage was “my best school,” he said with a smile, jerking his head in the direction of the former club. Similarly, Amine Snoop fondly recalled the

club as “the school of the movement” (interview, Casablanca, August 2 2010). Amine Snoop, who was not raised in Hay Mohammadi, met Barry at the club around 1992. Along with a third friend, they formed their first group, CasaMuslim, in 1992 or 1993, and continued to dance as a trio at LaCage. Their continued presence at the club brought them their first taste of fame when a local journalist became a fan and arranged for them to accompany other Moroccan acts on a mini-tour of three concerts around the Casablanca region.<sup>14</sup>

For Casablancon emcee Soultana, La Cage was a site of excitement, learning, and danger. The eldest of three siblings with two younger brothers, she was used to close friendships with boys in her neighborhood. When she tells the story of her engagement with hip hop, she recalls playing basketball and learning to rap in the cipher with her neighbors, young men in their early teens in ‘Ain Seb’a, a working-class suburb located just over the city border to the north of Casablanca. Yet as a young woman in her late teens, she had to be very cautious in her behavior at a club filled mostly with men, some of whom were significantly older. The traditional role of women at establishments which allowed the mixing of the sexes, music, alcohol, and dancing was as a *sheikha*, a dancer and singer of romantic songs in the genre known as *'aita* (Kapchan 2003, Ciucci 2012; cf. chapter 5).

Though Soultana attended La Cage during hip hop nights only, with her parents’ permission, and never alone, the potential damage to her reputation and that of her family remained significant. Soultana feared that, the more often other young women at the club drank alcohol, dressed seductively, flirted, or went home with men, the more intensively she would be expected to behave this way. She stopped attending hip hop nights at La Cage before it closed, following multiple experiences where men’s expectations of her did not match her behavior as a devout Muslim, nor her desires for her reputation. Nonetheless, her attendance did help her to secure her position in Casablanca’s hip hop network as it continued to develop. It was at the club that she first met musickers who would later work with her in a professional capacity, as beatmakers, producers, and collaborators.

The central role La Cage played in bringing together an emergent hip hop network in Casablanca was unmatched in the other major cities. Though young people were listening to and imitating hip hop in Fes, Meknes, Rabat-Salé, Tangier, and Marrakesh, these cities did not have a central location to hear music and to hone one’s skills as a listener, dancer, or emcee.<sup>15</sup> Several people in other cities mentioned cafés and other sites where young hip hop musickers congregated, but these sites were not nightclubs, and did not have the stamp of authenticity or the access to the latest in hip hop music that La Cage provided. Though Tangier and Marrakesh do have nightclubs, no one I interviewed reported attending them, nor that they played hip hop music.

### **A Series of Firsts: 1996-2003**

Few Moroccans knew a great deal about the hip hop musicking of other cities at this time. Many Casablanconans presume that they led the nation in early adoption of the hip hop arts, but Salé, a small ancient city just north of Rabat, had its own energetic network of young musickers in the mid-1990s.

In 1996, a duo from Salé released what is widely acknowledged to be the first full album by a Moroccan hip hop ensemble. *Double A*, which consisted of Aminoffice and his partner Ahmad (who, in 2010, was deejaying under the name DJ HMD, pronounced “hamed”), published their eponymous album as a CD. From this success, Aminoffice, who today lives in France year-round, continues to enjoy a reputation as one of the pioneers of Moroccan hip hop. Today, Salé hip hop artists proudly claim to belong to a consistent tradition dating to the 1990s. As I learned talking to fans at concerts in Salé, emcees and beatmakers from the area are also claimed by local fans.<sup>16</sup>

*Double A* would be the only CD released in the country, to my knowledge, for several years to come. Few of the recordings made by aspiring hip hop musickers during this era survive. One of the oldest members of Casablanca’s hip hop network, Amine Snoop, told me that his first groups made cassette tapes of their rehearsals with portable stereos, but his copies of these documents have long since been lost (cf. chapter 2). Pressings of CDs like *Double A* were unlikely to survive until the late 2000s. Few music stores outside of Salé would have stocked the CD. Finding a copy in the informal markets for CDs and cassettes, where most people went to purchase local music before widespread access to the Internet, would be nearly miraculous today.

During the late 1990s, many musickers started making the shift from dancing to French and American hip hop to making their own. Amine Snoop spent his formative years with CasaMuslim dancing and rapping along to favorite songs, honing his skills at delivering Arabic rhymes over a beat by practicing with Nass el-Ghiwane lyrics. He did not attempt to write in Derija until a few years after he gained proficiency as a dancer (cf. chapter 2). Masta Flow explained that his shift from dancing to rapping was the result of an injury sustained while b-boying. When he was unable to dance as he used to, “my friends said ‘rap with us, come sing with us.’ ...I learned how to write” (interview, Fes, June 6 2010).

At the same time that musickers were composing, perfecting, and recording their first original songs, emcees were attempting to develop their skills in their native language. For my interlocutors, this native language is the Derija (Moroccan Arabic) of their city. Many urban Moroccans live each day in a complexly polyglossic manner.<sup>17</sup> I focused my research in major cities, where youth are much more likely to grow up speaking Derija as their first language. None of my interlocutors, all of whom were born in their home cities or moved there as children, claimed to speak one of the three major dialects of Tamazight, the language of the Imazighen (Berbers). In addition to their local Derija, which may differ substantially from that of other regions, young people learn Modern Standard Arabic (MSA, or *Fusha*), French, and perhaps another foreign language in the public school system.<sup>18</sup>

Learning not only facility with multiple languages and registers, but when and with whom to use them, is a major part of acquiring urban *savoir faire*. The character and proficiency of one’s multi-lingualism is also a marker of educational and class distinctions both within and without one’s peer group.<sup>19</sup> In casual conversation with Moroccan interlocutors and acquaintances, many of whom enjoyed discussions of socio-linguistics, I learned that affluent urban families go to great lengths to ensure that their children study French privately in order to acquire a Parisian, rather than Moroccan, accent. Anecdotal evidence suggests that private study of English has increased dramatically in recent years, alongside the emergence of private post-secondary

education in computer science and information technology, which require familiarity with English.

Today, several musickers claim to have been the first to rap in Derija. Amine Snoop claims to have been the first to rap in Derija in Casablanca, and is generally credited with this by local musickers (or at least, I have never heard it to be contradicted) (p.c. November 22 2009). In “Itoub,” a song first released as a promotion between CDs in 2008, Don Bigg credits Masta Flow with the suggestion that Bigg develop his skills in Derija.<sup>20</sup> Given the timeline of Bigg’s artistic trajectory, this was probably in 1998 or 1999 (Maréchaud 2006). In Fes, the members of Syndi-K, who each located their first introduction to hip hop between 1993 and 1994, believe they were the first to develop Derija lyrics in their city or perhaps in the country.

Talos, a former member of 19-Contre-Attack, claimed that his group was the first in their city of Salé to deliver rhymes in Derija in 2000. This group began in 1998 out of a friendship among four boys from the same neighborhood, *arrondissement* 19, and was active until at least 2006. All of the members listened to French and US hip hop artists—Talos particularly recalled a cousin bringing home a copy of the French pioneers IAM’s hit album, *L’école du micro d’argent* (1997), marking that as the moment he fell in love with hip hop—and attempted to imitate them for two years. In 2000, the group decided that “French rap, it’s not for us” and began to work on lyrics in Derija (interview, Salé, March 2 2010).

The fact that multiple musickers claimed to be the first emcees to rap in Derija signifies that at the time, in the late 1990s, networks within and between cities were not nearly as close as they are today. The likeliest explanation is that over a period of two to three years, each city named here (and others) independently developed a group or small network of groups teaching themselves to write and rap in their native language after achieving a degree of mastery in French, or in the case of Casablancon musickers Amine Snoop and Don Bigg, in English.

For my interlocutors, Derija was the language in which they could reach the greatest number of their fellow Moroccans. Like the hip hop artists they admired, Moroccan musickers sought to express themselves in ways that at once celebrated the local and highlighted their stylistic continuity with the transnational hip hop tradition. In using Derija, hip hop musickers also followed the leading fusion musicians of the 1960s and 70s, expressing cultural pride through a rejection of the predominant use of French and Modern Standard Arabic in national telecommunications.<sup>21</sup> Some well-respected groups founded in the late 1990s (including Bizz2risk of Casablanca, H-Kayne of Meknes, and Fes City Clan) established a pattern in which one emcee in the group would provide verses in French while the rest rapped in Derija.<sup>22</sup>

Today, a small number of emcees choose to rap solely in French, and some frequently codeswitch. Using French can be a double-edged sword for Moroccan emcees. Many still consider French the most prestigious language in the Moroccan context. It is commonly seen as iconic of both modernity and colonial oppression (Mouhassine 1995, Ennaji 2005). Thus, emcees who fail to gain respect from their peers for their skills are dismissed for using French instead of Derija. Yet the respected emcees who frequently or exclusively rap in French are known for sophisticated wordplay and biting satire in that language.<sup>23</sup> This may simultaneously reflect those emcees’ choices of lyrical models and musickers’ received assumptions about the “literary” merit of French.

The late 1990s saw several milestones for the nation with direct impact on youthful hip hop musickers. King Hassan II undertook several reforms in his last decade, including altering the constitution to give more power to Parliament in 1992, creating a bicameral legislature in 1996, and instituting the “alternance” government (in which the opposition led Parliament) in 1998 (Pennell 2000: 371-373). The King passed away in July 1999 at age seventy after thirty-eight years of rule. He was succeeded by his son Mohamed VI, then thirty-six years old. As King, Mohamed VI immediately announced reforms chosen to distance him from his father’s legacy, without reducing the degree of power concentrated in the person of the monarch by the 1962 constitution. These included releasing political prisoners, increasing the freedoms promised to the press, and creating a Commission tasked with investigating human rights abuses during his father’s reign modeled after South Africa’s Truth and Reconciliation Commission (cf. Slyomovics 2001). On November 9, 1999, the new King fired Driss Basri, the longtime Minister of the Interior, who was the symbol and “principle architect” of the “years of lead” (Gilson Miller 2013). By firing Basri, Mohamed VI signified a break with the policies of his father’s reign.

The sense of change and possibility felt by young people and adults alike inspired several new initiatives. In 1999, amateur rock musicians Mohamed “Momo” Merhari and Hicham Bahou created *Le Boulevard des Jeunes Musiciens* and *Le Tremplin* (“springboard”) in Casablanca. The festival grew out of an informal series of concerts organized by Merhari and Bahou and hosted at a community theatre named *Le Fédération des Oeuvres Laïques*, or F.O.L., in Casablanca’s upscale neighborhood of Gautier. The theatre allowed the young organizers to host a competition called *le Tremplin* for four genres of music: rock, hip hop, electronica, and fusion (Callen 2006).

The history of L’Boulevard, as the festival series would come to be called, is detailed in chapter four; here, I want to mark the start of the series and its expansion over the next decade as a milestone for the process of community- and network-building that makes Casablanca unlike any other Moroccan city for pursuit of “Western” popular music. As the first and most successful (originally) independent music festival in Morocco, L’Boulevard has been held up by supporters as a model of free expression for both secular and religious youth across the Muslim world (cf. LeVine 2008). As the preeminent Moroccan site to perform and gain social capital through performance, it is also a model for what can be achieved through network formation.

Hicham Abkari also founded a new initiative in 1999. He started a dance series at a municipal arts center in downtown Casablanca, the Complexe Culturel Sidi Belyout, through his role as adjunct director at the complex.<sup>24</sup> Abkari recognizes himself as one of the first adults to provide young hip hop musickers with any kind of institutional support. In a 2008 interview, he said:

“In 1999, it all began with the first national championship of break dance, conceived in the form of a ‘battle,’ like those that exist, for example, in Germany . . . . It had contests between different breakdance groups, and, between these battles some rappers would sing. It was truly the beginning, [since] there were not many groups, at such a level for breakdance as for rap” (Cestor 2008, my translation).

The dance sessions brought b-boys into the rehearsal and performance venue, and turned a site dedicated mostly to Arab, Andalusí, and European art musics into a central location to meet, to practice, and to battle with dancers from beyond their own neighborhoods or ciphers. Abkari created a non-profit *association* in 2003, the Moroccan Underground Foundation, whose membership was drawn from the b-boys who frequented the weekly battles.

Market liberalization and state withdrawal from public corporations and services sped up in the 2000s, as King Mohamed VI continued to implement long-term structural adjustment goals. At the same time, the state continued to engage in “roll-out” neoliberalization in specific arenas, building or substantially altering markets for tourism, telecommunications, and outsourced public services.<sup>25</sup> In 1997, the newly elected socialist-led Parliament passed the Post Office and Telecommunications Act, which created a new regulatory agency with the charge of upgrading post, radio, phone, Internet, and television infrastructure. From 1992 to 1996, dial-up connections to the Internet were available only to academics, certain government ministries and offices of foreign NGOs in Rabat, and a few wealthy private clients (Davis 1996: n.p.). The agency opened the Internet market to competition by providing licenses to 20 Internet Service Providers (ISPs) in 1998 (Ibahrine 2004). Yet the cost of a subscription was still out of the average Moroccan’s reach, and home computers were available to even less of the population. This meant that the new industry of cybercafés grew rapidly as café owners could take advantage of the new, lower prices and consumers could pay an affordable rate per hour.

Morocco’s state-owned phone company, Maroc Telecom/Itissalat al-Maghrib, was partially privatized in 2000, and immediately faced competition for mobile and internet service from the Spanish multinational Méditel (Hibou and Tozy 2002). Today these two companies are joined by a third major provider, Inwi. The radio and television markets were opened in 2004, alongside the creation of a government authority to establish standards for programming. New private stations and channels now compete successfully against a diversified group of state-owned stations and channels.

Morocco has operated under a free trade agreement with the European Union since 1995, with the United States since 2006, and with Turkey since 2008. Foreign investment in NGOs partnered with the government, such as the US government’s Millenium Challenge Corporation (MCC) and Middle East Partnership Initiative (MEPI), has supported the provision of educational, agricultural, and environmental services that had formerly been under the funding and control of the state (Cohen and Jaidi 2006, Millenium Challenge Corporation 2007). Indeed, the terrorism events that took place between 2001-2005 in New York, London, Madrid and Casablanca resulted in a shift in aid and development strategies for not just the US, but for the other major aid providers to Morocco, France and the European Union.

### **State Interventions: Spring 2003-present**

On May 16<sup>th</sup>, 2003, twelve to fifteen young men from a group calling themselves *al-Sirat al-Mustaqim* (“the Straight Path”) or *Salafiya Jihadiya* (“Salafi Jihadists”) staged a coordinated suicide bombing in Casablanca. The targets included foreign-owned restaurants, a branch of the



international Golden Tulip hotel chain blocks from the downtown train station, and a Jewish cultural center. Forty-five people died, including ten bombers.<sup>26</sup>

These attacks were the first of their kind in the country, and they generated instant and widespread condemnation from across the political spectrum. The violence, the choice of targets, and the timing with both domestic and international events prompted widespread discussion. As more information about the bombers emerged, it became clear that all of the young men were from the same place—Sidi Moumen, a seriously impoverished *bidonville* (informal housing) on the outskirts of the city, where few to no services were provided by the state. Discursively, the unequalizing effects of Morocco's neoliberalizing policies, and the resentment that these could inspire, were linked to a willingness to identify with a violent extremist fringe of Islamism.

The attacks also generated a string of responses from hip hop artists. Hip hop musickers repudiated political violence in the name of Islam, echoing and amplifying the nationally cohesive rejection of such actions as sanctioned by any reading of Islamic texts or traditions.

Hip hop musickers' discourse, including lyrics and everyday conversation, shares with that of mainstream Moroccans the trait of consistently conflating Muslim identity with Moroccan citizenship. Political scientist Mounia Bennani-Chraïbi argues that through codified forms of religious instruction in public schools, the Moroccan state has inculcated a generation of youth with "a private and individualist ethic" of piety and practice, in contrast to a traditional and still-influential sense that one's Muslim identity is always already formed in relation to one's faith community (1994: 75). Fatima Sadiqi sums this up as the distinction between Islam as a belief, and Islam as a cultural foundation: "Islam as faith is perceived as a personal relationship between an individual and God, and Islam as culture is perceived as part and parcel of Moroccans' overall identity (whether they practice Islam or not)" (2003: 41).

Throughout my fieldwork I was constantly reminded how thoroughly practices, viewpoints, and aptitudes derived from Muslim ethics of self-care and ideals of sociability are imbricated into Moroccan daily life. These reminders came in little ways, such as musickers' habits (shared with Moroccans in general) of referring to each other through familial terms, or in big ways, such as being invited to a musickers' home for *ftour* (the fast-breaking meal) during Ramadan.<sup>27</sup> At the end of Ramadan and near the end of my fieldwork year, I hosted a *ftour* at the US Embassy's library in Casablanca. My deejaying teacher, DJ Sim-H, performed for the assembled American, French, and Moroccan guests after the meal, inspiring hours of dancing, with a customary break for the evening call to prayer. Consistent with a majority of Moroccans' views on the permissibility of many musical sounds, musickers were unfazed by the juxtaposition of hip hop with events at once social and religious.

From the pragmatic and secular-oriented to the devout, hip hop musickers locate themselves along the full spectrum of pious intensity. A stout corpus of hip hop songs refers to belief in Allah as the first and last response to life's challenges and as a fundamental tenet of Moroccan-ness. In keeping with a general sense of the responsibility to enjoin the good and forbid the bad,<sup>28</sup> emcees frequently criticize what they see as immoral, hypocritical, or corrupt behaviors, especially by those in power (cf. chapter five). At the same time, in keeping with Sadiqi's point above, no one was ever criticized in my presence for failing to pray or choosing to smoke, drink,

or swear by another musicker. Rather, musickers overwhelmingly disclosed their own failings and resolved to be better practitioners at some point in the future.<sup>29</sup>

The lamination of Moroccanness with cultural and religious expressions of Muslim faith is underpinned by the role of the monarch as *amīr al-mu'minīn*. Culturally Muslim dimensions of Moroccanness, and specifically Moroccan forms of Muslim faith practice, have historically been inescapably political. In the post-2003 context, those interlocutors with opinions on the subject shared with a majority of their fellow citizens a dim view of most political Islam and conservative reform movements. Islamist political parties like the Party of Justice and Development (PJD) were considered no more or less moral or effectual than other political parties. Some musickers accuse members of transnational reform movements of hypocrisy.<sup>30</sup>

In the years since the 2003 attack, some of the best-known soloists and groups throughout the country have produced songs about the bombings or about post-attack Casablanca. All of these songs share a rejection of the notion that Islamic doctrines and values permit such violence, casting the bombers' actions outside the pale of religion. Each artist or ensemble used a distinct musical approach. In 2004, the Marrakesh-based group Fnaire ("lanterns") produced "Matkitsh Bladi" ("Don't touch my country"), after a public campaign of the same name from late 2003. In reference to the targets of the attacks, the song explicitly depicts a tolerant Morocco in which all the *ahl al-kitab* ("people of the book") thrived, stating that in earlier times "we lived like brothers, Christians, Muslims and Jews... we praised the Lord, to One submitted." Fnaire's resolutely positive call for renewed unity proved to be very popular; like much of the rest of its oeuvre, its representations of Morocco's peaceful, devout past continuing into the present combined national pride with a message the state was attempting to re-broadcast internationally in the wake of the bombings.

In 2005, Fes City Clan's eponymous CD featured "Casablanca (16 Mai)." In this six-minute opus, the group creates a remarkable mix. The five emcees sing a chorus in three-part harmony, rarely if ever heard in Moroccan popular musics, with the addition of a melismatic top line that descends in sequence in apparent imitation of Andalusian song. The first half of the track uses several signifiers of mourning, violence, and warfare taken from the Western tradition of musical semiotics, including a snare-drum pattern and synthesizer riff that suggest a drum and bugle corps. At 4:17, a brief interlude recodes the backing track and singing as "Arab." The drum pattern shifts from a typical hip hop snare emphasizing the "2" and "4" of the quadratic meter to a hand drum whose pattern emphasizes the "2" with a high pitch (a "tek"), but de-emphasizes the "4" with a low pitch (a "dum"). Finally, the track creates a dialogue between an emcee rapping over the original backing track and another emcee singing over the "Arab" backing track, exchanging four measures at a time, as if trading bars in a jazz improvisation.

"Chkoune ntouma?" ("Who are you?"), from emcee Barry's reggae-influenced 2007 album *Sleeping System*, pairs the artist with a soulful multi-tracked female vocalist and stern English-language samples, creating a chorus of outraged voices who direct the title question to the suicide bombers in two languages. In an interview, Barry explained that he wrote a first version of "Chkoune ntouma?" immediately after the bombings, but it took him four years to record and release it (p.c., Casablanca, October 21 2009). In the meantime, a second attempted suicide bombing was thwarted outside the US Embassy in 2007. "Chkoune ntouma?" takes seriously the

possibility that both bombings were retaliation by a transnational extremist group for the Moroccan government's support of the US invasion of Iraq in March 2003. Barry expresses frustration and bewilderment to the extremists purportedly behind the bombers, singing, "Are you peacemakers or is your plan one of trickery?"

In contrast, "16/05," released on Casablanca rapper Don Bigg's second album *Byad ou K7al* (*Black and White*) in 2009, is the only song about the bombings to give voices to actors in that event. The structure of the narrative, the argument, and the music are quite different from the other songs treating this topic. In Bigg's dramatic rendering, a bomber character is driven not by extremist dogma, nor to redress a geopolitical grievance, but to make a radical statement against his poverty and social immobility. In chapter five, I explore this song in some detail in order to argue that the hip hop arts promote a certain kind of citizenship.

The 2003 suicide bombings were read as a wake-up call regarding the presence of extremist ideologies and the susceptibility of youth, especially impoverished youth, to their narratives (Belghazi 2009). Hicham Abkari described the change of political logic in this way:

"Before 2003, the public powers held an openly assumed reactionary discourse [against hip hop]. Currently[,] no, they cannot hold this discourse which would appear obscurantist, [like] a form of intellectual terrorism, even terrorism itself. Even if they are the same people in the same positions, even if the reflexes are always the same, the discourse has changed. It would be of this type: 'it must open up, Morocco is an open country, where we know how to accept difference... It's important to listen to the youth, it's a form of expression'" (Cestor 2008, my translation).

The attacks acted as a catalyst for the state's recognition of hip hop as well as other *musiques actuelles* or *musiq'a gharbi* ("Western music"), including fusion, electronica, and some rock. However, the attacks might not have prompted such an interpretation without the presence of other factors. A constellation of events and infrastructural changes in Casablanca made the state's eventual move into the investment in and promotion of "Western" cultural forms appear particularly connected to the 2003 bombings.

In February of that year, the state arrested and convicted 14 young heavy metal musicians on charges of undermining the national religion of Islam. Each was in his early twenties and performed with one of the amateur metal bands of Casablanca (the plaintiffs included band members from Reborn and Nekros; both were still performing up to 2006). Each was a member of the city's more affluent classes; as in hip hop, the costs of obtaining the instruments, recordings, fashion and other equipment is considerable. In addition, all of the metal groups of Casablanca sing in English, and the ability to master the language enough to write original lyrics suggests expensive private study. In an article based on a roundtable interview held in 2007 and originally published in the daily *Le Libération*, reporters recalled the affair this way:

"Nicknamed 'the Satanic adepts,' these young Casablancans were between the ages of 20 and 28 years and came from the middle class: the engineer, the business school student, the functionary and even the unemployed were arrested. ... The charges against them found

their juridical foundation in Article 220 of the Moroccan penal code: ‘[He] is punishable by six months to three years and a fine of 12,000 dirhams anyone employing means of seduction in the goal of shaking the faith of a Muslim or of converting him to another religion[...].’” (Alaoui et al., 2007, my translation).

The arrest and trial of these young men compelled previously unrelated groups of musicians, artists, and activists, including the founders of L’Boulevard, musickers from all the “urban” genres, and women’s rights groups, to join together in protest until the prisoners were released. Their agitation proved so successful that charges were eventually dropped against eleven of the young men. The three who were charged and convicted spent a few months in jail, and were later released after continued protests staged in Casablanca in front of the courthouse and in Rabat in front of Parliament.

In his analysis, Mark LeVine points out that the outcome of the trial was much less severe than in other cases of actions against metal musicians in the Arab world, including a 1997 trial in Egypt, though the initial allegations of “Satanism” were the same (LeVine 2008: 31; Belghazi 2009). The relatively light treatment of the accused metal musicians, in combination with the state’s visible levels of investment over the next several years, avoided a chilling effect amongst those interested in “Western” musics. Instead, the connections formed by disparate interests across Casablanca during Spring and Summer 2003, and their successful protests, galvanized the small percentage of people with the time, financial security, education, and energy to maintain this sense of solidarity into the rest of the decade. In the same article in *Le Libération*, the reporters declared, “These young musicians can never forget the scandal of 2003. [...] Since then, the amateurs of hip hop, fusion, electronic music and metal are particularly linked [“soudés”]. They will push until the end to form a bulwark against obscurantism” (Alaoui et al. 2007, my translation).

In the months and years after 2003, the national and municipal governments’ most visible interventions were in the realm of popular culture. Royal speeches and initiatives specifically targeted youth, especially unmarried males under 30, the category into which all the perpetrators of the 2003 and 2007 attacks fell.<sup>31</sup> Along with other genres of popular music, hip hop music-making became more visible and audible to the general Moroccan public a result of the national government’s investment in and promotion of “youth cultures.” In the context of the state’s aggressive expansion of cultural tourism, hip hop, a symbol of Western influence to its defenders and detractors alike, began to appear on the stages of state-sponsored festivals. When I asked about opportunities to perform at festivals, interlocutors often speculated that hip hop was seen by the state and even the King as a useful alternative to metal. They reasoned that hip hop appeared to be a genre with similar transnational cachet, but which attracted less condemnation and fear from conservative Muslims. One of the reasons this perception of hip hop seems so widespread is the mainstream appeal and commercial success of Fnaire.

Throughout their oeuvre, Fnaire positions themselves, explicitly and effectively, as upholders of a nostalgic traditional culture. The music and lyrics of their entire catalog work to foreground an identity that specifically melds indices of Moroccan folklore and Muslim practice, as discussed in chapter two. In addition to their musical innovation in this regard, in which they

layer musical signifiers from various genres and traditions into a hip hop form, they advertise themselves as promoting a form of self-restraint in regards to expression, self-censoring so that the “whole family can listen” together, as they said in an interview on al-Jazeera Television later included in the documentary *I Love Hip Hop in Morocco* (2004). Indeed, I have watched multiple generations of men and women gathered in outdoor concerts happily dance to this band’s successful musical mixtures. Their widespread popularity, thoughtful hip hop musickers have suggested to me, made it easier for the state to support hip hop through performances and appearances in state-owned media, even if other hip hop groups were not as perfectly targeted to mainstream Moroccan audiences.

Musickers of all genres have taken quite seriously both the power of the state, as revealed in the actions against the metal musicians, and their newly visible role as youth leaders. Since the partial privatization of radio and television in 2004, new shows have sprung up and old shows have changed their programming to compete for viewers. “Top Tarab,” a talk show focusing on interviews with current musical artists, now includes hip hop musicians like Nores and Barry in its lineup alongside names from *musiqqa sharqi* and *chaabi*.<sup>32</sup> “Hak Hna al-Jirane” (“here come the neighbors”), a sitcom set in an apartment building on the state-owned channel 2M, features a teenage girl character being raised by her divorced mother who loves Bigg, H-Kayne, and Hoba Hoba Spirit. Soultana, the Casablanca emcee, was tapped to add a rapped version of the lyrics to the show’s opening credits. In addition, shows in new formats dedicated entirely to popular musics frequently feature hip hop artists. These include “Al Oula Show” (“The First Show”) and “Studio 2M,” weekly musical revues with live audiences (cf. Mafhoum 2007); “100% Chabab,” which combines “man-on-the-street” style reporting of young people’s musical preferences with live performance; and “Korsa,” in which radio personality Younes Lazrak interviews prominent hip hop, fusion, rock and metal musicians in the back of a psychedelically-decorated Volkswagen bus (known colloquially as a *korsa*). “Korsa” and “Korsa Live,” which broadcasts concert recordings, are the most recent additions to the 2M lineup.

Similarly, Radio 2M’s nightly show “Debut du Soirée” allows Lazrak complete freedom to play whatever international or Moroccan songs he chooses from 5 to 8pm, provided their overall percentages comply with rules requiring at least 40% of music to be Moroccan (p.c. Casablanca, 15 December 2009). Its direct competitor, “Tendance Jeune” (“Youth Trend”), runs from 4 to 6 pm daily on the station Rabat Chaîne International; the host, Hicham Lazrak (no relation), focuses on interviewing and playing the songs of local musickers from Rabat and Salé (p.c. Rabat, 23 March 2010). This station is owned and operated by the public-private conglomerate known as Société National de Radio et Télédiffusion, one of the companies partially sold since 2004 (Boufous 2009). The same laws allowed for new radio stations to open and build broadcasting networks across the country. Hit Radio and Radio Mars, both of which have the same freedoms to choose their playlists, are privately owned and operated; each can be heard in multiple major cities across the country. Each of these stations has a less diverse set of requirements than partially state-owned stations. Each focuses on “top 40”-style programming drawn from Moroccan and international hits, including relatively high percentages of electronic dance musics, rock, and mainstream US hip hop.

New radio stations led to a diversification of musical styles heard across the country, as stations competed to distinguish themselves from each other with different programming, the newest popular songs, and attention-grabbing hosts. For the first time, songs that young people would have circulated on tapes in the 1980s and 90s, or would have downloaded from the Internet, were also available on the radio and could be heard in public places. This meant increased exposure for those hip hop artists lucky enough to be played by a radio host.

However, with increased opportunity came a further degree of frustration for those who, because of their sound, their lyrics, or their lack of contacts at the station, still did not succeed in getting radio promotion. Stations are careful not to play any songs with words considered obscene in order to avoid being fined by the Haute Autorité de la Communication Audiovisuelle (HACA). For rapper Chaht Man, a member of Casa Crew and the owner of a recording studio, stations provide an inexplicit but easily understood boundary between what is “too hard” (and likely to be censored) and “light” playable songs. As he put it, “there is a kind of cold war between the system and hip hop...if you have songs about lovers or something, they’ll call you for TV” (p.c., Casablanca, October 21 2009).

Fares Vox, the Rabati musicker whose hip hop training came from his youth in the US, complained about a lack of professionalism in the radio industry. As he described it to me, he first had to cultivate friends from his neighborhood who happened to work in television, then drop their names when he brought his recordings and résumé to the hosts of radio programs. Having done so, he found it much easier to convince them to play his songs. Fares’ perseverance paid off when, in spring 2010, one of his songs remained in the top five most-requested songs on Rabat Chaîne International for several weeks in row. Fares immediately capitalized on this success by talking the host of the RCI request program, Hicham Lazrak, into inviting him and his colleagues in the B3 crew on to the show for an interview and performance. He also requested, and received, a copy on CD of the radio announcement listing his song in the top five, to add to his press packet (fieldnotes, Rabat, March 23 2010).

In addition, the state’s interventions into youth culture and the field of radio and telecommunications also sparked a small boom in reporting on hip hop and other aspects of youth culture. Increased competition between both new and established hip hop acts for opportunities to perform and circulate their music has provided eager journalists with a steady stream of musickers willing to be interviewed. Several overview and roundtable articles, each purporting to introduce Moroccan hip hop culture to a wider readership, appeared in Francophone news and magazines between 2004-2008 (cf. Amale 2004, Bensalmia and Benchemsi 2006, Houdaif 2006, Lamarkbi 2006, Alaoui et al. 2007, Danilo 2008).

### **New Technologies and Enhanced Networks: 2006-2011**

*Fieldnotes, July 1<sup>st</sup> 2010: Col’Jam Fest, Institut Cervantes, Casablanca*

I know we’re nearing the end of the concert because the master of ceremonies has come by to tap my conversation partner, the evening’s dj, on the shoulder and tell him that he’s up next. He will play a set after the last act has finished their songs. “All hip hop—no house!”

says the host. DJ Casa Flayva, whose given name, I have just learned, is Mehdi, smiles sheepishly. From our position stage right, about halfway between the temporary stage and the tented sound booth in the petite walled courtyard, we watch the last song of Under Brother, a young trio. Like some of the other performers tonight, they are from ‘Ain Seb’a; like everyone tonight, they are playing for free at the first in a series of concerts organized throughout the month of July to benefit a youth organization. They brought their own deejay to work the CD turntables positioned in a downstage corner. They stalk the stage, arms lancing out stiffly, the other two echoing the end of the leader’s lines, to keep the crowd bouncing along to the unfamiliar song.

One of the group, who functions as a hype man, walks up to the edge of the stage and introduces the last song. I see all sorts of athletic and hip hop-inspired fashion on stage and in the audience—Mehdi, for example, is wearing a flat-brimmed fitted cap with a glittery appliqué over his bushy ponytail and pristine white Nikes—but I’ve never seen someone rock a Harvard basketball jersey here, or, for that matter, in the US. The hype man is shorter than his friends on stage but makes up for it in energy. “Wesh koulchi zwin (Is everything good/beautiful)?” he asks the crowd, who shout back various affirmations. “*Koulshi zwiwin?*” he pushes, playfully stretching out the first syllable and adding an extra “wi” to the word that means “beautiful” for emphasis. “Wesh koulshi zwin fi kul al-maghrif (Is everything good in the whole country)?” The audience plays along with this part of a familiar script, too, yelling yesses and nos. Sure, everything’s great, no problem.

The DJ keeps his finger over the start button on the right-hand CD turntable and lets the left-hand track run under the hype man’s patter, nodding slightly along with the beat and watching center stage for the end of the speech. “Wesh kayn koulshi fil maghrif? (Is there everything in Morocco?) Wesh kayn al-flous u al-t’alim u al-khadama p̄hel ba?” The most active group in the audience, clustered at the front of the raised stage, laugh and roar back “la (no)!” as the DJ switches to the track for the last song.

I think I know what “p̄hel ba” means but I turn to ask Mehdi if I have it right. “Did he say ‘Is there money and education and work like [your] father?’ Like the last generation?” I ask. He nods at me. The host walks by and gestures to him, and Mehdi takes his leave of me, skirting the crowd and ducking behind the stage to the roped-off performance area to wait for his last set.

The late 2000s were characterized by a steady increase in media coverage of hip hop. Self-organized performances, like the example given above, became more common. Most importantly, a younger group of hip hop musickers began to appear on stage and release music. Among other factors, these developments were enabled by the rise of private television and radio programs and changing programming at public ones. The spread of organizational expertise and musical competencies via well-established interpersonal networks also aided musickers in organizing their own events. The success and relative acceptance of hip hop has also prompted discussion from commentators, scholars, and artists, ensuring the formation of a local discourse outside hip hop networks about the character and merits of Moroccan hip hop. Because so much

of this material will be encountered in the following chapters, I provide only a brief overview here.

The expansion of opportunities to be heard on the radio and to perform in festivals has meant visibility, legitimacy, some income, and physical and social mobility for a small number of hip hop artists. Increasingly, as will be shown in chapter four, the state has chosen to support those efforts which prove themselves in a “marketplace” of service delivery, whose ability to fund and manage themselves is already clear.

Beyond the spread of hip hop in traditional media, musickers maintain strong presences on specific social media websites, including Facebook and Myspace as well as sites designed by and for Moroccan hip hop musickers like RapMaroc.org and RapduNord.com. Both of these include hip hop news from Morocco, North Africa, France, and the US as well as message boards, personal profile pages, and free downloads. In addition to these sites, musickers post and view videos at YouTube, DailyMotion, and Vimeo. Pages like Ta Jeunesse!, which is based in France and covers international entertainment news, are also popular. For a small group of active producers, subscription-based promotional sites like Soundcloud, Reverbnation, and Last.fm combine social media features with large amounts of storage space, allowing musickers to post their remixes, original tracks, or short samples of songs to be shared with other professionals. Today, a small number of artists also promote themselves on Twitter.

Though Internet access is still low outside metropolitan areas, its integration into the daily life of urban musickers at all socio-economic levels has radically altered the texture of daily life for many youth. Even those without home computers can access the same sites and media as their peers at local cybercafés, small independent businesses with separate cubicles for each computer, where one is charged by the hour for computer use and additional fees for services such as printing, scanning, computer repair, or web design. The ease with which media is now spread, and the commentary on hip hop that this media has generated, facilitates the pioneer generation’s efforts at historicizing Moroccan hip hop’s first twenty years. Within Moroccan hip hop networks, Internet-based tools have become central to artists’ and fans’ promotional strategies and self-fashioning. Though the Internet is increasingly accessible, differentiations between who has the skills, dispositions, and income to use it most profitably remain.

The performance capacities of Casablancon and other spaces, mostly utilized in the context of music festivals, will be discussed in detail in the following chapter. Below, I mention two sorts of infrastructural shifts from the late 2000s to give a sense of the possibilities emerging from Casablanca’s networks, the core of which is still composed of musickers in their late twenties to mid-thirties, though younger musickers also take advantage of this group’s accomplishments.

Importantly, continuing efforts by private citizens and the municipality to make concerts easier to organize has led to specific infrastructural changes. These changes have been spearheaded by a small network whose members already share certain connections. AEC-Boulevard, the organization that has grown out of L’Boulevard festival and is still headed by Merhari and Bahou, has joined with other Casablanca organizations to operate Les Fabriques Transculturelles des Abbatoirs. This uniquely named venue is in fact an old *abbatoir*, or slaughterhouse, originally built by the Protectorate in the 1920s and sited across the street from



the contemporary butchery and market in Hay Mohammadi (cf. Casamemoire.org). Since 2009, L’Batwar, as it is shortened in Derija, has hosted Le Tremplin annually as well as numerous singular art exhibits, theatre performances, dance workshops, and film screenings. I will discuss AEC-Boulevard’s other projects since 2006 in more detail in chapter four. In addition, L’Batwar has quickly become iconic for hip hop musickers beyond Casablanca through its frequent appearances in hip hop videos, including those for songs by Nores (from Salé), Muslim (from Tangier), and Casa-System (from Casablanca).

The Col’Jam Festival mentioned in the fieldnote excerpt above is a unique, yet instructive example of the potential in the Casablancon regional network. Col’Jam Fest held four concerts in the month of July, once a week, with each evening dedicated to a single genre as at L’Boulevard. Whether organized by public or private groups, live musical performances are most often free to the audience. The dominant ways organizers finance hip hop performances are to get sponsors to cover the costs of equipment, space rental, and paying staff and performers (though frequently neither are paid), or to structure the performances as competitions in which performers to pay a fee to compete (cf. chapter six). Instead, at the Col’Jam Fest, tickets were sold, and the concerts were advertised as a benefit for the association that organized them, with the profits earmarked for that organization’s summer musical workshops for young children (p.c. Casablanca, July 22 2010). At twenty dirhams per person (about \$2.50 US), the ticket price targeted a fairly affluent audience. The relatively expensive price also balanced the large numbers of friends, family, and helpers who entered without paying. By the time of our last conversations in late July, the organizers with whom I spoke were unable to tell me how much they had benefited from the concerts, but were confident that they had made a profit from the series.

Col’Jam kept their costs down by obtaining donated services from the venue, the sound technicians, and the performers. Younouss, the member of the youth organization who had taken the lead on the festival, also ensured that a friend designed the posters and tickets, and another friend printed them at cost (i.e., without making a profit from the work). His roommate wrote about the upcoming festival in his coverage of arts and culture for the Casablanca daily *Au Fait*. Most importantly, the venue attracted just the right sort of performer for the task: young musickers who were both relatively well-known in the city amongst people their age, and unknown enough to be willing to donate their time and expertise. The self-taught house and hip hop deejay in the fieldnote excerpt above, DJ CasaFlayva, described himself as willing to play anywhere to gain experience and visibility; since he does not own his own turntables, relying on friends to allow him to rehearse on their equipment, performing is also a way of practicing his craft in a very direct sense (p.c., Casablanca, August 28 2010).

The Festival was held at the Institut Cervantes, a combination of language school and cultural outreach center funded and operated by the Spanish Ministry of Culture.<sup>33</sup> Located downtown just off the rondpoint that connects Boulevard Moulay Youssef, the major street running through the posh shopping district of Gauthier and the location of the US Consulate, to Arab League Park at the heart of central Casablanca, the Institut is ideally situated in a highly recognizable and safe place easily reached on foot from the train station or the local inter-city taxi stand. This made it simple for the performers and their friends, most of whom were from a working-class neighborhood just outside the city’s outer industrial belt known as ‘Ain Seb’a, to

travel quickly to and from the concert location at little cost. In addition, the music spilling from the Institut's small cobbled courtyard would not bother any local residents, as the nearest apartment buildings were at least three blocks away. Though the stone walls and floor of the venue made for excellent sound with minimal amplification, a sound technician was seated under a small tent at the back of the courtyard to control the system of microphones, monitors and speakers.

The presence of a hired expert, and his professional-level equipment, was highly significant to the performers and their knowledgeable audience members. Complaints about the lack of training and ability amongst Moroccans in sound recording, mixing, and reproduction, both in live contexts and in the studio, were some of the most frequent comments I heard when discussing the shortcomings of the current informal mode of musical circulation. Competent sound technicians are often assumed not to exist in Morocco; concerts that otherwise appeared to be expensive and well-organized were frequently disappointing to both artists and audiences because the sound quality was inconsistent or not up to their standards. Audience members mentioned with respect and admiration the fact that the Col'Jam organizers chose to invest their resources in a professional sound engineer, instead of saving money by employing a willing amateur.

Thus, though they were not to be paid, musickers who agreed to perform could earn significant social capital as a result of their participation in a well-organized, well-attended event held in a desirable location. Through the use of social media, musickers also ensured that their social capital was immediately reinvested into the network in the form of posted video and photos from the performance; the capital was leveraged, as it were, to maximize the number of people who might access that documentation, further enhancing the performers' reputation.

#### *late 2000s: the rise of second-wave hip hop musickers*

According to the organizers, each of the performers at the hip hop concert in the Col'Jam series was between fifteen and twenty-five years old. The majority of the audience at these and other concerts is now younger than the genre's most prominent performers. My work focuses on the first wave of hip hop musickers, those who grew up alongside the first entry of hip hop media into Morocco and pioneered the adoption of hip hop arts in their neighborhoods as teenagers in the 1990s. These musickers are now in their late twenties to mid-thirties (the oldest performer I have interviewed was 35 at the time, though I have spoken with older musickers who identify themselves and their children as fans).

In addition to the means by which they were first introduced to hip hop culture, many first-wave artists in Casablanca and other cities share a few other points in common. Aesthetically and philosophically, many register a preference for the sounds, topics, and rhetorical approaches of US hip hop artists from the 1990s and early 2000s. Whether my interlocutors referred to the "conscious" trend of the early 1990s, or the polished, materialist trend of the late 1990s, these were often cast in conversation as a "golden age" compared to the hit artists of 2009 and 2010.<sup>34</sup>

Economically, many (not all) of the oldest hip hop musickers with national recognition, or who are widely respected within hip hop networks, are from lower socio-economic positioning;

their families would be characterized in US terms as ranging from working poor to middle class. Several people reported fathers who worked in the public sector, demonstrating that their families had benefited from the employment, education, and housing policies of the post-Independence era. Like many other urban dwellers in their twenties and thirties, many of the first-wave musickers I worked with were un- or underemployed. This was true across educational levels, which ranged from no baccalaureate degree to 2 or more years of private post-secondary education.<sup>35</sup>

Many first-wave musickers are invested in mentoring the next generation. For example, at a concert they headlined August 8, 2010, Casa Crew listed the other four performing groups as “the Casa Crew family.” Othman Benhami, one of the four emcees of H-Kayne who is also their primary beatmaker and studio engineer, makes a point of giving away time and advice to second-wave groups in his home studio in Meknes (interview, Meknes, March 18 2010).

Yet at the same time, older musickers sometimes remark that they dislike the (lack of) perspective they detect from the youngest practitioners. First-wave musickers cite a lack of awareness of the political and cultural repression of the 1970s and 1980s, and a lack of adherence to their self-defined role as advocates for greater freedom of expression and expanded rights as citizens. Some have scoffed at the introduction of “gangsta” names, themes, imagery, and sonic indices into Moroccan hip hop musicking. Several first-wave musickers told me, each in very similar language, that “there is no gangsta rap in Morocco” because “there are no gangsters” or “we have no guns.”<sup>36</sup> Thus, younger groups with names like “Clash Gun Click” [*sic*] are viewed as insufficiently educated by their older counterparts. Others hold that hip hop can and should include other topics than socio-political commentary or “conscious” musicking, viewing that eclecticism as the fulfillment of those same efforts. As Don Bigg argued, echoing KRS-One, “hip hop is a way of life. It’s life, nothin’ more, nothin’ less” (p.c. Casablanca, October 21 2009).

Though they share similar musical tastes and aspirations with their role models, younger musickers in their teens and early twenties today have more social freedoms, more experience with the Internet, the advantage of compulsory English instruction in secondary school, and parents whose memories of the immediate post-Independence era and its ideologies of full public employment and doctrinal unity are less vivid. In addition, younger musickers have been responsible for most of Moroccan hip hop’s variation from a standard of socio-political commentary, with less of an emphasis on “conscious” or “message” rap (as it is known transnationally) and more examples of comedy and party-oriented lyrics on the one hand or self-consciously “hard” or “gangsta” musical and lyrical references on the other.<sup>37</sup>

Many first-wave musickers I interviewed expressed a strong belief that rappers and musicians, like any artists, have a responsibility as public figures to educate and enlighten as well as entertain. In addition, some first-wave musickers respond to the recent diversification of hip hop styles in Morocco with a desire to act as gatekeepers, affirming the proper content and values of Moroccan hip hop as a distinct genre.

References to music as “underground” or “commercial” frequently peppered such discussions. In the US, hip hop known as “underground” claims to have its own aesthetic and its own values. “Underground” hip hop artists share with other independent musicians the desire to

avoid doing business with the mainstream music industry, relying instead on self-recording and distribution, or small independent labels (cf. Harrison 2003). “Underground” hip hop encompasses a wide range of musical and lyrical styles united in their opposition to the homogenizing and policing force of the mainstream music industry.

While Moroccan musickers use these terms to describe local hip hop, they take on different meanings in the local context. In the absence of most institutions associated with a formal music industry in North America and Europe, “commercial” and “underground” no longer refer to affiliations to major or independent labels, nor to the values associated with those affiliations. Instead, they become stylistic markers attached to both sounds and people.

If “underground” refers only to music not affiliated with major recording companies, then nearly all Moroccan hip hop qualifies as “underground.” There are few recording companies in Morocco. None of the regional companies remaining from the 1970s record or distribute hip hop artists. Few hip hop artists have the opportunity to sign with a label. H-Kayne, of Meknes, is signed to a French recording company, Platinum. However, they commission or make their own beats, record their own music, and are subject to the same Internet circulation and informal-market piracy as other artists within Morocco. Don Bigg released his first album, in 2006, through a short-lived Casablanqan company named Clic Records. These artists are the exceptions to the rule. In addition, nearly all artists still have to rely on pirated copies of software and downloaded or copied samples and music, and are indifferent to or proponents of unpaid circulation of their own music (cf. Alaoui et al. 2007).

If “underground” refers to lyrical and musical content that musickers position as in opposition to a mainstream sound, or prefer to keep hidden from mainstream consumption for political reasons, then very little Moroccan hip hop qualifies as “underground.” In “Men Zanja l Zanja” (“From Street to Street”) (2006), Caprice raps:<sup>38</sup>

“Fuck the commercial [music] and all its artists  
The underground makes the good music, it adds up little by little  
Kids want me, I rap for them, I sing to them  
In the middle a rap hit comes today and I’m the one bringing it  
Casa Crew is the big school, you know and you carry it”

Caprice claims “the underground” makes better music than the “commercial” variety. Yet Casa Crew participates in all the distribution methods of other hip hop artists and popular musicians, including live performances at state-sponsored festivals, appearances on television and radio, and recordings circulated via the Internet and informal-market copies. As well-respected pioneers, their music reaches as broad a public as any other Moroccan hip hop artists. In this verse, “the underground” does not seem to refer to a deliberate avoidance of the Moroccan music industry. Instead, “the underground” are people making whatever music Caprice likes (presumably within hip hop). None of the artists I have mentioned in this chapter, nor any others that I worked with, desired to stay unknown to all but a limited discerning public. The ambition to reach a broader audience was as central to hip hop musicking as the musickers’ critical viewpoint.

“Underground” and “commercial” may also indicate different attitudes deployed in the pursuit of audiences, or different levels of prestige and belonging. Class distinctions play a role in whether musickers perceive that other musickers belong to the “underground.” In an early interview, Barry claimed that “nearly all the kids of the rich who pretend to be underground are not,” but also sought to define being “underground” as a quality of sincerity.

“If it’s not money that makes the difference, it’s the spirit. I can’t explain it to you, the underground is a lot of things. A true underground artist is [underground] in the soul. An underground [artist] who plays sentimental [music] or writes insipid words leaves the underground” (Samie 2004, my translation).

This 2004 interview is an early example of the heightened scrutiny “Western” music practitioners received after the events of 2003 brought Casablancon rock and metal artists to national attention. Suddenly, labeling a music or a person “commercial” or “underground” had meaning beyond one’s immediate network, and might impact possibilities for exposure, performance, or financial gain.

For other musickers, “underground” and “commercial” were merely markers of musical style shared with the language of the transnational hip hop tradition. In a discussion with Talos, a solo emcee formerly of 19-Contre-Attack, and his manager, both scoffed at the notion of a hip hop “underground” separate from the networks in which they worked and socialized. Talos used the Tangerois rapper Muslim as an example of “underground” style, citing the audible influence of Tupac Shakur in his music and vocal style, and his “hard” lyrics and persona. But, he noted, Muslim had just returned to rapping after a two-year hiatus with a national tour. For Talos, Muslim’s pursuit of an audience through live performance meant that his “underground” sound was merely a way to differentiate himself stylistically from his competitors (Rabat, February 6 2010).<sup>39</sup>

Talos’ comments bring into relief some of the local meanings of transnational style markers implied through the use of the terms “underground” and “commercial.” Tupac Shakur, Muslim’s early influence, is hardly an “underground” artist by any standard. He was an internationally successful performer before his untimely death, and his musical style (overseen by Los Angeles beatmaker and producer Dr. Dre), lyrical style, and persona were widely influential. Yet for Moroccan musickers, most of whom seek to distance themselves from a stereotypical image of hip hop artists as drug dealers or criminals that circulated during the height of gangsta rap’s popularity in the 2000s, the audibly “gangsta” and “West-coast” sounds of Tupac and Muslim are distinct from the Moroccan stylistic mainstream, and thus “underground.”

In contrast, some younger musickers claim a “commercial” sound while refusing the negative value judgments commonly associated with the term. The Casablancon producer, beatmaker, and emcee known as West was in his early twenties when I met him in 2010. As a self-taught musician, he prided himself on making music consistent with the latest transnational trends in his bedroom studio, specializing in styles recently made popular in the Southern and Eastern US and broadcast internationally on top-40 radio. His production team, under the name

W-S Corp, uses the slogan “We make the beat, you got the hit” (in English). In March 2010, West wrote and posted a manifesto he titled “*Hitologie*” to facebook:

“[To] make a hit is to have made your heart vibrate at the same time as the kick [drum], the hand at the same time as the snare... the hit is an art that only he who loves music can appreciate[.] It’s an essence that is drawn from the most profound of our sensibilities[.] I did not create my music, I gave birth to it. It is beautiful and I admire it in all sincerity and simplicity because it is born of my love” (March 13 2010, my translation).

In his passionate defense of the musical value of “hits,” West invoked the same devotion and personal commitment that Barry suggests is central to the “underground” sensibility.<sup>40</sup>

Within Moroccan hip hop networks, the politics of authenticity normally invoked through the underground-commercial dichotomy is further complicated by the application of new vocabulary and definitions by those who scrutinize hip hop and other *musiques actuelles*. In the mid- and late-2000s, some musickers used the term *naйда*, a noun form of the verb that means “moving,” “standing up,” or “rising,” to name hip hop and the urban youth culture in which it is embedded. Others retorted that such a term implies more import and coherence than the phenomenon had achieved at the time, or that it suggested a progressive political program that did not actually exist.

For socio-linguist Dominique Caubet, hip hop and its fellow-traveling musical genres are a movement akin to the Spanish *movida*, the blossoming of artistic production that began in Madrid after the death of Francisco Franco. Caubet implies that the death of Hassan II brought to young Moroccans a similar sense and measure of freedom (Caubet 2010, 2011). A recent issue of *Le Magazine Littéraire du Maroc* to which she contributed argued that the “naйда movement” constitutes a renaissance (*naйда*).<sup>41</sup> Caubet has argued for the cohesiveness and political potential of the youth participating in *musiques actuelles* since writing a documentary about the phenomenon, *Casanayda*, released in 2007. The film cites an issue of the liberal French-language weekly *TelQuel* which put the term *naйда* on its cover the previous year. From her perspective alone, the *naйда* movement would seem to begin and end with free expression of the network of artists immediately surrounding the founders of L’Boulevard, Mohamed Merhari and Hicham Bahou.

In the late 2000s, as hip hop and related genres became more widely disseminated and efforts to characterize them multiplied, *naйда* acquired some of the ideological freight of “underground,” despite its very public circulation in Francophone journalism and via affluent, educated organizers and tastemakers like the leaders of the Boulevard Festival. Each attempt to name and define the *musique actuelles* phenomenon and hip hop in particular also has been an attempt to bring hip hop musicking into dual marketplaces—a partially-monetized, translocal market for musics, and a largely Western, discursive market for images of Arab-Muslim youth.

*“We’re like the Bronx in the 1970s” : a movement or a market?*

This chapter has argued that today’s field of hip hop production in Morocco grew in tandem with changes in physical, technological, legal and social infrastructures during the last twenty years. I have sought to provide a historical framework to support my claim, advanced further in the next three chapters, that hip hop musickers’ creation of and participation in socio-musical networks enables a certain kind of neoliberalized subjectivity. What I have not done is depicted a unidirectional, cause-and-effect relationship between new technologies of state rule and new technologies of self.

I do not wish to argue, as scholars tended to do in the earliest publications on hip hop culture in the US, that Moroccan hip hop musickers have created something that represents a complete disarticulation or rejection of previous musical or cultural standards. The major milestones of neoliberalization, including the legalized spatialization of social classes, the reduction of the public labor force, the privatization of industries including radio and telecommunications, the provision of services by internationally-funded NGOs, and the creation of new markets for tourism, appeared over a period of years. The emergence of hip hop musicking, the growth of hip hop networks, the codification of hip hop styles, and the genre’s incorporation into the main circuits of musical distribution in Morocco took shape over the same period. While hip hop musickers certainly identify some of the attitudes and aspirations they hold as distinct from their parents’ generation, they explicitly retain certain others in the face of neoliberalization.

What leads some commentators, like Caubet, and musickers, like Barry, H-Kayne, Caprice, Nores, and other prominent artists I interviewed, to label the diverse networked hip hop activities of the last twenty years a “movement”? What is moving, and where is it going?

The first-wave musickers who refer to Moroccan hip hop arts as a “movement” appear to have settled on this term to capture the distance they feel they have traveled from the cultural and political atmosphere of their parents’ generation (and their childhoods). Casa Crew, a quartet of emcees and beatmakers now in their thirties, evoked the discomfort their music and clothing inspired in the uninitiated in the chorus of “Men Zanqa l Zanqa” (“From Street to Street”) (2006):<sup>42</sup>

Going from street to street  
The police trail us constantly  
Hip hop style not just on paper  
Oh people, understand: rap is precise poetry  
On the mic I explain to you reality and the ways of the world

For the earliest hip hop musickers, imitating the bravado of French and American hip hop artists, claiming the right to speak one’s mind in the language of “the street,” was experienced as a novel freedom and a decisive break with the past. To some, the seemingly unique stylistic and philosophical demands and rewards of hip hop were more like a calling than a hobby, especially in view of the disapproval some musickers faced early on. At the conclusion of our interview,

Masta Flow switched from Derija to English to say, with a grin, “I didn’t choose rhymes. Rhymes, they chose me” (Fes, 6 June 2010). Post-2003, when opportunities to perform expanded rapidly, many of the first-wave artists who benefited from the new focus on youth culture sought to use their new platform—which could evaporate at any time—in ways consistent with their self-perception as “teachers,” “advocates,” and even “revolutionaries.”<sup>43</sup>

By contrast, second-wave musickers, many of whom were inspired to pursue hip hop arts or become knowledgeable fans in the early- and mid-2000s, have less first-hand experience of the distance first-wave musickers feel they have traveled in pursuit of acceptance. They have always participated in Moroccan hip hop networks in their current state, as a focus for state intervention, a genre among others in the privatized radio and television market, and as a market for performance opportunities, prestige, and mobility. Though friendly collaboration is still an important part of learning and participating in hip hop networks, second-wave musickers have more first-hand experience of competition as a valued part of the local hip hop culture (cf. chapter six).

This does not mean they have any less sincere attachment to hip hop musicking as a practice that affords them a mode of expression that is still unique in their experiences. When Under Brother’s hype man asked “Is there money and education and work like [your] father[’s generation]?” he was speaking about unemployment, a central concern for urban youth, in a way specific to his age and cohort. Given the consistently high levels of urban unemployment over the past 20 years<sup>44</sup>, the hype man was likely to be speaking to at least some unemployed post-baccalaureate youth in the audience. Yet he was not discussing it with peers over tea in a cafe, as his father’s generation might do. Likewise, he was not joining the unemployed university graduates who hold sit-ins every weekday in front of Rabat’s Parliament building, and whose demands for a return to the full-employment policies of the pre-structural adjustment era are largely ignored by both their government and their fellow citizens (cf. Cohen 2003, Emperador 2007). The stylistic and rhetorical expectations of the transnational hip hop tradition provide a powerful way to address such issues publicly, to one’s peers, without engaging in the traditional political process through overt protest.

If it is possible to characterize the state of national discourse, one could say that Moroccans are struggling to delineate exactly what about their country is changing, how rapidly, and to what degree. The phrases “les jeunes qui bougent,” “le Maroc qui bouge,” or “le Maroc en mouvement” are frequently repeated by the popular press in an attempt to sum up the socio-economic changes of the last twenty years. Attitudes about such religiously and culturally fraught topics as women’s autonomy and rights to work, dating and the proper age of marriage, the exposure of Moroccans to stereotypically relaxed North American and European attitudes and cultural productions through media and tourism, and the value of an explicitly pluralist society continue to change, especially among the youngest citizens. Yet plainly, each of these (and other) topics also has an economic dimension, and each of these topics is most interesting to those who have benefited or believe they will benefit the most from neoliberalized economic outcomes. One of the most obvious outcomes of the collective impact of neoliberalization on technologies of rule in Morocco is the demarcation of “youth,” here including any men and women under 30 (and unmarried people until even later), as a category targeted for study, concern, and control.



In an October 2009 interview, Don Bigg said “We’re like the Bronx in the 1970s. We need ten years to get hip hop as a confirmed culture” (p.c., Casablanca, October 21 2009). Bigg’s simile was intended to emphasize the newness and fragility of Moroccan hip hop as an accepted set of practices and aesthetics. But the statement also underscores the potential impact, both social and economic, the hip hop arts may make in urban Morocco in the coming decades. The last year of the 1970s saw hip hop move from its origins in the boroughs of Queens and the Bronx to a recording studio named after the poshest area of Harlem, Sugar Hill, and rapidly expand both its commercial and its aesthetic potential (Charnas 2010). Hip hop musicking, encompassing rapping, deejaying, beatmaking, and dancing, began a journey from being predominantly live, improvised, and collective to being predominantly recorded, mediated, written, and soloistic (Dimitriadis 1996). The astonishing spread of hip hop aesthetics and culture from the late 1970s through today was enabled by the same technological advances seen in Morocco over the same period, but also through the much more robust recording industries and economies of circulation shared by developed countries in the global North. In the next chapter, I will argue that as the Moroccan state constructs a market for tourism through music festivals, hip hop performers and audiences encounter festivals as sites of neoliberal subjectivation, in which the values, orientations, and comportments of valorized citizens are enacted and refined.

## Notes

<sup>1</sup> P.c., Casablanca, 21 October 2009. Hay Mohammedi was introduced in chapter two as a working-class neighborhood in central Casablanca famous for its lineage of artists and musicians, including the musicians at the center of the last chapter, Nass el-Ghiwane.

<sup>2</sup> *Siba* is commonly translated by Anglophone scholars as “chaos” or “dissidence.” In the pre-modern era, Morocco was divided into *dar al-Makhzen*, the area under government control, and *dar as-siba*, the area in which people refused to submit to the rule of the Sultan or pay taxes into his treasury.

<sup>3</sup> For a summary account of the emergence of neoliberalism as the growth and success of neoclassical economics as the dominant discourse within economics, see Brenner, Peck, and Theodore 2009. For seminal accounts of the development of the political ideology of neoliberalism in the United States and United Kingdom, see Harvey 2005 and Brown 2003. For a history of the Mont Pelerin society, who formulated the neoliberal political framework in the post-War era, see Mirowski and Plehwe 2009. For an introduction to neoliberalism as a mode of governing, see Foucault 2008 [1979], Burchell in Barry, Osborne and Rose 1996, and Rose 1999.

<sup>4</sup> See the discussion of the terms “scenes” versus “networks” in the introduction. Though I refer to networks throughout this work, it is sometimes hard to escape the vernacular use of “scenes.” The French term “scène” is used by musickers themselves in two ways—first, in the literal sense, as a stage on which one performs; second, and less commonly, in the English sense invoked here.

<sup>5</sup> See the introduction for more on my fields of questioning during semi-structured interviews.

<sup>6</sup> Dominique Caubet (2010) divides hip hop’s history into three similar sections, but she does not provide her rationale.

<sup>7</sup> Bogaert notes that the regional government created to lead the prefectures established in Casablanca after the 1981 riots, the *Wilaya* of Greater Casablanca, was led by administrators hand-picked by King Hassan II, and as such does not indicate a lessening of state power but a new technique through which state power is directed (2011: 716). This is an example of “roll-out” neoliberalization, “authoritarian” state power combined with neoliberal norms (Peck and Tickell 2002b).

<sup>8</sup> “*Koun kayn wahid ughniya wlla video wlla shi haja li ba’d thelik kunti tfou fil hip hop?*” Or, “*wesh katthikr mrra loula li sm’ati musiqa dyal hip hop?*”

<sup>9</sup> According to government statistics, those are the four countries with the largest numbers of Moroccan migrants. See <http://www.marocainsdumonde.gov.ma/minist%C3%A8re-des-mre/mre-en-chiffres.aspx> (last accessed March 25 2013).

<sup>10</sup> To Amine, “Al-Kayssar” is “Caesar” rendered in Arabic (interview, August 2 2010). This is a good example of the proliferation of meanings possible in a complex polyglossic environment, where one’s ability to codeswitch is born of both formal and informal education in multiple languages. If the term was derived from the Arabic root *k-s-r*, it would signify “to break” or “to destroy,” thus making him “the Destroyer” (Wehr 1994 [1979]). Most of the time, Amine Snoop and others writing about him use “kayssar,” but sometimes use “qayssar” or “9ayssar,” thus transliterating from the Arabic letter *qaf*. Translating from the resulting root would give something like “the weak” or “the lazy.” But for Amine Snoop, this is beside the point, as the name is actually Latin transliterated into Arabic transliterated back into Latin.

<sup>11</sup> Popping, a technique where the dancer isolates specific joints and gestures with them in a quick, precise manner (a “pop”), originated on the US west coast in the 1980s (see Schloss 2009). B-boys and b-girls sometimes combine popping, locking, floorwork, uprocking, and other techniques into a seamless routine, but individuals also specialize in one or more techniques. Dance competitions in Morocco and elsewhere divide into different styles or genres, so that one might perform in the pop/lock competition only.

<sup>12</sup> In Morocco, the English term “freestyling” generally means rapping prepared lyrics a cappella, instead of improvising. Some musickers with more international experience do recognize the distinction. I heard very few improvised lyrics under any circumstances during my fieldwork.

<sup>13</sup> Fares was inarticulate about his reasons for this. In my notes from this discussion I read him as implying that such advanced lyrical techniques are under-appreciated amongst Moroccan musickers. On the other hand, musickers may wish to differentiate themselves from other kinds of spoken and sung poetry which does rely on puns, metaphor and metonymy.

<sup>14</sup> According to Amine Snoop, they danced and rapped to music taken from US hip hop songs during these concerts. Their first group disbanded in 1994, but both continued to perform (p.c. Barry, October 21 2009; Amine Snoop, August 2 2010). There are slight discrepancies between these musickers’ recollections.

<sup>15</sup> These are only the cities where I know from firsthand reports that young people were listening to hip hop in the 1990s.

<sup>16</sup> For example, at a concert in Salé during the 2010 Mawazine Festival, one young man wore a tshirt with the text “*Fink wfin rap fin* respect for Majesticon“ (“Where are you and where is rap? Where is respect for Majesticon?”) spelled out in iron-on letters (p.c. May 29, 2010). Majesticon is an emcee from the early-2000s Salé group 19-Contre-Attack.

<sup>17</sup> For an overview of Moroccan polyglossia from native linguists’ perspectives, see Ennaji 2005 and Ennaji and Sadiqi 2006.

<sup>18</sup> This depends on the region and the time period. In northern Morocco, for example, public-school students study Spanish as their first non-Arabic language. English has been offered as an elective in public school since 2002. One deejay reported taking English in his Casablanca public school in the mid-2000s, receiving three hours of instruction once per week (p.c. DJ Sim-H, Casablanca, August 8 2010). Tamazight, the language of the indigenous peoples of Morocco widely spoken across the country, was officially allowed as a language of instruction in Imazighen-majority regions in 2003, and was officially recognized as a national language in 2011 (Chakrani 2011).

<sup>19</sup> Dahmen and Chrifi-Alaoui found that students and alumni of Al-Akhawayn University, an elite private institution modeled on American universities, routinely mixed English (their language of instruction), French, MSA, and Derija together within the same sentence, leaving each common phrase or reference in its original language (2011). I frequently encountered mixes similar to the examples they give in spoken and written conversation (e.g. on facebook), except that the untranslated English phrases were often hip hop slang (“big up,” “peace,” “go hard,” etc.) mixed in with local Derija and French.

<sup>20</sup> “itoub” was the name of a music streaming website popular during 2008 and 2009. The name derives from the practice of putting “e-“ or “i-“ in front of a noun, such as “e-commerce” or “ipod” (the latter is often pronounced like the American long *e* by French speakers), plus the French slang for a hit song (“tube”). Amongst certain musickers, the word had become slang for “cool” or “great,” and after the song’s release this usage was widely expanded.

<sup>21</sup> A small number of emcees from the southern regions of Morocco, most notably the Agadir-based Style Souss collective, also use Tashelhit, a variety of Tamazight.

<sup>22</sup> In my experience, French verses rarely depart from the overall point of the song. Rather, I suspect they are a way to accommodate emcees who are more comfortable in French without doing entire songs in that language.

<sup>23</sup> These include Mobydick (Younes Taleb), a solo emcee from Rabat, Hatim from H-Kayne (who studied in Montpellier), and David “Hoofer” Benezra of the Casablancon groups Bizz2risk and Ghost Project.

<sup>24</sup> Facts in this paragraph are drawn from personal communication with Abkari, Casablanca, 28 July 2010, and an interview he gave to Élisabeth Cestor in May 2008.

<sup>25</sup> See above and the introduction for a definition of “roll-out” neoliberalization (Peck and Tickell 2002b).

<sup>26</sup> See “Terror Blasts Rock Casablanca,” BBC News, 17 May 2003. <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/africa/3035803.stm> (last accessed 21 April 2007), and “Moroccans March Against Terror,” BBC News, 25 May 2003. <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/africa/2936918.stm> (last accessed 1 December 2010).

<sup>27</sup> Most of my unmarried interlocutors still lived at home with their families, as youth traditionally do until they marry and start their own households. In each case, I was invited by musickers in their twenties to *four* at their family homes.

<sup>28</sup> Enjoining or commanding the good and forbidding the bad, *al-amr bi al-ma‘ruf wa an-nahy ‘an al-munkar*, is generally considered an obligation upon all Muslims (*Sura-s* 3:104, 3:110, and others; cf. Ali 2001: 62, Cook 2001: 598) and may be read as the background upon which normative moral claims are made within hip hop lyrics as well as other expressions. See chapter 5 note 38.

<sup>29</sup> Several young men explained to me that a lack of proper behavior in any dimension of Muslim comportment emptied other behaviors, such as prayer, of their meaning. Examples included alcohol and drug use (though not smoking cigarettes) and premarital sex. In a real sense, if one engaged in any of these sinful or *haram* (forbidden) actions, it was better not to pray or attend mosque at all. In Amine Snoop’s words, “For me, I respect my religion...so I can’t pray and do sin[ful] things [at the same time]” (p.c., Casablanca, August 2 2010). See also Bennani-Chraïbi 1994: 80.

<sup>30</sup> Sultana’s song “Sawt Nssa,” discussed in chapter five, depicts men who covertly buy prostitutes yet overtly condemn women driven to prostitution. In a conversation about music’s permissibility, Amine Snoop summarized his distrust of the conservative side of the debate by saying, “*Ikhwan* [lit. “brothers,” i.e. the Muslim Brotherhood, i.e. Islamists] say music is *haram*. I don’t know...lying is *haram*” (interview, Casablanca, August 2 2010).

<sup>31</sup> In addition to reinforcing the rejection of any sort of violence for political motives, King Mohammed VI stressed the role of economic liberalization in promoting safety and stability. In his Throne Day speech of 2003, he said, “Our democracy will remain fragile, as long as it is not based on an efficient administration, a fair justice and an economy productive of wealth and useful jobs for our youth. ... To realize these objectives, we have no choice but to modernize the functions of the State... At the same time, it is imperative to promote investment and encourage private initiative... opening and upgrading the economy in order to win the game of partnership and meet the challenges of productivity, competitiveness and positive interaction with globalization” (my translation).

<sup>32</sup> *Musiqā sharqī*, “eastern music,” refers to popular song from the Arabic-speaking countries east of Morocco, especially Egypt and Lebanon. *Chaabi* (lit. “popular”) is a collection of styles of Arabic-language song indigenous to Morocco. See Callen 2006.

<sup>33</sup> I will discuss the role of this and similar programs from France and Germany, as well as the different model that the United States uses, in chapter four.

<sup>34</sup> I was also frequently called upon to list my favorite artists. For example, one emcee established my credentials to his satisfaction during an interview by making sure I enjoyed Public Enemy and Black Star (Caprice, Casablanca, June 24 2010).

<sup>35</sup> Urban unemployment has stayed within a few points of 30% for the past 20 years (cf. Pigato 1994: 22; OECD 2002: 213; Cohen and Jaidi 2004: 139).

<sup>36</sup> p.c. Soultana, Casablanca, multiple dates; Bigg, Casablanca, 21 October 2009; Hakim Chagraoui, Casablanca, 10 November 2009; Fouzia Chemaoui, Rabat, 6 February 2010. Don Bigg includes a very similar statement in “Interlude Hip Hop 2” on *Byad u K7al* (2009).

<sup>37</sup> See Krims 2000 for a typology of mainstream hip hop styles. These terms continue to be hotly contested.

<sup>38</sup> “Fuck lcomercial wga3 ses fane/ L'underground fe lmizane ysawi ch7al wch7al/ Drari bratni nrappi liha, nghanni 3liha/ Waste droub rap jite lyouma wrani njibha/ Casa-crew madrasa kbira rak ta3raf wrak taddiha”

<sup>39</sup> I attended one of Muslim’s concerts on that tour, a free performance held at an orphanage in Kenitra, a small city north of Rabat, in October 2009. Like the rest of his concerts on that tour, and like most live musical performances in all genres in Morocco, the concert was free to attendees. Sound and stage equipment were sponsored by Hit Radio, a privately owned station. See chapter four for more discussion of the politics of Muslim’s “underground” persona.

<sup>40</sup> [http://www.facebook.com/home.php?#!/note.php?note\\_id=360836122701](http://www.facebook.com/home.php?#!/note.php?note_id=360836122701) (last accessed March 23 2010). West also started an illuminating conversation on facebook, joined by Amine Snoop and several people I did not know personally, about the emptiness of the term “commercial” as a negative epithet for his beatmaking style (p.c., August 7 2010).

<sup>41</sup> Zekri, Khalid, and Dominique Caubet, 2010. Zekri suggests that *nayda* and *nahda* have the same root in Arabic, the former being a Moroccan corruption of the latter, and thus share core semantic values.

<sup>42</sup> “Radyine men zan9a lzan9a/ Bolice taba3na da99a da99a/ Hip hop style ma7tote fwar9a/ Ya cha3b fham: rrap poéme wda99a/ Flmocrophone, na7ki lwa9i3 wddanya ba9a”

<sup>43</sup> e.g., interview Talos, Salé, March 2 2010; interview Caprice, Casablanca, June 24 2010; p.c. Soultana, Casablanca, October 21 2009.

<sup>44</sup> cf. Pigato 1994: 22; OECD 2002: 213; Cohen and Jaidi 2004: 139.

## **Chapter Four**

### **Financing Change: Hip Hop, Tourism, and Moroccan Music Festivals**

What does neoliberalization sound like? Since the 1990s, state-funded festivals have become a dominant sound of musicking under neoliberalization in Morocco. In keeping with the argument that under neoliberalization, central values and emphases may change though the forms in which they are expressed may remain, this chapter shows how festival participants today experience neoliberalization. It presents festivals as sites of neoliberal subjectivation for musickers and audience members alike, in which the values, orientations, and comportments of valorized citizens are enacted and refined. Through their participation at in these events, hip hop musickers align themselves with the values promoted by state-sponsored and privately organized festivals under Morocco's neoliberalizing tourism policy. This occurs despite, and sometimes because of, hip hop musickers' commitment to socio-economic critique. As Rebecca Luna Stein so succinctly expressed in her discussion of Jewish Israeli tourism to Arab or Bedouin sites within Israeli borders, "The counterhegemonic politics I imagine is complicitous with power, emerging through the marketplace and the commodity form, not in spite of them, in sites made available by state policy" (1998: 92). I argue that as festival events unfold, hip hop practitioners' and festival organizers' agency and the state's tourism strategy intersect to encourage an entrepreneurial stance and an ambivalent relationship to the commodification of cultural expressions.

Since live performance continues to be the primary way musicians generate income and audiences experience music, state-sponsored festivals and their privately organized counterparts have a profound impact on the creation, distribution, and trajectory of Moroccan hip hop. As I discuss below, the Moroccan state makes most festival performances possible through its tourism framework and through state and municipal funding. However, in accordance with the neoliberal expectation that states appear to be divested from the markets they make possible, critical, oppositional, or "counterhegemonic" statements by festival performers appear to enact a separation between the state and the market for festival performances. The latter is then further invested with the significance of a public sphere through a logic of presence—the presence of masses of festival attendees, especially youth, and the presence of media in and about festivals.

Practices developed in relation to and during festivals are one way in which musickers inhabit a market-oriented, neoliberal Muslim rationality, a concept and set of practices which will be further explored in chapters five and six. The festival stakes are high for hip hop artists, whose music of choice is simultaneously well-mediatised and marginal. Festival organization, programming, promotion, remuneration, and sound production are all constant concerns for hip hop performers, who see these events as their best opportunities to reach the widest audience, and some of their only opportunities to earn income from their music. While hip hop musickers are well aware that the state funds most festivals, they do not consider expressing critical statements during festival performances to be contradictory. Festival settings are not seen to eviscerate musickers' socio-economic or political message, or to erode their potential to resonate with others.

At the heart of Morocco's tourism industry and its thriving roster of festivals is a willingness to identify and exploit music, art, architecture, language, food, and other cultural elements as "heritage."<sup>1</sup> The festival is so central a mechanism for this process that Moroccan scholars use the festival as a metaphor for the commodification of culture into heritage. Arguing that the increasing prominence of festivals has resulted in a "festivalization" of aspects of urban Moroccan life, Taieb Belghazi depicts the Fes Festival of World Sacred Music's successful production of a discourse that links the Festival, urban renewal efforts in Fes, and the historically significant perception of Fes' sacred character (2006). Aomar Boum applies the term "festivalization" to successful hip hop artists themselves, suggesting that a "pragmatic state" has promoted hip hop musickers' inclusion in festival rosters in order to capture and delegitimize the genre as a site for genuine protest and/or action against the state, an inference that had wide currency amongst my interlocutors in 2010 (2012a: 22).

This chapter extends both scholars' emphasis on festivals' disciplinary character, considering the festival as a process through which the state not only spearheads the commodification of culture, but also encourages certain modes of conduct and circulates its preferred vision of the contemporary Moroccan citizen. Of course, governmentality is not enacted solely by states and through policies, but by people in their everyday actions. Thus this chapter also links festival participants' preparations, performances, and reactions, big and small, to festival infrastructure and tourism policy.

The first section of the chapter begins by situating the efforts made by the Moroccan state in the tourist industry since 2001, the year it launched a comprehensive tourism plan called "Vision 2010." State-sponsored festivals form the cornerstone of this industry. The legitimacy of the public spectacles I will describe derives simultaneously from historic, state-oriented, and reputational aspects--from the tradition of local religious festivals known as *muwaseem* (lit. "season" or "feast"; sing. *mousseem*), from implicit or explicit state approval, and from the prestige Morocco is perceived to gain internationally through presenting world-class artists. Due in part to the history of *muwaseem* and the continuing respect for state approval, festivals are acknowledged by supporters and detractors alike as crucibles of local and national citizenship.

An extensive roster of music festivals structures the high tourist season. In the second section, I categorize selected festivals by their types of funding, comparing them by their degree of sponsorship by the Moroccan state as well as their desired audiences. Each type of festival—those fully sponsored by the Moroccan state and municipalities, those with both public and private funding, and those that rely on the support of non-Moroccan governments—respond to the conditions of "roll-out" neoliberalization. My examples, selected from just a few of the festival performances I witnessed, help to show how different funding arrangements influence but do not dictate relationships between musickers, between performers and fans, and between musickers and institutions. They also show how festival participants understand and interact with the disciplining strategies and discourses of belonging promulgated by each festival. While each festival has its own trajectory and relationship to its host city, I attempt to draw out similarities and differences in their policies and effects. Where possible, I trace interpersonal networks and highlight key personnel active in each festival.

As theorists of the festival have demonstrated, the impact of the festival's sonic, temporal, and spatial arrangements on the sensorium affects individuals in unexpected ways, creating potentially powerful sensations of community (cf. Kapchan 2008). Through their participation, musickers--whether performers or audience members--recognize and legitimate the sounds and sensations of a certain performance of Moroccanness in both themselves and others. Increasingly, this particular performance highlights leisure, consumption, and individual choice as practices of a valorized youthful Moroccan, one whose behavior is beneficial to both private industries and to the image the Moroccan state prefers to project internationally.

### **Modernization, Neoliberalization, and the Tourism Industry**

The first section of this chapter contextualizes the role of festivals in Morocco's tourism industry and, in turn, in discursive constructions of Morocco's post-Independence "modernization" and neoliberalization.

#### **Muwasem**

Religious festivals known as *muwasem* go back to the establishment of *zawiyat* (Sufi lodges) and the tombs of saints (Ar. *wali Allah*, "friend of God," or *murabit*, "one who is bound"; Fr. and En. marabout). Remembered saints include founders of Sufi orders or other individuals known for such things as piety, learning, charity, leadership, blessedness, ability to enhance the efficacy of prayers, and possibly descent from the Prophet.<sup>2</sup> Sainthood, which became an institution of Moroccan Islamic practice in the 11th and 12th centuries (Cornell 1998: xxxvii), continues to be honored by annual pilgrimages to saints' tombs. These pilgrimages and the festivals surrounding them are the events primarily indexed by the term *moussem*. Most often they are associated with the birth or death day of the saint.

*Muwasem* were, and to some extent still are, major annual events in rural life.<sup>3</sup> The *muwasem* of regionally significant saints served as rare meeting times for transhumant groups<sup>4</sup>, tribes whose members are spread widely across a sparsely populated area, or small towns in remote mountainous areas (Eickelman 1977: 41-43). Katherine Hoffman notes this is still the case for young married women in particular amongst the Ishelhin, Tashelhit-speaking Amazight of the Anti-Atlas mountains in southern Morocco, who live with their husbands' families and may only see their birth family and childhood friends on such occasions (2002: 531). In his discussion of various tribes' and lineages' political fortunes during the 15th century, Abdellah Hammoudi points out that the strength or weakness of a group's presence at important annual *muwasem* would communicate to other groups their potential power in conflict (1980: 622). Through the mid-20th century the changing status of various groups' political power in relation to the *zawiya* of the celebrated saint was often made clear to all the gathered groups during *muwasem*, for example in noting which tribes or lineages' tents were posted closest to the shrine (Eickelman 1976: 113).

Historic and contemporary *muwasem* are quite diverse in their ritual practices. Frequently, these multi-day festivals include time for markets, news-sharing, socializing, and musical performances as well as ritual. In Eickelman's study of Boujad, a regional pilgrimage center in



central Morocco, the biggest *moussem* fell in September and took on the character of a fall harvest festival (1976: 84). In Moroccan documentarist Izza Genini's short film *'Aita* (1987), one of the most well-known contemporary *'aita* vocalists, Fatna bint el Houcine, and her troupe are shown performing at the *moussem* of saint Mawlay Abadallah in the mid-Atlas town of Azzemour. Genini contrasts the performance of these *sheikhat*, women whose singing and dancing for male audiences places them outside the bounds of propriety, with the competition between teams of rifle-bearing men on horseback (a fantasia or *tehrak*).<sup>5</sup> Both take place during the days in which people come to visit Mawlay Abadallah's tomb; neither has any religious significance nor is related to a particular saint.

Given their multivalent significance, *muwasem* were used as bargaining chips by governments for centuries, including during the pre-Protectorate era, by the French under the Protectorate, and more recently under Hassan II's reign (Eickelman 1976: 173). By refusing to support, fund, or attend a *moussem*, a *caid* (local governor) could signal displeasure with a particular saint or his followers. In addition, some Muslims, including but not limited to modern-day Islamist reformists, see pilgrimage and saint veneration as opposed to the fundamentally monotheistic nature of Islam. Particular rituals have been discouraged by both government figures and "ordinary" Moroccans on religious, social, and political grounds. Eickelman writes that an annual ritual renewing the covenant between a particular lineage and their spiritual patrons the Sherqawa, descendants of Sidi Mhammed Sharqi, included some people trancing and drinking the blood of a sacrificed bull. This ritual was last performed in 1968; "one reason for discontinuance... was pressure from townsmen, including many Sherqawa, who are hostile to this ritual and the view of Islam implicitly represented by it" (175).

In recent years the idea of the *moussem* has been leveraged to attract tourists or encourage exports. Drawing on the term's association with cultural and religious traditions, both the state and individual actors have used *moussem* to describe many different kinds of festivals or gatherings without religious significance. In 1978, eleven painters critical of what they saw as the elitist character of museums "took their work to the streets" of the small Atlantic coast town of Asilah, founding what they called a "cultural *moussem*" (Pieprzak 2008: 50). In terms reminiscent of the socialist vocabulary popular with Morocco's postcolonial elite in the 1960s and 70s, they promised to provide "a common ground... for much needed communication within a human framework that includes students, teachers, workers, farmers, craftsmen, civil servants, and housewives" (Melehi and Benaissa 1978, quoted in Pieprzak 2008: 50). Today the International Cultural Festival of Asilah is in its 34th year and still calls itself a *moussem* in its French and Arabic materials. Despite its avowedly secular character, the Festival's 2012 press booklet includes a photo of the dome of the tomb of "marabout Sidi Benmansour" on an early page, directly after the translated sentiments of King Mohamed VI (*Moussem Culturel International d'Assilah*: 2012). The combination of religious (read: local, exotic) and political signifiers demonstrates the simultaneous preservation and commodification of culture, architecture, historic artifacts, and other assets that defines the making of heritage (cf. Stein 1998: 91).

In a similar fashion, the state deploys the idea of the *moussem* to promote products aimed at the international tourism market. In the 1980s, the Ministry of Handicrafts and Social Affairs ran

a *Moussem National de l'Artisanat* each year, bringing a selection of handcrafted goods from throughout the country to Casablanca to entice individual tourists and exporters (1987). Current National Office of Tourism language de-sacralizes the moussem entirely, reducing it to the category of folkloric festivals:

“...One can simply celebrate the rhythm of the season, of the crops, like the festival of dates at Erfoud, at the door of the desert, or of the moussem of honey at Immouzer Ida Outanane close to Agadir. There are also moussems essentially dedicated to culture and traditions, like the festival of desert musics in the Tafilalet, or even the celebrated Gnaoua festival in Essaouira.”<sup>6</sup>

The first two “muwasem” listed in this quotation are traditional harvest celebrations. The latter two are recently-founded, partially state-funded, internationally-oriented festivals. This strategy of categorizing a wide variety of traditions as muwasem “festivalizes” pilgrimages and other traditions linked to faith practices, placing them in the cultural sphere alongside traditional handicrafts, food, architecture, and music.

*patrimony, heritage, tourism: processes of cultural commodification*

Historically, tourism has been one of the ways that Morocco could control its appearance to the outside world, in a geo-political situation where it was mostly voiced and opined about by European actors to other European actors. As in other “non-Western” countries, tourism to Morocco continues to depend on narratives that strike a delicate balance in their portrayals of Moroccan sites as both exotic and accessible, “timeless” and full of modern luxuries; of Moroccan people as authentic in their difference yet fully immersed in “Western” socialization.

The French Protectorate considered the establishment of a tourism industry to be one of its major goals.<sup>7</sup> Shortly after the end of the First World War, the Protectorate began shifting resources to tourism promotion; their efforts were in keeping with contemporaneous expectations of opulent, exotic, and sexualized presentations of the Arab world, and would shape the narratives around frequently visited Moroccan cities and their peoples in ways that continue to resonate today. Reportedly, General Lyautey argued that tourism would encourage potential *colons* to settle in Morocco, thereby helping to ensure the Protectorate’s financial and political stability (Hillali 2007: 25). The lavish Mamounia hotel in Marrakech was built by the Protectorate in 1918 (26). In 1919, the first guidebook for tourists, “*le guide bleu*,” was published with Protectorate funding; it was updated semi-annually through the end of the Protectorate in 1956 (36). The Protectorate sponsored well-publicized diplomatic tours in the 1920s, including one undertaken in 1926 at the close of the Rif War; these served to convince the French public and international observers that Morocco had been successfully “pacified” and was capable of welcoming European tourists (27). Fes, Rabat, and Marrakech—the triangle of “imperial cities,” with extravagant palaces, tombs, and *medersas* to visit—were conceived of as the biggest tourist attractions (as they are today), and were the first to receive services that would benefit both the residents and tourists, including transportation, health, and sanitation services, after 1926 (28).

The newly installed Independence government continued the former Protectorate's tourism strategy with the Festival National des Arts Populaires (FNAP). Begun in 1960, four years after Morocco gained its independence, the festival was designed from its inception to maximize foreign interest around Morocco's "cultural products." Each year the festival takes place along a main artery of the Ville Nouvelle and in the Marrakesh medina. The festival's central performances were and are folkloric revues which package the music, costumes, and dance of various regions into a compact program. These are set in the expansive ruins of the *Palais al-Badi*, the former home of the pasha (governor) of Marrakesh and historically part of the walls between the *mellah*, or Jewish quarter, and the Muslim quarter of the medina (Gottreich 2007).<sup>8</sup> FNAP followed similar modernist nationalist festivals in building a sense of national cohesion for audience members (Callen 2006: 43-45; Turino 2000: 182). However, today, the audience for FNAP's long-running folkloric revues includes influential Moroccans but also many European and North American tourists.

Like the Festival National des Arts Populaires and the nightly performances on Marrakesh's Jamaa el-Fna, other festivals situated in cities on the historic tourist circuit have played major roles in cultural commodification and heritage creation. The rhetorical and spatial strategies by which these festivals are organized have deeply impacted their home cities. The largest festivals are generally sited to take advantage of tourists' desires to visit the pre-Protectorate *mudun* (Ar. cities; sing. *medina*) of each city (Belghazi 2006, Kapchan 2008). These elaborate events require year-round preparations, and thus have contributed to changes in the social and physical qualities of the centuries-old urban neighborhoods where they are located.

Often conceived as part of a plan to simultaneously identify, exploit, and preserve designated "cultural heritage," festivals shift the balance of local economies even further toward the seasonal tourist market. Indeed, they are designed to shift the balance of the national economy toward the tourism industry, a project ongoing since the 1960s (Hillali 2007: 38, International Bank for Reconstruction and Development 1966: 140). Moroccan citizens otherwise uninvolved with the heritage tourism industry are well aware of its discourse and the policies created to support it. I have discussed the benefits and problems brought by festivals to their cities and their artists with musickers in Rabat, Salé, and especially in Fes.

The emcee L-Tzack lives in the Fes al-Bali neighborhood of Batha, just inside the Bab Boujloud and down the street from the Batha Museum, two places where concerts are held for the Fes Festival of Sacred Music. His immediate surroundings are taken over by the sounds and participants of this and two smaller festivals each year. "[Batha] is *achiri*, but we are in control more than [his previous neighborhood]," he commented to me over tea on the roof of Café Clock, a central tourist destination on a main street of Fes al-Bali and cultural hub for young medina residents, owned by an English couple.<sup>9</sup> When I asked what he meant by "in control," he spelled out his response with the exasperated emphasis one might use to lecture an inattentive child. "We are safe in the street more than in my last street because here the police control the situation...not because they care about Moroccan people, but because...it's a place for the tourists" (interview, August 2010). For L-Tzack, the state's priorities, here expressed via the police, are so obvious they are hardly worth mentioning. They may benefit the ordinary Moroccan resident, but only as an afterthought.

## *Vision 2010 and neoliberalization*

Today, tourism has become a tool and an expression of neoliberal governmentality for all kinds of festivals and festival participants. Tourism receipts make up the second-largest category of Moroccan GDP after agriculture. In 2001, King Mohamed VI broke with government precedent and established a new initiative for the promotion of the tourism industry called Vision 2010. Unlike previous attempts to orchestrate the tourism sector, which consisted of three-to-five year plans for incremental growth created and managed by the *Office National Marocain du Tourisme* (ONMT) and the Ministry of Tourism, Vision 2010 fell under the control of the King and his appointees, outlined a longer-term approach, and set ambitious goals to enable Morocco to become “one of the most sought-after destinations on the planet” (Kingdom of Morocco 2001: 3; Hillali 2007: 161).

The “Accord Cadre” (“Framing Agreement”), the document outlining the Vision 2010 initiative, declared a goal of attracting 10 million unique visitors to Morocco by the end of 2010. Secondary goals in support of that included extending the tourism police to all major cities; adding 80,000 new beds to hotel stock by 2010 (about 20% of hotel growth would go to major cities to “renovate and extend the ‘*produit culturel*’”); further liberalizing the transportation market, allowing foreign air and ground carriers to begin or expand travel to and within Morocco; and creating four new private post-secondary schools in hospitality and tourism management by 2010. As a consequence, the “Accord Cadre” estimated 600,000 new jobs would be created within the tourist industry by both government and private firms by 2010 (Kingdom of Morocco 2001: 4-7). This would effectively double the number of jobs maintained directly and indirectly through tourism in 2001 (Berriane 2002).

Each of the Accord’s steps to its tourist goal had far-reaching implications. Accord policies had immediate material effects in the lives of musickers I knew. Two of my interlocutors had obtained post-secondary degrees in tourism and hospitality studies at private schools.<sup>10</sup> Youth are directly involved in the tourism project through their education at private post-secondary tourism schools; their daily interactions with tourists as residents, restaurant employees, or salespeople; and their employment as tourism police. Tourism police staff the most-visited monuments and areas of cities to protect tourists from situations that range from illegal or dangerous (e.g. kidnapping, robbery, and assault), to those that are merely unpleasantly revealing of poverty and inequality (e.g. unregistered guides or begging women and children). They are also tasked with protecting unsuspecting foreigners from themselves, for example by minimizing the potential for contact with prostitutes, or attempting to ensure that consumption of alcohol stays within private homes and establishments.<sup>11</sup> As L-Tzack pointed out, current policing practices in the areas of cities with major tourist draws demonstrate the state’s investment in protecting the tourism market through its intervention in foreign and Moroccan lives and habits, while simultaneously doing nothing to dispel the jaded view of the police held by many Moroccans of his socio-economic location.

Vision 2010 has been a classic example of roll-out neoliberalization. In their discussion of state-sponsored neoliberalization, geographers Adam Peck and Jamie Tickell specify “roll-back” and “roll-out” neoliberalisms: in the first, the state moves to *construct* and maintain free markets

via the *destruction* of state-owned capital. This has included privatization of Moroccan national assets and companies as well as reducing state control over other productive endeavors like capital markets. In the second, the state may engage in “institutional and regulatory restructuring” through the “radical, emergent combination of neoliberalized economic management and authoritarian state forms” (2002: 384). Paradoxically, the Vision 2010 restructuring represented a greater incursion into the private market for this particular industry than the government had undertaken in the past. State spending on tourism had dwindled from a high of 6.5% (averaged) of the annual budget in 1977 to 1.5% in 1992 (Hillali 2007: 38). During 1995-2000, a period in which privatization of media, financial, foodstuffs, and energy companies, and government-owned hotels was in full swing, the ONMT and the Ministry of Tourism released no short-term plans at all (159; Khosrowshahi 1997: 243). With the Vision 2010 plan, the King and the restructured tourism offices addressed the private sectors critical to the tourism enterprise, including the 9% of the hotel industry that had been newly privatized (World Bank 1994: 94).

The “Accord Cadre” is structured not as a decree by the King, but as a contract whose terms are agreed upon by both the newly created Vision 2010 commission and undersigned private individuals representing tourism and investment firms. The government’s role in the contract was to provide financial and legal support. For example, in the financial realm, the contract promised that ONTM would spend 500 million dirhams annually on promotion alone, and that firms importing equipment deemed important to the tourist enterprise were eligible for a reduction in customs taxes. In the legal realm, the document promises an inviting regulatory and commercial environment for domestic and international investment in the tourism market (7-10). The private firms’ roles were to take the new opportunities afforded by the “Accord Cadre” in ways appropriate to the smooth functioning of the macro economy under neoliberalized assumptions: they were to simplify their pricing structures, pay and charge their customers value-added taxes, and invest in their own enterprises—through credit offered by the government, if necessary—in order to bring them up to a level recommended for global competitiveness (9-11). Privately owned post-secondary schools that offer vocational training in hospitality, event management, catering, and other necessary skills, a central part of the small but growing private education market, were seen as crucial to providing the workers that tourism growth would need.

Vision 2010 superseded the goals of the previous three-year plan (2001-2004). It also went beyond the mandate of the ONTM and the Ministry by using the King’s voice—literally—to encourage the adoption of the government’s goals within the private sector. The “Accord Cadre” document is preceded by a “Discourse Royal,” a transcript of the speech given at the 2001 announcement of the new mandate, in which the King addressed an audience of both officials and tourism entrepreneurs. In his speech, the King encouraged not only public-private partnerships in tourism initiatives, but also changes in individual comportment, suggesting that “it would appear to every Moroccan to consider himself as a promoter of tourism mobilized to win the game [gagner le pari]” in the overall “social and economic *jihad*” (2001: 2).

Calling the state’s restructuring of the tourism industry, and the larger context of national development, a “*jihad*” invokes a complex set of allegiances and emotions; the term, which translates to “struggle,” carries connotations of obligation, of pursuit of both individual moral

righteousness and social justice, and also a sense of belonging to a common cause. It evokes the work of the *Istiqlal*, or Independence movement (1938-56), and invokes the King's Constitutionally enshrined role as religious leader to legitimate his statement. In language reminiscent of his father's landmark speeches calling for participation in the Green March to the Western Sahara, or calling on youth of the 1980s to pursue engineering and the sciences for the development of the nation, King Mohamed VI casts the Vision 2010 plan as a national endeavor in which ordinary Moroccans have a duty to participate.<sup>12</sup> This duty, to promote new growth in the tourism market, extends to both tourism industry workers and Moroccan consumers of tourism products.

Encouraged to take ideological as well as financial ownership over the success of the nation's tourism initiative, private interests' visions of what would attract which sorts of tourists occasionally clashed with those of other crucial social institutions. Much literature on festivals' roles in urban renewal strategies discusses the profound effect of the long-running Fes Festival of Sacred Music in Fes al-Bali, the oldest part of the Fes medina (Porter 2000: 61).<sup>13</sup> Geoffrey Porter documents private developers' turn away from extant projects preserving and renovating Islamic cultural and intellectual heritage in Fes al-Bali immediately following the death of King Hassan II and the suspension of his preferred projects. Tourism entrepreneurs, "sensitive to European and American tourists' tenuous relationship with Islam," recast the heritage represented by old Fes' architecture, decorative arts, and food as "humanitarian, cosmopolitan and only incidentally associated with Islam" (Porter 2001: 218). Privately funded efforts to preserve Fes were outstripping the state's plans, caught up as the latter were in "micro-practices" of bureaucracy and interpersonal politics (Porter 2000: 86). Porter concentrates in his 2001 article on Fes projects supported by King Hassan II, all of which focused on bolstering the narrative depicting Fes as a devoutly Muslim intellectual and cultural capital of the ancient world. Conspicuously absent, in Fes or other major cities, are projects that celebrate or detail the heritage of Jewish Moroccans or Imazighen Moroccans.<sup>14</sup>

Justin McGuinness cites Fes-Saïss, the NGO that founded and runs the Fes Festival of World Sacred Music, as a driving force in obtaining funding for and orchestrating these renovations: "This type of institution had the task of promoting projects that the administration *was no longer in a position to implement*" (2010: 32, emphasis mine). While in the 1980s and 90s, the state was encouraged to reduce its funding for such projects under its structural adjustment requirements, in the 2000s the state chose remain financially disengaged and to encourage private and international organizations in order to replace former state funding.

In the roll-out of Vision 2010, the Moroccan state acted in service of the market it identified as strategically important, using its power to reformulate and stabilize the industry. In turn, state discourse envisioned a successful tourism sector leading the way to macroeconomic and social benefits formerly provided by the state. At the same time, from the beginning of the Vision 2010 project, Islamist parties and individuals criticized the promotion of the tourism sector not on the role of the state in the market, or the withdrawal of the state from realms like education and housing to redeploy its energies in tourism, but on moral grounds, arguing that increasing the number of foreign tourists would lead to increasing rates of prostitution and alcoholism (Hillali 2007: 77). Whereas state discourse from both the Protectorate era and the *Istiqlal*-led 1960s held

that international tourism would expose Moroccans to the habits, mores, and tastes of Europeans in order to socialize and civilize them, for 21<sup>st</sup>-century Islamists this exposure would be decadent and corrupting (50-51; 73). This position was demonstrated in the weeks leading up to the 2010 Mawazine Festival, when prominent Islamist politicians including parliamentarian Mustapha Ramid protested the choice of openly gay musician Elton John as a headliner (Ramid 2010 quoted in Akalay et al. 2010).<sup>15</sup> The burgeoning size and expense of the most prominent state-funded festivals, understood as designed to attract international tourists, was also blamed for encouraging greed amongst hip hop performers. One columnist complained that some hip hop musickers, who were asking for and receiving higher fees, were “converted to ‘ultraliberalism’” by the sudden opportunity (Akil 2008).

Note that Islamists did not (and do not) critique the market basis of the industry; they critique the size, dominance, and “Westernization” of the industry. But the state’s discourse had also changed, as noted above. In the 2000s, tourism would craft Moroccans into entrepreneurs and promote the nation’s integration into globalizing economies of tourism and travel. In the latter framework, Moroccans are free to approve or disapprove of the behaviors and attitudes of the foreigners they encounter—free to refrain from being “civilized” by the encounter—but they must communicate an enthusiasm for cross-cultural exchange as part of their business model.

In my experience, for many hip hop musickers this enthusiasm is sincere, and there is no apparent contradiction between open flow of ideas and impressions suggested by the phrase “cross-cultural exchange” and the strict application of market principles to the domain of actual exchanges of goods, services, experiences, and currency. Musickers in the “imperial” cities, historically centers of tourism, cited exposure to tourists (and foreign researchers) as both an incentive to learn English and a laboratory for their foreign-language practice.<sup>16</sup> The first time I met Soultana, an hour before her group Tigresse Flow took the stage for a concert in June 2008, I asked why she thought hip hop had become so popular in Morocco so quickly. After thinking for a moment, she responded, “I think it’s because tourism is number one in Morocco, you know?” Despite the ease with which Moroccans could access multinational media in the mid-2000s, for Soultana, the presence of representatives of other countries enhanced the sense of exchange latent within participation in hip hop musicking.

### **Sponsorship, Representation, and Hip Hop in Moroccan Music Festivals**

Morocco’s high festival season, running from mid-May to August, brings the complexities of Peck and Tickell’s theory of “roll-out” neoliberalization to life. Below, I ask how different festivals constrain and enable understandings of citizenship amongst hip hop practitioners. I ask how festivals’ discourse, including the lexical and non-lexical sonic dimensions of musical performance, address and thereby help to construct youthful Moroccan subjects. From the perspective of hip hop musickers’ socio-musical networks, each festival can be read as a site that accumulates social, cultural, and financial capital, and at which participants accumulate and deploy such capital amongst themselves. Thus, the festival season can be theorized as part of the economy of reputation or prestige which hip hop musickers’ networks create. In the following

sections of this chapter, I show how the micro-practices of hip hop musickers within a variety of festivals respond to the effects of roll-out neoliberalization.

First, I discuss the Fes Festival of World Sacred Music as an example sponsored by the state and the Fes municipality. In contrast to this centerpiece of the Moroccan tourism industry, its corollary event, the Festival de la Ville, is designed for local audiences, showcases local performers, and draws on a mix of public and private funding. Next, I discuss Jil Mawazine (“Rhythms Generation”), the competition portion of the Mawazine Festival. Like the Fes Festival, the Mawazine Festival is oriented towards international tourism; its competition program encourages both established and aspiring performers towards translocal entrepreneurship, tantalizing them with the potential for an international audience. I compare both these to a leading example of a festival sponsored by the state and municipality but aimed at Moroccan audiences, the Festival of Casablanca.

Finally, I conclude by exploring the unique role of the Boulevard Festival and its competition *Le Tremplin* (springboard), whose parent organization combines funding from private corporations, non-Moroccan governments, and the municipality of Casablanca while claiming independence from any state influence. All three types of festivals reflect their organizers’ engagements with Morocco’s roll-out neoliberalization of the tourism industry, as expressed through Vision 2010. All three types educate their publics in ways of being concert-goers, performers (or aspiring performers), and urban citizens.

### *The Fes Festival of World Sacred Music and the Festival de la Ville*

Some annual festivals, like the Festival of Sacred Music in Fes or the Festival of Gnawa and World Musics in Essaouira, are central to the success of the tourist enterprise in Morocco. The national and municipal governments spend millions of dollars on them annually, and they draw millions of guests from North America, Europe, and the Middle East, as well as from within Morocco. Successful festivals bring substantial annual revenues to municipalities in the form of hotel, restaurant, and retail receipts.

The Fes Festival of World Sacred Music is held annually during the first two weeks of June in Fes, Morocco. Founded in 1994 by Fes-Saïss, a local *association* or NGO financially supported by the Ministry of the Interior, its popularity and themes made it a cornerstone of the Moroccan festival season well before the implementation of Vision 2010 (McGuinness 2010: 32).<sup>17</sup> As the Festival gained notoriety, influence, and a core group of audience members who make an annual pilgrimage to Fes, it came to stand for the kind of attachments the Moroccan state hopes to foster amongst international tourists and which it encourages its citizens to enable through their work in the tourism industry. It functions as a model for partnerships between municipal governments and festival organizations within Morocco's tourism industry, and attracts thousands of audience members (and hundreds of journalists) every year.

The Festival's long-standing theme, "Giving a Soul to Globalization," argues through its seminars and musical programming for the idea of a universal sense of the sacred that can be heard by any sufficiently attuned listener, regardless of linguistic, sonic, or cultural knowledge barriers (Kapchan 2008). The idea of giving a soul to a transnational process which the Festival



itself perpetuates suggests that Director Faouzi Skalli and Fes-Saiss seek to supply “soulfulness” from the bottomless stores of Fes’ “timeless” heritage to fill a need felt by participants in the Festival and, by extension, by participants in transnational capitalism.<sup>18</sup> The Festival itself produces specific links between Fes’ citizens and international tourists, links that are never free of power differentials amongst multiple parties and institutions represented by individuals (Curtis 2007).

Most of the Festival’s concerts and seminars take place in and around Fes al-Bali, the oldest part of the Fes medina, which has been included on the UNESCO list of World Heritage sites since 1981 (Porter 2000: 61). The Festival’s founder and long-time director, the anthropologist and Sufi Faouzi Skalli, has written of Fes as a spiritual haven and a city of sanctuary in Festival press materials. These are echoed in statements made by journalists and in media aimed at tourists every year. Taieb Belghazi points out that “the [Fes] festival organizers promote the image of the city as a sacred place because it encloses within its walls the sanctuary (*zawiyya*) of its founder, Moulay Idriss” (2006: 102). The Idrissi *zawiya*, at once a gathering place and a mausoleum, still attracts Fes citizens and other Moroccans for a moussem every autumn.

By contrast, instead of seeking spiritual education and renewal from Moulay Idriss (or a living sheikh of a *tariqa*) in particular, travelers to the Fes Festival respond to the successful rhetoric of the Festival, and to a larger touristic discourse which invests the entire city and Fes al-Bali especially with an atmosphere of interfaith spiritual credibility—a sense, readily perceived and promulgated by North American and European tourists, that the purported timelessness and faithfulness of the oldest parts of Fes and its denizens releases spiritual authenticity into the air like the scent of incense. Simply feeling something unfamiliar, something non-visual and non-lexical that cannot generate the same feeling when circulated as transnational media, provides an affective experience interpreted as spiritual. Skalli’s well-documented sincerity notwithstanding,<sup>19</sup> tourists from the global North are trained to locate authenticity and the potential for spiritual renewal in difference as manifested by Fes’ buildings, music, and citizens, even—or especially—when that difference is due to poverty as well as cultural or religious distinctions.

Until recently, the Fes Festival had been unique amongst Moroccan festivals for charging for most of its concerts. Eleven years ago, FES-SAISS founded the Festival de la Ville, a week of free concerts concurrent with the original Festival that focuses on Moroccan artists and targets locals rather than international tourists and Fes’ most affluent. This was done as an explicit response to complaints that the Festival deliberately excluded locals who could not afford the ticket prices, nor held the same musical interests as the international tourists whom the Festival strives to attract. While both festivals accept private sponsorship in addition to funds from the state and the municipality of Fes, they display their sponsors’ commitments in very different ways. The Fes Festival’s multiple tiers of sponsorship are discreetly displayed at the end of press materials, paper programs, and its website. The Festival de la Ville has no separate paper materials for its local audience. Its main private sponsor, the Spanish-owned telecom company Meditel (which sponsors many similar festivals throughout Morocco), was announced with a large banner at the base of the Festival de la Ville stage. Its logo and colors were also

incorporated into the large signs listing the week's programming posted around the sites of free performances throughout the week of the two festivals (fig. 5).



Fig. 5. The program for the Festival de la Ville, 2010, in Méditel's colors and typefaces. This poster was located on the roadside edge of Place Boujloud.

The Festival de la Ville shapes Fes-dwellers' experience of their city in ways distinct from the original Festival, but still indicative of neoliberal principles. In its spatialization, programming, and publicity, the Festival de la Ville promotes the flip side of the glamorous international Fes Festival experience, supporting the original Festival by forming a constitutive comparison to it. During 2011 only two hip hop performances were programmed at either the Fes Festival or the Festival de la Ville. The Fes Festival programmed an expensive concert by the critically acclaimed French rapper Abd al-Malik at Bab al-Makina, and the Festival de la Ville hosted a free performance by the well-known Tangerois rapper Muslim. A brief comparison of both performances will delineate some of the differences that emerge between the paid Fes Festival and the free Festival de la Ville.

#### *Abd al-Malik at the Fes Festival of World Sacred Music*

Bab al-Makina is one of the entrances to the Royal Palace of Fes and its grounds, built by Moulay Hassan in 1886 in what would become known as Fes al-Jadid (New Fes) (Belghazi 2006: 104). More than a simple door, it consists of a two-stories-tall gate that leads to an expansive rectilinear walled courtyard. Concert-goers pass through a human-sized door in the thick palace wall, to the left of the gate; within the wall, one of several suited security staff takes their tickets and others watch as their belongings pass through an x-ray machine. On the other side of the wall, a team of young women in business attire hand concert-goers the evening's program or an advertisement for one of the Festival sponsors. Some two hundred meters beyond the gate, a series of pointed arches with their own doors lead the way into the palace grounds; the stage is set up in front of these so that the largest outer arch becomes the stage proscenium.

During the festival, the courtyard within is transformed into a full-size outdoor auditorium, complete with a carpeted "lobby" in which Festival sponsors set up informational tents, sell products, and serve tea. Tiered bleachers physically reflect the divisions in ticket price: the tallest bleachers, farthest from the stage, serve around two hundred patrons at 300 dh/ticket/concert; the middle tier serves a similar number of patrons at 500-600/ticket; and the orchestra seating, in fact the largest section, is reserved for VIPs, invited guests, festival staff, and members of the press. The orchestra seating is arranged around a small carpeted dais with two chairs—seats for members of the royal family, should they wish to attend a concert.<sup>20</sup> Unlike festivals in other Moroccan cities, such as Festival Mawazine in Rabat, where the majority of fee-based concerts also have a free section located far from the stage, there are no free places at concerts in Bab al-Makina or at its daytime counterpart, the outdoor stage in the courtyard of the Batha Museum.

Perhaps due to the multiple allegiances highlighted by the Festival marketing materials, Abd al-Malik's concert was eagerly awaited by a wider variety of people than I had come to expect for a hip hop concert in Morocco. Since leaving the hip hop group New African Poets for a solo career, Abd al-Malik has emphasized the parts of his biography that appear to diverge from expectations of French hip hop artists. He is a French citizen of Congolese descent with

advanced degrees in Philosophy and Classics.<sup>21</sup> More importantly to the Fes Festival audience, he is a member of the internationally popular Boutchichiyya Sufi tariqa. The Boutchichiyyin can be found in North Africa, West and Central Africa, France, and elsewhere, but their sheikh leads from Fes (Kapchan 2008). For Abd al-Malik, a gig in Fes was therefore an honor and a pleasure, as he stated during his performance and at the press conference held earlier that day.<sup>22</sup>

For Francophone tourists to the Fes Festival who do not follow his music, Abd al-Malik is predominantly known as the author of an autobiographical book, *Qu'Allah Bénisse la France! (May Allah Bless France!)*, in which he recounts his journey from a single-parent home in a Parisian *banlieue* to Sufism. The back cover copy celebrates the open, tolerant quality of Sufism in opposition to other forms of Islamic practice, closing with “Abd al Malik has found his way in Sufism, [a] luminous Islam centered on the universal love that has reconciled him with the spirit of citizenship, and allowed him entrance into the meeting of hearts” (2004).<sup>23</sup> Thus, in addition to the cachet generated by attending a concert at Bab al-Makina, Abd al-Malik drew audience members intrigued at the promise of educated, spiritually informed rap, in French, from a performer whose published work shares the view of Sufism the Fes Festivals’ organizers put forward.

Musically, Abd al-Malik also chooses to highlight his distance from commonplace notions of rap musicality, including the current mainstream of hip hop releases in France.<sup>24</sup> During his performance at the Fes Festival, his ethnically diverse, all-male, seven-piece band layered a variety of signifiers. The two male backup vocalists visually and audibly referenced an earlier era of African-American-identified expression with handheld shakers, coordinated movements, and vests, caps, hairstyles, and bootcut jeans that referenced 70’s era fashions. In particular, their falsetto ranges and melismatic phrases recalled Marvin Gaye. The turntablist, whose work was occasionally buried under the grand piano, electric guitar, and percussion, was given a chance to shine during the intro to “Gibraltar,” in which he looped a two-measure segment from Nina Simone’s piano introduction to “Sinnerman.” Abd al-Malik raps this song in a style influenced by poetry slam performance; while he still responds to the beat, he enunciates more clearly, speaks more slowly, exaggerates his inflections, places breaks between phrases based on semantic rather than rhythmic considerations, and makes more use of silence between and within phrases than in typical rapping.

During his live performance, Abd al-Malik’s physical and sartorial comportment combined with the musical sound to communicate an indie rock sensibility. Dressed in a long navy cardigan and skinny black jeans, he closed his eyes when reciting the slam-style verses (as he did in other songs during this show) and danced at his microphone during the guitar solo, long arms windmilling.

While Abd al-Malik was clearly conscious of his stage(d) presence and had control over the space throughout the concert, the way he moved in and used that space marked a clear departure from styles of movement and gesture associated with hip hop. During the latter half of the concert, audience members from the orchestra section left their seats and gathered in the open space between the first row of orchestra seats, reserved for dignitaries and local leaders, and the stage, elevated about 6 feet from the ground. The previous evening, a small group of young people danced in this space during Youssou N’Dour’s concert. This is a very unusual form of

audience participation for Bab al-Makina, and was clearly unexpected by the security, the audience in the front rows, and the dancers themselves—we kept wondering aloud to each other when we would be made to sit down. When a small, excited mass of people sprang up to dance during Abd al-Malik’s show the next evening, he stopped between songs, bent down to make eye contact, and politely asked that the dancers move to the sides of the stage so that everyone could still see the performance. This request, and the prompt compliance of the audience, is in sharp contrast to expected behavior at a hip hop show—a seasoned hip hop musicker would instead expect to be exhorted to throw his hands up, move towards the stage, and encourage his friends to do the same.

### *Muslim at the Festival de la Ville*

In 2010, I saw four hip hop acts during the Festival de la Ville over three nights. These included Casa Crew and Fes City Clan, leading groups from their respective cities, and well-known local crew Shabka, who had been making hip hop in Fes since 2001. During the 2010 version, the Festival de la Ville included three stages outside those of the paid Fes Festival: Place Boujloud (or Place Baghdad), Ait Skato, and Dar Tazi. The Ait Skato stage was located far from the center of the Ville Nouvelle in a residential area, and drew few members of the press. This stage hosted several local hip hop acts and drew large multi-generational crowds, primarily from the recently-built apartment buildings surrounding the stage area. In 2011, the Festival de la Ville was reorganized to take place in just one location—the Place Boujloud, just outside Bab Boujloud. Bab Boujloud (“Abu Jeloud Gate”) is a local landmark, the main entrance to the working-class neighborhood known as Batha, and a common starting point for tourists exploring Fes al-Bali.<sup>25</sup>

Scaling back the concerts to Place Boujloud positioned the Festival de la Ville performances on a route between the site where the most celebrated artists of the main festival took place, Bab al-Makina, and the site within the medina where late-night concerts of Sufi music took place each evening around midnight, a refurbished palace named Dar Tazi. This single stage allowed the generally impoverished residents of Fes al-Bali (and the working-class neighborhood of Batha in particular) to walk to the free concerts, but also provided no reason for medina residents to leave their own neighborhoods and venture into or through the center of the city (in the Ville Nouvelle). This concentration of sites, and the fact that concerts at Place Boujloud generally did not start until after 10pm (despite being advertised earlier), benefited audiences at Bab al-Makina. People attending 8- or 9pm concerts at Bab al-Makina benefited from decreased noise from the nearby square and decreased foot and vehicular traffic around that concert site. While Place Boujloud is easily reached by car, taxi, or bus, the reputation of the surrounding neighborhoods may contribute to keeping more affluent Ville Nouvelle residents from the free concerts.

In addition to consolidating the free stages of the Festival de la Ville into a single location, the free Festival’s lineup changed significantly from the year before. The night after Abd al-Malik’s performance, I left Bab al-Makina early to watch the Tangerois emcee Muslim perform in Place Boujloud at the Festival de la Ville. Unlike the previous year, his was the only hip hop

performance scheduled at Festival de la Ville for the entire week. More people were packed into Place Boujloud than I had ever seen in that space, whether for a nighttime concert or in the early evening, the peak hours of the day for promenades and socializing, when carts sell snacks and circles form around cheap games. In the dim orange light of the sodium lamps lining the edge of the Place, I could make out groups of young men standing on the slopes of hardened mud that rose to half the height of the medina wall separating the Place from the street beyond (fig. 6).

The “press entrance” was not an entrance at all, but rather the spot where the metal fencing dividing the crowd from the VIP and press sections met the stone-and-plaster wall. A sturdy tree, nearly taller than the stage, grew out from under the wall at an improbable angle, arcing over the fence. As the security on the other side of the fence moved aside a few inches to let me squeeze through, I noticed five or six young boys perched in the tree, eagerly awaiting the performance.

That the turnout was larger than other concerts I had observed at Place Boujloud was in part due to Muslim’s reputation. He was widely believed to have retired from performing and recording music after the release of his fourth solo album in 2008; rumor had it he had become convinced proper Muslim practice required him to leave music. This had the effect of heightening fan excitement when he announced a forthcoming album in 2009 and released it in early 2010. The excitement of the mostly young men surrounding the stage and sound tent, who had no doubt been waiting for hours in order to secure their spots, was similar to the other two times I had seen Muslim in public: once in October 2009, at a benefit concert for an orphanage in Kenitra, a small town outside Rabat, and the other at the hip hop day of the Boulevard’s Tremplin in March 2010 (see below). Both times, when Muslim strolled across the open audience space below the stage, he was instantly mobbed by fans requesting photos or just wanting a closer look.



Fig. 6. The audience in Place Boujloud waiting for Muslim’s performance, taken from inside the VIP/press section in front of the stage.

Muslim’s latest album, *al-Tamarroud* (The Rebellion), met with a strong fan response and cemented his reputation as the foremost artist on the “underground” side of the underground-commercial spectrum.<sup>26</sup> Being stylistically “underground,” for Muslim, means developing a musical and on-stage persona that North American hip hop musickers would describe as “hard,” that is, tough, brave, and cynical. Yet because most of the first generation of hip hop musickers in Morocco have categorically rejected gangsta rap for their context, however much individuals may have been influenced by North American leaders of the gangsta style, Muslim and other “underground” Moroccan musickers project “hard” personae without recourse to the imagery of violence, criminality and drug use commonly associated with gangsta rap. Muslim and the artists associated with his house label, Kachela Records, have adopted the vocal and musical sounds of gangsta rap, applying this sonic index of “hardness” to the prevailing critical discourse amongst musickers.

Instead of thematically imitating North American “gangstas,” Muslim uses visual and verbal imagery associated with the military to demonstrate his “hard” persona. For example, Kachela Records’ logo is an upper-case “K” whose upright left side is formed from two combat boots and

a rifle, with a helmet atop them.<sup>27</sup> From his earliest recordings as a member of the duo Zaqqa Flow (“Street Flow”), he and his emcee partner Larbé used this imagery, as in their song “Hip Hop 3askri” (“Military Hip Hop” or “Soldier’s Hip Hop”) (2001).

Muslim also uses sonic indices in his music and his voice to demonstrate “hardness” as expressed in the US tradition. His first solo album was titled *Strictly For My Souljaz* (2005), a reference to Tupac “2Pac” Shakur’s “Strictly 4 My N.I.G.G.A.Z.” (1993). Muslim’s early solo recordings show how deeply he has been influenced by US rapper Shakur; one of his singles samples the chorus, first verse, and instrumental from “All Eyez on Me,” the title track of Shakur’s 1996 album, inserts two verses of his own before and after the Shakur verse, and retitles it “All Eyez on Me feat. 2Pac” (2005). At the time, Muslim had not yet developed the distinctive growling timbre for which he is known today; his rhyme schemes, phrase patterns, and vocal inflections strongly resembled Shakur’s.

Like Shakur, Muslim is seen by fans as consistently and credibly standing against a corrupt authority. Unlike Shakur, Muslim does not depict (not to say advocate) acting outside the law or committing violent acts as a response to that corruption. Instead, he laments that his trust in the government’s authority has been undermined by the poverty of its citizens.<sup>28</sup> Implicitly, not trusting the state means he cannot trust the state’s official version of Islam. Because Muslim is respected among fans as both a “hard” rapper who fearlessly denounces corruption and as a devout person, his acceptance of any Muslim practices or viewpoints that could be associated with extremism serves to underscore his distance from the corrupting influence of the state and his righteousness. When, from 2008 on, he was widely reported amongst musickers to have said that women should not listen to his music, some (not always female hip hop musickers) found this offensive; some found it refreshingly direct and honest.<sup>29</sup>

Muslim’s performance that night showcased songs from his 2010 album, *al-Tamarroud (The Rebellion)*, with old favorites sprinkled in. This performance was not the first or last time I saw hip hop with overtly critical messages on state-sponsored stages. This was not at all unusual in my experience of hip hop concerts from the prior two years.<sup>30</sup> Moreover, despite his sustained if generalized critiques of poverty and injustice, Muslim’s lyrics are not experienced as precluding or undermining national pride. As at other concerts at Place Boujloud that week, when the young men crowded up at the front of the stage grew impatient waiting for Muslim to come on stage, a clump of them started singing the national anthem. This was quickly taken up by audience members nearby, producing a joyously noisy, belted version of the anthem accompanied by waving tshirts.

Muslim’s deejay began the show with the opening sample from his song “Flouss” (“Money”) (2008). In all the noise, the deejay slowly turned up the volume before the audience directly behind me, just beyond fenced the VIP and press section, noticed the highest pitches of the piano arpeggio and erupted into a roar. Seconds later, a fog machine downstage left launched a burst of fog that quickly drifted stage right, obscuring the deejay’s movements and making a halo effect around the lights spelling out “FES” behind him. Wearing matching red Moroccan flag tshirts, Muslim and his partner Larbé jogged out from behind the upstage screen in time for the first verse. Later in the song, an assistant ran out and draped a Moroccan flag around Muslim’s



shoulders. Later the flag was spread out on the deejay's deck, with the green star facing the audience.



Fig. 7. Muslim on stage at Place Boujloud, wearing a flag-styled tshirt and a flag draped on his shoulders.

National pride was a theme on the Festival de la Ville stage throughout the week, regardless of the wide variety of performers. On a stage that made no presentational distinctions between religious and secular musics, the presence of flags, the lit-up “FES” sign, and the bright red and yellow Meditel sponsorship banner were the only items linking all the performances within the empty container of the stage throughout the week. None of this iconography was in evidence at the sites of the Fes Festival proper, with its ticketed performances.

Given the continuity of Anglophone and Francophone journalism about the Fes Festival with the Festival’s stated themes and goals, I imagined Muslim’s performance at Festival de la Ville would be of interest to journalists covering the Fes Festival for international outlets. The combination of an enormous mixed-gender, multi-generational audience and hip hop seemed appealingly “global.” The nationalism latent in the audience’s rendition of the anthem and the appearance of the Moroccan flag could be framed as a celebration of Moroccan specificity and difference, the sort of experience one might enjoy as a future tourist to Fes or to the twin Festivals. And Muslim’s reputation as a practicing member of his religion who had thought carefully about the relationship between his music and his faith, while probably not well known to international journalists, was central to the respect he was accorded by Moroccan listeners (including those who do not consider themselves fans of hip hop’s sounds and presentation). However, I saw no foreign journalists in the backstage press area at Muslim’s concert, nor at any of the Festival de la Ville performances that week. The range of performances at Place Boujloud, the local audience, and the lack of a clear sacred theme only complicated common narratives of the Fes Festival and its welcoming message of spirituality as both consumable cultural difference and a potential catalyst for commonsality.

### *Jil Mawazine*

*Jil Mawazine* (“Rhythms Generation”) is a tournament-style national competition held annually since 2006 in connection with *Festival Mawazine - Rythmes du Monde* (World Rhythms). Organized by Maroc-Cultures, an *association* that is one of the public faces of the Ministry of Tourism, Festival Mawazine encompasses a nine-day festival each year. The grand-prize winners of *Jil Mawazine* are usually slated to perform at the Festival that year or the next.

Festival Mawazine has taken place annually in Rabat since 2002. In 2008, the original general director was replaced with Mounir al-Majidi, personal secretary to King Mohamed VI and general director of Maroc-Cultures, who transformed Mawazine from a low-key regional celebration into a major seasonal event. Since that year, it has become the longest and most expensive festival of Morocco’s high tourist season. Mawazine’s funding comes from an array of sources linked to the Makhzen, including major foreign companies with contracts in Morocco, businesses owned by members of the royal family, and state-run businesses. Critics of the festival’s extravagance, including the high fees international artists can command, characterize all of this sponsorship as governed by personal and political loyalty to the King and “his festival,” comparing it to the tribute collections of pre-Protectorate Morocco (Akalay et al 2010: 21).<sup>31</sup> Its location, expense, organizational might, international musical celebrities, and explicit

appeals for national prestige ensure that Mawazine is seen as the most “state” of all the state-sponsored festivals.

Since Mawazine puts the national capital—both the city and the nation’s wealth—on display by staging concerts in several spots across town, this festival has largely succeeded in appearing more glamorous than the Fes Festival of World Sacred Music or the Gnaoua Festival in Essaouira. Though both of the latter continue to draw more international tourists, Mawazine leverages the nation’s media to ensure an international reach. Concerts at Mawazine are sometimes broadcast live on 2M or one of the SNRT television channels, which are partially state-owned, reaching audiences across the country and in places that get Moroccan satellite television. In addition, the Festival runs its own Francophone radio programming during the festival each year from an office in Rabat’s Villa Des Arts, a museum and event space sponsored by the ONA Foundation, the arts and culture NGO funded through *Omnium Nord-Africain*.<sup>32</sup>

In 2010, hip hop was singled out in Festival Mawazine programming in several ways. These included the number of performances by hip hop artists over the length of the festival, the young artists’ showcase known as *L’Mouja* (“the wave”), and the dominance of the genre in the *Jil Mawazine* competition. In addition, Festival press associates hip hop with the values of tolerance and respect for difference that it chooses to promote. A full page of the press booklet I received was filled with the King’s remarks on this subject taken from various addresses between 1999 and 2005, for example, “Morocco is proud of the role it plays as a country dedicated to promoting dialogue between cultures and civilizations and to upholding universal values.”<sup>33</sup> In the same booklet, Director Mounir al-Majidi wrote,

“This global musical gathering is also an event based on the values that we hold dear in our country. All you have to do is move from one stage to another to travel across the continents and hear the musical notes of words and expressions such as universalism, tolerance, openness to one another, as well as a rejection of narrow identities and fitting into one model. These values are consistent with the beliefs of His Majesty King Mohammed VI, whose high patronage and high concern are a source of pride for the entire team of the Mawazine Festival” (Majidi 2010: 4, my translation).

This commitment to a representation of music as “a universal language,” underpinning what Deborah Kapchan calls in reference to the Fes Festival of World Sacred Music “the promise of sonic translation” (2008), is demonstrated at Festival Mawazine by strategic pairings and collaborations between local and “international” artists. In 2010, for the first time, Moroccan hip hop was given this role in a collaboration between Casablančan emcee Don Bigg and Cuban jazz pianist Omar Sosa and his ensemble.<sup>34</sup>

The stated aim of *Jil Mawazine*, the Festival Mawazine’s young-artist competition, is to find the best amateur performers in selected “Western” genres from across the country (Tancrez 2010). From the selection of the jury to the requirements for competitors, each part of the competition trains and educates young musicians in aspects of professional development. Every year, the process begins with a call for candidates, who send in an application including a photo of the group, at least two recorded songs, a group biography and description of musical style, and

a résumé. First-round competitions, called “the casting caravan” in press releases, occur throughout February or March as the jury travels to five cities: Marrakesh, Casablanca, Rabat, Fes, and Meknes or Tangier (Maroc-Cultures 2010). A few weeks later, a second round in the same cities winnows the field. Finally, in April, finalists from the five cities compete against each other in Rabat. In theory, the winner in each genre category performs at the al-Mouja (“The Wave”) showcase during the Mawazine Festival in Rabat that year. Advertised prizes for Jil Mawazine winners include a three-year contract with Maroc-Cultures, studio time, and production assistance on the winners’ debut albums (MAP 2012).

The performance at which Jil Mawazine winners are generally scheduled to perform, Al-Mouja, is usually held the last day of the Mawazine Festival at some distance to the Festival’s main stages, at the Salé stage on the beach across the estuary from downtown Rabat. On the other nights of the Festival, the stage is reserved for stars of Moroccan genres, who draw huge crowds to the expansive beach.<sup>35</sup> A bridge over the Bouregreg River was finished in 2010, allowing buses, trams and taxis much easier access to parts of Salé. However, the distance from the rest of the festival’s stages and tourists’ likely unfamiliarity with the area and its public transit mark the Salé beach stage as a place for locals.

Al-Mouja was advertised alongside the Mawazine Festival and, simultaneously, as a separate event. Festival press materials announced the “closing concert” as a 12-hour extravaganza “dedicated to the talents of the new Moroccan scene who express themselves in urban musics” (MAP 2010). At the same time, billboards around Rabat, banners hung from downtown lightposts, and a tv ad advertised the “18 groups in 12 hours” of al-Mouja itself. Additional ads linked the concert to its particular sponsor, partially-privatized Maroc Telecom, with the slogan “Don’t miss this call” (fieldnotes 29 May 2010). Unlike the stages hosting international artists at Mawazine, there were no tickets available for purchase for al-Mouja.

Jil Mawazine is clearly inspired by Boulevard’s *le Tremplin* competition in its choice of musics and format (see below). As such, it represents a goal fulfilled for Boulevard organizers Merhari and Bahou, who were quoted during *le Tremplin*’s first year as hoping their attempts would inspire state support for “young artists” (Dades 1999 quoted in Callen 2006: 125-126). Boulevard programming has been enormously influential amongst its participants and their networks, especially in Casablanca, but Jil Mawazine dominates the professional aspirations of amateur hip hop musickers in a different way. Its national reach, state seal of approval, longevity, and potential benefits (real and assumed) contribute to its ability to shape what is heard by musickers and, in turn, what is performed by them.

For example, the winners of the 2007 edition, a five-member Meknes-based group named Hakmin (Ar. “rulers”), described themselves to me as “rap *en fusion*.” They had first heard the term to describe themselves when a French journalist interviewed them in 2006, the first year they competed in Jil Mawazine, and subsequently adopted it to differentiate themselves from other groups. Hakmin are careful to include music from a variety of sources currently celebrated as Moroccan heritage in addition to their mix of rapping and dancehall-style chanting, as their beatmaker and vocalist Rachid explained.

“First, we are crazy about what we inserted into it [our music], we have a Gnawa track, that

is a tradition here in Morocco, the ‘Aissawa, so on and so forth. ...Rap was waiting for this concept. ...After that, our development at Mawazine took us to a professional level...we wanted to go out [on stage] as a group with not just any style, so we made our own instrumentals” (interview, Meknes, 17 March 2010).<sup>36</sup>

Rachid’s use of “first” and “after that” are not references to the order in which things happened; instead, they are the order of these ideas’ importance. While he wants to ensure that I understand the particular mix of musics as Hakmin’s own innovation, he also notes that Jil Mawazine spurred them to experiment and create their own beats instead of downloading others.<sup>37</sup>

Jil Mawazine’s advertised prizes for winners, and the chance to meet well-connected contest judges, encourage competition as a mode of professionalization. Aydoun described the competition in the hip hop category as “difficult and fierce” (Tancrez 2010). Maroc-Cultures promotes its role in the ecology of “Western” popular musicking by invoking the very informality of the market it helps to construct. In a press release announcing the forthcoming albums of the 2010 winners, the association claims, “In the absence of a structured musical industry, Maroc-Cultures has made artistic management an essential element of its work” (MAP 2012).

Jil Mawazine has almost singlehandedly provided an elaborate state-sponsored market for hip hop and other “Western” popular musics. However, there are few public or private post-competition opportunities for the musickers trained through the competition. In 2011, in the midst of a winter and spring of protests in Tunisia and Egypt, as well as a burgeoning protest movement in Morocco, the Jil Mawazine prize was leveraged to produce a patriotic video which circulated on YouTube as a counter-expression to Moroccan protesters in the same social media circuits the protesters were using. Below, I explore this song and video in some detail in order to discuss the hip hop musickers’ attitudes towards the competition and the international market Jil Mawazine helped them to imagine.

As part of their award for winning in the hip hop category in the 2011 competition, Rwapa Crew were teamed with RedOne (Nadir al-Khayat), a New York-based producer, who holds Moroccan citizenship and is known internationally for his work with Lady Gaga. Rwapa Crew, who are based in Fes, first entered Jil Mawazine in 2007, the same year they were founded. In 2010, they reached the national finals in Rabat, but did not win the competition. Their competition song “Allah Ya Moulana” (“Allah Our Lord”) celebrates the zawiya of Fes’ second founder, Sheikh Moulay Idriss, and the city of Fes itself. With a recognizably Phrygian chorus that leaned heavily on the lowered 2<sup>nd</sup> scale degree, “Allah Ya Moulana” recalled the “rap *taqlidi*” (traditional rap) that Marrakesh group Fnaire had made popular in 2007 and 2008 (fieldnotes 9 May 2010).

Babel, the winning fusion group of 2011, is a rock band from Mohammedia whose lead vocalist is frequently compared to Bon Jovi. Their winning performance, on a text describing the Western Sahara as Moroccan, demonstrated strong influences from reggae and Moroccan folk and popular melodies. These combined attributes fit neatly into Aydoun’s preferred criteria for winning rock bands—technical facility, clear grasp of transnational rock style, and recognizable Moroccan-ness in a single package.<sup>38</sup>

Rwapa Crew and Babel collaborated with RedOne in his studio in Tetouan over three days in May 2011 (Korsa episode 20: 2011). The video for their resulting collaboration, entitled “Feels So Right,” was shot over the course of a week in July 2011 in Marrakesh, and released on YouTube by the Jil Mawazine YouTube channel on January 31, 2012.<sup>39</sup> The video sets the bands amongst a series of landmarks familiar to international visitors to Marrakesh despite the fact that none of the participants are from the city. The song seamlessly integrates an English-language chorus from Babel with Derija verses from Rwapa Crew. This is not wholly unexpected, since many Moroccan rock and metal bands sing in English. However, the video also subtitles the rapped verses in English and includes closing credits in English. In addition to this, its settings in tourist landmarks like the medina’s main shopping streets and the recently renovated train station, and its images of women in fashionable miniskirts dancing at a posh Marrakesh nightclub, unmistakably gear the video to tourists as well as Moroccans.

Not only images and lyrics, but also musical choices situate the song in relation to an imagined international audience. Every fourth measure of the sixteen-bar verses includes a guitar riff with a lowered 3rd and 5th scale degree. In an interview on 2M, RedOne described this riff as “ethnic” (using the English word in his mix of French and Derija), stating that it was his way of including a “Moroccan touch” (“un touche Maghribi”) in an otherwise standard transnational pop song (Korsa episode 20: 2011).

RedOne held creative control over all the dimensions of “Feels So Right.” Not only did he arrange the song and produce the backing tracks over which Babel and Rwapa Crew contributed their instrumental and lyrical parts, he also provided the general idea, the chorus melody, and even edited the emcees’ lyrics. RedOne justified his intervention in the lyrics by criticizing the transnational hip hop tradition as focused on delineating problems to the exclusion of solutions. As he described in his interview with 2M host Younes Lazrak on *Korsa*:<sup>40</sup>

“The song they did had a message that was 100% hip hop. Hip hop always has a message. ...Always, okay okay okay, here’s the problems with this, problems of the street, problems with parents, problems with [your]self...whatever...So I told [them], ‘you’ve done one thing,’ only, my personality is always positive. I think that—“

Younes: “there are problems, however—“

RedOne: “—what, what works? How do we make a positive moment? It’s not just ‘everything’s in chaos.’”

Like other depoliticized neoliberal subjects, RedOne (and the eventual lyrics) locates potential responses in the terrain of the self (“my personality is always positive”), rather than in overt resistance or political participation.

Given the centrality of cultural tourism to the Moroccan economy, no doubt the video was viewed by Maroc-Cultures as an opportunity to reinforce a longstanding and successful narrative that depicts Morocco as a safe, “moderate” Muslim country, even as international news covered protests across North Africa. In addition, from a perspective that assumes hip hop’s resistant

stance, the degree of control exercised by RedOne over the production of “Feels So Right” might appear to lead directly to fears of Rwapa Crew’s exploitation or co-optation. Yet the video’s attempt to reach an international audience (and potential tourists) is entirely aligned with the agency, goals, and preferences of Rwapa Crew.

According to Amine, he and his artists saw this collaboration with RedOne as a career-launching opportunity. In fact, the video for their 2010 competition song “Allah Ya Moulana,” filmed and directed by the band’s manager, Amine Idrissi, applies similar visual strategies to Fes. In addition to images of the group and other visitors at the zawiya of Sheikh Moulay Idris, each chorus of the video follows Rwapa Crew through typical tourist itineraries--walking through medina gates, shopping for shoes, and admiring the famous tanneries (figures 8 and 9).



Fig. 8. An early frame in Rwapa Crew’s “Allah Ya Moulana” (2010), showing a view of the Fes medina, the emcees of Rwapa Crew walking through an ornamented gate, and one of the fountains in Fes’ Ville Nouvelle.



Fig. 9. Rwapa Crew and friends walking away from the Koutoubia Mosque towards Jamaa el-Fna in Marrakesh during the video for “Feels So Right” (2011).

As a manager and producer himself, Amine was in fact happy to specify which parts of the lyrics to “Feels So Right” he had written, and what parts of the video he had shot. But after the video was filmed,

“we came back to Fes and chill[ed], waitin[g] to do a big promotion...[to] do all the tv show[s,] the radio[,] when the video clip came out. But nooooooohiiiiing [happened.] I don’t [know] why but the manager did nothing to promote [us]. ...it was just the clip...on tv...for like two month[s] and bye bye” (p.c. Moulay Amine Idrissi, Brooklyn-Fes, Nov 10 2012).<sup>41</sup>

The band expected their song to be circulated and promoted to their fellow Moroccans and abroad, backed by RedOne’s star power and the connections between Maroc-Cultures and public and private tv and radio. During his stay in Morocco over the Mawazine Festival and the summer of 2011, RedOne was interviewed by 2M, Medi1 and other national outlets, but Rwapa Crew was not. Instead, after five years competing in Jil Mawazine, Rwapa Crew reached the pinnacle of the state’s market for amateur talent with no path to any professional work. As Amine put it, “u wanna [k]now where is rwapa crew now[?] They are nowhere...i think that this mawazine contract kill[ed] their [career].”

*Mixed sponsorship and local embeddedness: le Festival de Casablanca and L’Boulevard*

“A festival in the image of the city: festive, massive and controversial.” —Reda Allali, 2006<sup>42</sup>

In this section, I focus on festivals organized in consultation with active musicking networks in Casablanca. In contrast to the elite-led NGOs that organize the Fes Festival, the Festival Mawazine of Rabat, and the Festival of Gnawa and World Musics in Essaouira, the organizers introduced below came from active socio-musical networks and explicitly claim that they



represent those networks, even as their festival projects transcend their original audiences and participants. In public statements, the spatiality and physical makeup of these festivals, and the choices of performers, the two festivals described in this section represent the audiences for which their programming is selected as citizens of Casablanca rather than subjects of the nation or consumers in the tourism industry.

However, the festivals also differ in several ways. Perhaps the most important of these is their funding strategies. Both articulate public and private funding, but *le Festival de Casablanca* follows the pattern of the Fes Festival in getting private funding from corporations which are recently privatized, partially privatized, or close to the state. L’Boulevard, by contrast, takes funding from the municipality and other governmental organizations, but gets the bulk of its funds from major multinational corporations and, as I will describe below, the cultural-outreach arms of non-Moroccan governments.

### le Festival de Casablanca

The *Festival de Casablanca*, known as CasaMusic until 2010, was founded in 2005 by Hicham Abkari, who currently functions as the artistic director of the Festival. He is also the current director of the Mohamed VI Municipal Theatre in Casablanca, with the financial and technical support of the municipality and the state, as well as private corporations (2010 Festival press book; p.c. 28 July 2010, Casablanca). The Festival receives funding from municipal agencies, as well as publicly owned companies such as Royal Air Maroc and the Banque Centrale Populaire’s foundation. In 2010, private funding came from Méditel and Coca-Cola among other companies (2010 Festival press book). The Festival de Casablanca fills four to eight stages with two or three performers or ensembles each, in different neighborhoods, throughout the city for four nights each July. Additional workshops and performances take place during the day.

Originally timed to coincide with the international Festival of Music day, July 21<sup>st</sup>, the Festival de Casablanca now takes place on the Thursday-Sunday closest to that day. In 2010, the Festival organizers chose to concentrate the musical programming, including fewer artists and ensembles for the main stages, but ensuring an impressive lineup in which each performer was indisputably recognized in his or her field. For example, in a special program of “Ghiwanien” music, the three most famous bands from the 1970s fusion moment—Nass el-Ghiwane, Jil Jilala, and Lemchaheb—performed on a single stage on both Friday and Saturday nights. According to its own press materials, the Festival averaged 2.5 million spectators annually in its first three years (2008: 3). Over 2.6 million spectators were estimated at all four main stages and additional programming in 2010 (Akalay et al. 2010: 24).

Unlike the Fes Festival, the Festival Mawazine, and the Festival of Gnawa and World Musics--all of which provided the option of exclusive paid events or exclusive paid seating at larger events--all of the concerts and non-musical programming of the Festival de Casablanca are free. This reflects a recognition on the part of Festival organizers and funders that the Festival de Casablanca primarily attracts Moroccans from the city and its suburbs, but not a significant percentage of external tourists.

Casablanca has been left out of the majority of tourism growth since 2001. In part this reflects how little narratives about what international tourists are expected to desire from trips to Morocco have changed since the turn of the last century.<sup>43</sup> The city, which only grew to its current size and stature after the advent of the Protectorate in the twentieth century, lacks the historic, political, or religious significance of the “imperial” cities on the traditional tourist circuit. Nor does Casablanca have strengths in traditional package tourism like Essaouira or Agadir, smaller towns on the Atlantic coast known for beaches, surfing, and a quiet atmosphere. Even the city’s unique assets, such as its collection of 1930s “neo-Moorish” architecture and active year-round events calendar, underscore Casablanca’s heritage as a European-style urban agglomeration, the Protectorate’s industrial counterpart to its political center in Rabat (Wright 1991: 101).<sup>44</sup>

In a way, this comparative lack of international tourism frees the Festival of Casablanca from the constraints imposed on festivals like the Mawazine Festival in Rabat, to which it is often compared, by the need to attract international tourists. The Festival de Casablanca enjoys a reputation for being “by” and “for” Casaouis in a way that other festivals, more integrated into the national circuit of international and domestic tourism, cannot match.

This reputation is earned in several ways. One way is through the credibility of its organizers, including Hicham Abkari, mentioned in Chapter 3 as the founder of a b-boying association. It is also earned through a deference to genres that Casaouis continually want to hear; each edition is filled with a preponderance of *chaabi* artists, with much time set also set aside for “eastern” (including rai) and “contemporary” genres (especially hip hop). These latter genres, moreover, are represented not only by Moroccans, but by artists drawn from the locations considered by Moroccans to be most credible for them. Arabic-pop powerhouses Egypt and Lebanon are represented, and one of the largest stages annually brings hugely influential hip hop artists from the East Coast of the US such as Akon (2006), Busta Rhymes (2009), Missy Elliot (2010), and 50 Cent (2011).<sup>45</sup>

Thus festival programming is credible in that Abkari and his team use their resources to bring international artists when they are desired by the audience, but also strive to put Moroccan artists on stage. Additionally, performances and corollary Festival activities are deliberately aimed at a variety of tastes and social locations. The Festival includes workshops and discussions, open to all, that seek to actively involve audience members beyond their spectatorship. For example, the 2010 roundtable on contemporary culture-making was conducted in French and drew a number of well-educated, well-known culture makers in their late 20s and 30s (Crétois and Hillariet 2010: 50). In contrast, the annual b-boying and b-girling competitions implicitly invite youth of any social location to participate by placing the competitions’ stages in “popular” or working-class neighborhoods.

The diverse programming can sustain conflicting expectations and preferences from a variety of citizens. Between 2008 and 2011, the main stages scattered throughout Casablanca’s downtown and residential neighborhoods were often programmed with consistent styles of music across the weekend and year-by-year. This made it easy for locals relying on word of mouth to decide which stage they would attend based on their musical preferences.

In addition, as I described in relation to the Fes Festival of World Sacred Music and the Mawazine Festival above, the spatiality of musical programming reflects both practical concerns and widely held expectations about which social classes will enjoy which genres of music. For example, the biggest names from the USA, France, and other international locations at Festival de Casablanca are usually hip hop artists, and are usually programmed in the open space around the el-Hank lighthouse. The lighthouse is on a spit of land facing the ocean in the impoverished neighborhood of el-Hank, a vestige of pre-structural adjustment Casablanca sandwiched between two upscale locations. To the north sits the enormous and extravagant Hassan II Mosque, the city's biggest tourist attraction and the tallest minaret in the nation, next to a luxury multi-use development currently under construction called Casa Marina (Barthel and Planel 2010). To the south sits the already-established upscale neighborhood of Anfa, whose oceanfront is lined with clubs, restaurants, and cafés that charge for access to the beach. The Boulevard de Corniche runs through el-Hank, linking the two.<sup>46</sup> On the waterfront side of the Boulevard de Corniche, the el-Hank lighthouse's triangle of land was until recently home to concrete-block slums and a single nightclub, le Petit Rocher.

In 2010, the open space around the lighthouse was accessible by car or on foot. During the day, getting to and from the lighthouse to the closest area where taxis would likely stop meant a long but straightforward walk. During an evening concert that might not end until well after midnight, returning from el-Hank lighthouse on foot through a dimly lit and unfamiliar neighborhood surrounded by strangers also leaving the concert was a genuine safety concern, especially for women.<sup>47</sup> Additionally, the poorest residents of other neighborhoods in outer Casablanca could be deterred from attending simply because of the cost of transport to and from the concert. Thus concerts programmed at the el-Hank stage catered to two extremes: those who lived in the soon-to-be-demolished slums in the immediate area, and those who lived in the adjacent or other upscale neighborhoods who would simply drive in and out (and perhaps park at le Petit Rocher).

While McGuinness speculates that Festival de Casablanca was “probably conceived—and certainly presented by the Moroccan press—as a counterweight to different conservative discourses” (2010: 29), the Festival sidesteps a direct challenge to culturally and religiously conservative voices by presenting itself as responsive to the tastes and desires of its generationally, socially, and economically diverse Casaoui audience. “. . . Under the sign of diversity and quality . . . the spirit of Casa Music, that of a festival accessible to all and privileging popular festivities, is always there,” declare the organizers in a press release. “Casa Music . . . does not succumb to the latest fashions but . . . invests in sure musical values [valeurs], already familiar *or to be discovered*” (2008: 6, my emphasis).

This press release addresses an audience of both journalists and concert-goers—or, more precisely, figures the journalist readers of the press releases as eventual concert-goers and participants. The audience member is at the center of the imagined event. Yet, precisely because Festival programming acknowledges diverse tastes and demographics, it imagines those audience members making up a pluralistic public. Combined with the promise of entertainment “accessible to all,” the descriptor “popular” brings out both the positive and negative

connotations of populism— notions of commonness, massness, or backwardness, implicit in the term in both French and Arabic, but also respect for these widespread tastes.

Statements like that quoted above correspond to a discourse of accountability to a variety of citizens unknown in the promotions and programming for major festivals outside Casablanca. Hip hop music and dance has been crucial to Festival de Casablanca programming since the Festival's inception, providing between one-fifth and one-quarter of the music each year. Both famous international hip hop groups and well-known local ones have held dominant positions within festival programming. Festival de Casablanca official statements showcase the Festival's commitment to hip hop as a commitment to Casaoui youth: "In putting a most particular accent on the genre of hip hop, the festival celebrates a culture that has found a broad-based affinity [un vaste echo] with the Moroccan youth" (2010: 8). In another section of the 2010 press book, they defend youth-focused programming as citizen-oriented programming: "The Festival... from its first edition in 2005, and faithful to its motto of '[a] festival for all Casablancans,' will also put into practice this Casablancan speciality in organizing a breakdance tournament (the most respected [convoyé] in Morocco), and in programming national and international rappers" (2010: 14, emphasis mine).

Here, the Festival de Casablanca implicitly makes the case for considering youth as important as any other category of Moroccan citizen. More fundamentally, the Festival seeks to communicate a regard for Moroccan audiences as citizens whom the Festival serves, rather than as subjects whose festival attendance helps fulfill the Moroccan state's goals for creating international prestige. The Festival de Casablanca, then, provides hip hop programming in recognition of its enduring local popularity. By contrast, the limited amounts of hip hop included in other festivals--especially those directed at international audiences--reify international stereotypes of conservative Muslims by celebrating Morocco's transcendence of those stereotypes.

Abkari, the Festival de Casablanca's artistic director, feels strongly about the promise of hip hop for largely un- or under-employed Moroccan youth, especially those of lower socio-economic backgrounds. He has parlayed his experience with the Moroccan Underground Federation, an association or non-profit dedicated to supporting young hip hop musickers which he founded in 2003, into an annual breakdance tournament for the Festival de Casablanca. In 2010, the multi-day breakdance tournament was set in the working-class outskirt neighborhoods of Drissia, Sbata, and Hay Hassani, as it had been since the inception of the tournament and Festival, and also added a finale at the newly opened Fabrique Culturelle des Abattoirs in Hay Mohammedi.<sup>48</sup>

These locations held significance for Abkari as long-term sites of "underground" hip hop musicking. In 1999, while working as an assistant director at the downtown Sidi Belyout Cultural Center, he first learned of Casaoui youths' new attempts at hip hop musicking when a group of teenagers came to him asking to use the space for a dance performance. Happy to be able to provide something that young men actually wanted to attend, he started organizing regular dance "battles" at the center; these continued for several years, and still occur there despite the end of Abkari's tenure at the center (p.c., 28 July 2010, Casablanca). Today, he continues to schedule staged "battles" at Mohamed VI Theatre. Thus like many musickers I

interviewed, Abkari's first experience with the hip hop arts was through dance, though his was through the eyes of youth from the poorer neighborhoods beyond the autoroute circling the center of Casablanca. As a result, he argues that dance is the element of hip hop that is the most open and accessible for the greatest number of people. Like the Festival de Casablanca programming which he oversees, his choice of the term "underground" reflects a belief in the importance of accessibility regardless of class location.

Abkari's passion for promoting hip hop dance stems from a desire to support and protect urban youth culture as urban youth culture, as something distinctly reflective and productive of a particular Casaoui experience for this generation of Moroccans. This can be read as a particularly "Western" attitude towards youth as a category of culture-making, and as part of his project, Abkari embraces this as he makes explicit the stakes of the debate. As he told an interviewer in 2008, he recognizes an anti-Western discourse at work in dismissals of Moroccan hip hop musicking: "We shouldn't forget that in the center of Casablanca, we have had difficulty accepting that which certain people call 'the West,' or Western culture[,] because, according to a conspiracy theory, our identity is in danger, attacked by the West." Yet those who repeat "conspiracy theories" fail to admit how imbricated Casablanca is and has been in "Western" culture; they fail to see that their critiques are themselves imported.

"Now we bring up [ramenons] some youth who represent the extreme even in the heart of the West: youth of the cities, of the banlieues, are poorly perceived in the West, thus you can imagine if you were to bring that style here! So evidently this transplanted [véhiculé] discourse against these youth is found in Morocco" (Cestor 2008, my translation).<sup>49</sup>

Without disputing the framework in which this discourse takes place, in which a division between Morocco as an Arabo-Muslim nation and "the West" is unproblematically reproduced, Abkari's depiction of the content of the discourse justifies a special place for hip hop musicking and dance in particular within the Festival de Casablanca.<sup>50</sup> Under his leadership, the Festival de Casablanca creates programming that reflects its plural publics in their rather unexotic urbanity, rather than packaging Moroccans' diversity for international tourism.

### L'Boulevard *and* Le Tremplin

"Popular cultures are the last bastion against the neoliberal invasion on one hand and [against] the temptations [of the] fundamentalists on the other." —Reda Zine, journalist<sup>51</sup>

The Boulevard Festival and its parent organization, today known as L'EAC-L'Boulevard, can be assigned a great deal of the credit for the cohesion and vibrancy of the "contemporary" musical activity in Casablanca and the Casablanca-Rabat corridor today. The founders of the association, Mohamed "Momo" Merhari and Hicham Bahou, have sought to provide a safe space and laboratory for what they saw as unappreciated (or even, after the "Satanist" trials of 2003, persecuted) youth musicking (Callen 2006: 125-126).<sup>52</sup>

L'Boulevard, as it is known colloquially, began in 1999 with its first competition. At the time, Hicham Bahou, one of the founders of the festival and the organization behind it, ran the

Association for Artistic and Cultural Education (EAC), itself a part of *le Fédération des Oeuvres Laïques* (F.O.L.) (Callen 2006: 124).<sup>53</sup> The EAC had occasionally held concerts at the F.O.L. Theater in the previous years; these included rock bands and more idiosyncratic ensembles including various types of fusion. In 1999 Bahou and friends, including the eventual co-founder of the Boulevard Festival Mohamed “Momo” Merhari, used the F.O.L. Theatre in the posh Gautier neighborhood of downtown Casablanca to hold a festival called *Le Tremplin des Jeunes Musiciens de Casablanca* amongst local bands. The first festival included several rock and metal bands and three fusion bands (Kounache 2008: 37). Since then, the Tremplin has been upheld by the Boulevard team as the cornerstone of their programming.

The competitive aspect of the Tremplin was not originally the most salient feature of the event. From its inception, le Tremplin and le Boulevard des Jeunes Musiciens was designed to bring scattered practitioners of “alternative” musics in Casablanca into regular dialogue. The network-building capacity of the original group rapidly expanded with each year and each new mix of programming.

From 2000 onward, the annual competition included a hip hop category. Starting in 2001, the three-day event included workshops for participating musicians; these covered beatmaking software, pre- and post-production musical effects, recording technology, and sometimes instrumental technique (Callen 2006: 23). In 2005, Bahou and Merhari started to include invited guests to round out the competitors’ performances. By 2007, this had grown into two separate events: the Tremplin and its companion, a four-day festival where rock, fusion, hip hop/rap, and metal each had a dedicated evening of performances. At the same time, Boulevard had outgrown its old space and relocated to two soccer fields and training grounds located next to each other in a residential area of Casablanca.

In 2009 and 2010 le Tremplin was held at Les Abbatoirs, the site of the former city slaughterhouse, in the site’s new guise as a cultural center. Maintained by the city with a collective of arts associations in Casablanca, of which L’Boulevard and the preservationist group Casamemoire are perhaps the best-known members, Les Abbatoirs was rescued from redevelopment and now serves as an all-purpose event space year-round. According to the estimates of the Boulevard, 10,000 people aged between “16-35 years” visited le Tremplin daily in 2009 (7). Building on the success of each previous iteration, Boulevard’s corporate and other funding has enabled it to grow to year-round programming. Today, this includes film screenings, sponsoring artists’ gallery openings during Boulevard, one-off concerts, and artist residencies (see table 2).

By 2010, annual Boulevard happenings were understood as central events in the temporal, spatial, and social dimensions of the nationwide hip hop network. Participating at le Tremplin was an education for musickers in both the social and musical skills needed to be considered a competent member of the network. Because the Tremplin 2010 was held during the day, and in a smaller space than Boulevard’s previous wide-open rugby pitch, the event was more conducive to moments of introduction, reacquaintance, or collaboration.

When I arrived at le Tremplin during the afternoon of the hip hop competition in the company of two Moroccan researchers, I quickly met people I already knew from Casablanca, Rabat, Salé, and Fes. I also met three people, friends-of-friends, with whom I would

subsequently spend more time. As I strolled the broken concrete yard, I was surprised at the number of hip hop musicians who were visiting with each other. The space was small enough for well-known artists to be clearly visible in the audience, or in the circulating crowd behind the sound technicians' tent.

As a younger generation of hip hop aspirants competed on stage, established musicians from hip hop's founding years in Morocco reconnected with each other. Soultana in particular was in high demand, since her single "Sawt Nssa" (Voice of a Woman) had been released two months earlier and was getting radio play. That afternoon, we met many people whom Soultana knew personally, or had worked with in a performance or in the studio. But in several other meetings I witnessed that day, musickers knew each other only by sight, by facebook, or by reputation. The older well-connected musicians, including Muslim (in town from Tangier), members of Casa Crew, and other pioneers arrived singly or in small groups, without coordinating with fellow musicians.

The younger members of the musical networks were also busy connecting and learning. In a quieter moment between performances, a young girl who knew Soultana through one degree of separation—she was Soultana's boyfriend's younger sister—came over to us as we stood slightly apart from the crowd. She wanted to perform for Soultana something she had written. We stood with our heads bent over the girl's Yankees cap, our backs to the crowd, as she recited her rhymes to the concrete wall, straining to hear her over the conversations circulating behind us. The paired rhymes neatly punctuated the end of each line, but in her excitement at spitting a cappella for Soultana, the girl started to speed up, and ran the end of one line into the beginning of the next. Soultana stopped her after four or five lines.

"Pretend you are doing this to music," she told her new student. "Just before you reach the end of the line, we make a pause [*ndiro pause*]." The girl looked up, nodded intently, took a deep breath, and recited her words perfectly, with a recurrent stress on the penultimate syllable of each line. When she finished, they beamed at each other in genuine excitement.<sup>54</sup>

The Boulevard Festival and le Tremplin are crucial gatherings, temporal and spatial nodes in trans-city and trans-genre networks of musickers. L'Boulevard has often been referred to as the largest "independent" music festival in the Arab world, or on the African continent, by both supporters and the organizers themselves. In 2008 Merhari told a reporter that "we are an independent festival and association that has stayed independent. We have never censored any group nor any musical style, we have never imposed anything. It's a free space. We try to maintain our independence at any price[;] if not it wouldn't make sense any more [to continue]" (Despouys 2008: 25, my translation).

The term "independent" is no less loaded than in other realms of translocal popular music discourse, and perhaps more so in the context of frequent and intensive government support for cultural productions in Morocco. In Merhari's quote above, artistic and financial independence are conflated as two sides of a "free" coin. Here, I take "independent" to mean that Boulevard productions are not supported by the state in a way that would allow it to claim that is it "Under the High Patronage of King Mohamed VI," as is explicitly stated by the Fes Festival, the Gnaoua Festival, the Mawazine Festival, and many smaller events. Just as importantly, "independent" has

normative, rhetorical, and affective force that aligns with L'EAC-L'Boulevard's discourse and its mission to provide a home for contemporary musicking.

As an organization, EAC-L'Boulevard champions a specific "liberal" ideology that is not necessarily secular, not necessarily affluent, but definitely urban, summarized in the tagline for its festival publication *L'Kounache (The Notebook)*: "free spirit and urban creation." The magazine's articles celebrate moments of musical experimentation and musical activism in Moroccan and US history, including coverage of the leading fusion, rock, and soul artists of the 1960s (2008: 44-65), a 40-year anniversary retrospective on Woodstock (2009: 48-62), and an interview with Public Enemy's Chuck D (Zine 2009: 22-24). Its editorials forward a vision of rights-based claims to freedom of expression. For example, Braham Bihi, the President of EAC-L'Boulevard, opened the 2009 issue with this statement:

"The objective of Boulevard has never been to organize a simple music festival for 3 or 4 days each year, but to continually actualize this means of expression that is music amongst the Moroccan youth and by doing so[, to] defend a principle: the freedom of expression. Because the two are linked, music is not only a means of expression, but also a cultural activity that carries his [the Moroccan's] identity, his message and his participation in society." (Bihi 2009: 18, my translation).

He followed this with four UN and UNESCO articles calling freedom of expression and freedom to play instruments a human right.

L'Boulevard's financial independence is thus seen as central to its cultural and musical independence. It is a cornerstone of its attraction for some, though certainly not all, of the musickers who attend every year. It is certainly part of the attraction for the international press and researchers who attend. The Boulevard Festival, the Tremplin, and the continuously emerging year-round programming created by the organizers at EAC-Boulevard have been the subject of countless news articles in international as well as Moroccan press and featured in the documentaries *CasaNayda!* (Benlyazid and Caubet 2008) and *I Love Hip Hop in Morocco* (Asen and Needleman 2004). While L'Boulevard has not seen as much research activity as the Fes Festival of World Sacred Music, its origins and impact were closely studied by Jeffrey Callen for his 2006 dissertation on fusion musicians in Morocco.

For most of its 13-year history, Boulevard did not receive money or other forms of support from the national government. However, it has received funding and support from the municipal government of Casablanca since early in its career.<sup>55</sup> This changed in 2006 with little fanfare from either the Festival or the state. In 2006, the Moroccan Ministry of Culture was noted prominently as a sponsor of the Festival in its publications. In 2009-2010, the Ministry of Culture did not appear, but the Moroccan Consolidated Council on Human Rights was listed as a sponsor.

Separately, in a move that occasioned a great deal of local gossip, King Mohamed VI gave L'EAC-L'Boulevard a gift of 2 million MAD (around \$250,000 USD) in 2009. Reportedly, this gift came from the King's personal funds, not government revenues. It was intended to convey his respect for Bahou and Merhari's contributions to popular culture, and to allow L'EAC-



L’Boulvart to finish the stalled work on their long-planned expansion of the organization’s office Boultek. The finished complex was to include rehearsal spaces, a recording studio, a radio station, and a concert venue (Mrabet 2010a and 2010b). When I first visited Boultek in late 2009, my tour showed that Boulevard was creating its planned complex from scratch: they had finished putting up and drywalling rooms in their eventual floorplan, but had a long way to go to complete the space. My tour guide, a member of the Boulevard team, was frank about having to do the work piecemeal, whenever they had the money to complete something. The royal gift made it possible for Boultek to open in 2010, and thus for Boulevard to move forward with creating year-round programming. It also provoked speculation, ranging from admiring to jealous, about the King’s musical preferences as well as the actual use of the funds.<sup>56</sup> L’EAC-L’Boulvart received a second personal gift of 2 million MAD in late summer 2011 after canceling the festival portion of its summer programming when its major corporate sponsor the telecommunications company Inwi, itself a subsidiary of the royal family-owned investment company SNI, dropped out (Crétois 2011).

More interestingly from a translocal perspective, Boulevard’s “independent” status attracts the support of cultural and social organizations funded by other nation-states which have offices in Morocco. These include the British Council, the Institut Français, the Instituto Cervantes (Spain), the Goethe Institut (Germany), and the French and US Embassies. In at least two cases, individuals at these organizations were instrumental in obtaining the eventual support Boulevard received. For example, in 2006 the British Council sponsored a multinational residency called Music Matbakh (Music Kitchen) which brought together rock, electro, and hip hop musicians from several Arabic-speaking countries. The songs the group composed together were eventually performed at the 2007 edition of Boulevard before premiering at other MENA-region festivals (Lynskey 2007). A former employee of the British Council in Rabat, who has acted as a judge for the Tremplin for several years, connected Matbakh organizer Justin Adams with the Boulevard organization. Similar combinations of personal networks and international support enabled a lasting partnership between l’EAC-Boulvart and Pirineos Sur, an annual festival in Spain, in which musicians from both countries hold a residency each summer and perform new works at both festivals.

In another, ongoing support relationship, the US State Department has, through money provided via the US Embassy in Rabat and the US Consulate in Casablanca, consistently provided funding and other assistance to the Boulevard Festival. The Boulevard Festival is not the only arts organization the US Embassy supports in Morocco, but it is the most consistently supported.<sup>57</sup> Since 1999, the Consulate in Casablanca has provided the team with a portion of their initial funding and use of facilities.<sup>58</sup> In 2006, they funded the US hip hop group De La Soul’s trip to Casablanca to headline the festival, which one Consulate official estimated to cost around \$64,000 US.<sup>59</sup> Subsequent years maintained similar levels of investment.

Donations to the Boulevard organization fulfill specific criteria for the Embassy. These interventions leverage and encourage existing partnerships with influential Moroccans. They support products and services that have already proven themselves to some degree in a competitive market, whether that is a market for advertising dollars, for youth audiences, or for social capital. They provide a return far exceeding the original investment in terms of a specific

sort of visibility--what Long calls “the multiplier effect.” However, the Embassy is careful to ensure that its visibility is always filtered through Moroccan partners.

With its ability to articulate international private and public funding, the Boulevard Festival is an American-style success story. As Matthew Long, the current Cultural Affairs officer at the US Embassy in Rabat, put it, “they have now reached a scale where the type of funding we can provide is nothing. ...Because they've developed to the point where they can provide a product to a sponsor...and...quite honestly from an American point of view that's how it's supposed to work.” Long describes a historic “cycle” between periods of focus on “opinion-makers” and a “broader...general-public and youth focus” within the US State Department’s foreign arts funding initiatives, observing that today’s decision-makers support interventions that reach a large public rather than targeted groups of foreign elites (interview, Rabat, March 23 2010).

EAC-L’Boulevard’s activities since 1999 have had far-reaching effects on both Casablancon and national networks of musickers in hip hop, rock, electronica, and metal. Boulevard has enabled translocal connections at neighborhood, city, national and international levels. Like Festival de Casablanca, it is oriented towards local musickers, and claims to come from the musicking community. Like other festivals I describe in this chapter, it seeks both public and private funding to achieve its goals.

From an internal tourism perspective, Boulevard is an asset to Casablanca, as its events attract people from across the country. From an international tourism and geopolitical perspective, Boulevard is an asset to the country. Primarily Francophone journalism celebrates its activities and its organizers as one face of the mostly affluent, mostly well-educated, mostly secularist (not to say secular) Casablancon elite. European countries and the US support both its business model and its apparent similarity to Western personal and artistic values. From all these perspectives, though it was not intended to do so, Boulevard’s reputation and its effect on musickers’ activities aligns with the state’s preferred, intertwined touristic and political narratives about the nation.

Despite its attempts to reflect the preferences of Casaouis—to create “a festival for all Casablancans,” as the motto suggests—and not of internal or external tourists to the city, the Festival de Casablanca does not provide for network-building amongst Moroccan hip hop musickers in the same way that EAC-Boulevard’s programming can and does. The reasons for this are, to some extent, infrastructural. EAC-Boulevard’s programming, while quite successful by its own standards, still draws many fewer people than the Festival de Casablanca every year. The understanding of its public as “all Casablancans” on which the Festival de Casablanca is built leads to physical stages and programming choices that must be accessible to huge numbers of people with widely divergent tastes. That understanding of its public as citizens whose varied tastes and preferences are to be celebrated and deferred to, rather than disciplined or civilized, is paradoxically more likely to occur amongst affluent Casaouis whose educations and social milieus inculcated in them a respect for the values of *citoyennité* (Ar. *madaniyya*).<sup>60</sup>

## Conclusions

This chapter has focused on the agency of festival organizers and hip hop musickers in relation to modes of public and private financing. Rather than reflecting on the interactions musickers have with (international) tourists, I have attempted to delimit the frame through which musickers usually see the festival phenomenon. Musickers clearly recognize the biggest state-sponsored festivals as emblematic of relations of domination between Morocco and other, richer nations, whether Arab, European, or North American. Outside of Boulevard and Festival de Casablanca, other major festivals are seen as potential tools for improving the livelihoods and recognition of local (Moroccan) musickers. The most prominent hip hop musickers calling for better pay for Moroccan musicians take a postcolonial perspective on this particular issue, considering the potential of festivals to be wasted by the state in favor of the re-establishment of existing, unequal patterns of compensation.

I argue that festival organizers and festival participation promote a vision of a specific kind of Moroccan youth that benefits from neoliberalization: one who is proud of his (and less often, her) cosmopolitanism and transnational savoir-faire, who has the desire and the leisure time to attend the concerts of internationally known American and European stars, who consumes the latest fashions in clothes, music, technology and media. Unlike during the post-Independence era, in which Moroccan citizenship was represented through discourses on the pan-Arabist Moroccan subject united despite differences in class positioning and lineage, this image of Moroccan youth privileges a middle-class or upwardly-mobile section of society over expressions of faith or community. While more impoverished youth can and do participate--and even reinforce the impact of this imagery through their attempts at attainment, as in during independently-produced hip hop competitions or in purchasing pirated media and international brands--their specific needs, preferences, and points of view are left out of the emerging conversation around Moroccan youth as a category, one which has increasingly come to be signified by the leisured festival-goer.

As in other aspects of contemporary Moroccan life, neoliberalizing policies around festivals like the revitalization of the tourism industry, the increasing number of young people in tourism and hospitality post-secondary education, the integration of youthful performers and audiences into national and international media, are frequently placed into a narrative of continuous “modernization” and “development” central to national discourse since the post-Independence era. The use of hip hop in all the festivals discussed in this chapter works to distinguish “modern” events and event-goers from “traditional” ones. However, the defining characteristics of “modern” orientations map ever more closely onto wealth and class position in the neoliberalizing moment, as the gap between the most and least affluent widens.

Yet an additional layer of complexity needs to be identified here. Non-affluent, yet translocally oriented, youth involved in hip hop musicking are in the process of creating and expanding translocal networks. Musickers share values, orientations, and ethics, yet the Moroccan members of these networks range from comfortably upper-middle-class to impoverished, financially insecure, and/or unemployed.

This is not incompatible with the neoliberalizing influence precisely because in both market rationalities, musickers' rhetoric, and specific state-sponsored and independent events, participation is often conceptualized as a competition. In a competition, or a game, there must be winners and losers. The "losers," the musickers whose access, capital, skills, and other necessities do not allow them to connect to significant networks in materially beneficial ways, are integral to neoliberalization's discursive project in that they provide the images against which "winners" are constructed and celebrated, and at the same time, provide an object of and target for further neoliberalization. Festivals are sites of neoliberal subjectivation, and sites where the borders of valorized citizenship in the Moroccan neoliberal moment are negotiated. More practically, they are also sites where winners and losers within musicking networks are effectively delineated, both in the display of chosen performers and the informal procedures determining who accesses what performances, events, and spaces.

In his article on the Fes Festival of World Sacred Musics, Belghazi reads the Festival as "a text that reflexively depicts, interprets and informs its social context and reproduces the dominant power political structures in Morocco" (2006: 97). Festivals have always functioned as places where a certain kind of Moroccan subject is acculturated and valorized. Who that subject is and how that subject performs his or her role properly in relation to others has changed over time. In the case of *muwasem*, participating in pilgrimages to the saint's tomb and other rituals aimed at receiving blessings (*baraka*) from the saint was just as important as socializing with other pilgrims. In the case of the Festival National des Arts Populaires, established immediately post-Independence, members of troupes performing their local music and dance for the benefit of a mostly elite audience learned to codify their performance, dress, and comportment in ways that differentiated them from each other and from the audience. In the case of Moroccan audience members at the Fes Festival of Sacred Music, the Mawazine Festival, or the Gnaoua Festival of World Music, mixing in large, compressed crowds with visitors from different Moroccan cities, from Europe, North America, and increasingly the Gulf states forces audience members to encounter difference on all sides.

The claims to and celebrations of diversity in the texts accompanying the Festival Mawazine seem to come to life in these crowds, though not without consternation and conflict. Older Moroccan audience members watch younger Moroccans move through crowds with few compunctions about brushing up against other bodies; "Western" men and women see the *hijabi* women in the crowd as the marked category of female participant and comment to each other when those women smile, clap, or dance; wealthy and connected audience members enjoy the relative space and freedom of movement in the VIP area fenced off closest to the stage; young men without the same access fight through the crowds or arrive early to cluster against that fence. In every case, Moroccan audience members act and react in historically and contextually grounded ways. And in every case certain dimensions of Moroccanness and cultural belonging have been valorized in ways that are never free of state influence nor translocal mediation.

Today, the music festivals that dominate Morocco's spring and summer serve as places where visual, sonic, and physical cues that help subjects to determine who among them is a valued Moroccan actor are formed and enacted. In other words, the subjects considered to be behaving in ways that are appropriate for the festivals come to be seen as not only subjects, but as citizens.

But the behaviors and dispositions that allow a subject to be most comfortable in the festival context—an appreciation for many types of music, a belief in the propriety of a mixed-gender public space, a positive opinion about the cultural tourism industry and foreign visitors—are most likely to be held by members of affluent or aspirational social classes. Increasingly, the frame in which major festivals are cast and promoted, in both conceptual and physical terms, imagines and enacts a secularized and privatized public sphere. Muslim piety is encouraged and seen as fundamental to national character, but also most appropriately pursued in private space—the home, the *zawiya*, or the mosque, which is no longer seen as the site *par excellence* of the public sphere.

In addition, in the context of a prevailing discourse in which Morocco's national culture is inexorably changing (whether for worse or for better), all sides of the debate over the change focus on youth as the site of the nation's success or failure, the site of the fulfillment of the adult generation's disparate hopes for the future. A certain kind of Moroccan youth is presented through festival ads, news coverage of festivals, and the performances of youthful Moroccan musicians at festivals. Media and festival organization, which are both different kinds of public-private partnerships, present relatively affluent youth with the taste to desire the latest in music and fashion from the global North, and the leisure and wealth to acquire and enjoy the objects of those tastes. Consumerism thus becomes one of the defining characteristics of the idealized festival-going youth.

As in other aspects of neoliberalization, the winners and losers in this reformulation are not necessarily clear-cut or immediately apparent. Hip hop musickers are, in a sense, caught in the middle of the process of valorizing a particular kind of neoliberal actor. On the surface, they appear to be ideal representations of the youthful Moroccan citizen promoted by festivals—simultaneously fiercely proud of their nationality and adept consumers of transnational youth culture in the form of hip hop media and fashions. As festival performers, their frequently oppositional, critical, or rebellious statements are made within a highly regimented and state-sponsored environment. Musickers' own discourse prizes a critical approach to the relationship between state and society, with a general consensus in lyrics that the state should support Moroccans' needs for economic growth and stability, and that it frequently fails at that project. At the same time, as I will discuss further in chapter five, musickers frequently perform this criticism through a morally inflected language rooted in their enculturation as Muslims, with reference to the rights and responsibilities of citizens themselves. This can be read as promoting active and freely exercised citizenship, and in fact hip hop musickers (emcees in particular) often characterize themselves as educators informing the public about their rights. Yet at the same time one can interpret this as entirely consistent with the state's neoliberalizing project, as individuals are encouraged to take on greater responsibility for themselves in the name of rights. None of this is seen by musickers as conflicting with accepting state sponsorship or the ultimate authority of the monarchy.

I do not wish to argue that hip hop musickers who perform at or attend festivals, including those sponsored in whole or in part by the Moroccan state or funding from other governments, have been co-opted wholesale into promoting the state's vision of the appropriate neoliberal Moroccan citizen. The concept of co-optation does not capture the full range of agency and

opinions at work amongst hip hop musickers. While my discussions with musickers, especially those who have been invited to perform at festivals, show that they see multiple sides of the situation, they are nevertheless some of the most ardent consumers—to use a deliberately evocative term—of neoliberalizing values in their competition, marketing, self-promotion, and modes of performance. Thus they are exponents of an ambivalent position; their lived experience of neoliberalization is one in which new avenues of expression have been opened, yet those expressions have not yet led to concrete change. Moreover, avenues to mobility or professionalization in music are not yet open to many, and may be short-lived for all.

This chapter discussed one way that hip hop musickers engage with discussions of the nation carried out in the Moroccan public sphere. In the next chapter, I argue that musickers' performances enact a kind of counterpublic, a space for conversation and contestation that both interacts with and separates itself from dominant public discourse.

## Notes

<sup>1</sup> Barbara Kirschenblatt-Gimblett elegantly sums up the attraction and inherent distortion of “heritage” in her definition: “Heritage is a mode of cultural production in the present that has recourse to the past. Heritage thus defined depends on display to give dying economies and dead sites a second life as exhibitions of themselves. A place such as Salem, Massachusetts, may be even more profitable as an exhibition of a mercantile center than it was as a mercantile center” (2001: 7). Moroccan tourism plays, and depends, on contemporary international tourists’ colonial-era expectations of “timelessness” (read: “pastness”) to keep certain locations (e.g. Marrakesh’s Jamaa el-Fna) and industries (e.g. busking, storytelling, leather tanning, weaving) alive in the present. As internal and international tourism becomes increasingly central to the Moroccan economy, and to daily life for dwellers in highly heritage-ized places, that expectation also mediates Moroccans’ experience of the same sites in educationally and economically specific ways.

<sup>2</sup> North Africanist historians know a great deal about saints and leaders of Sufi orders and lodges from religious hagiography and other sources. The anthropological literature on distinctly Moroccan Muslim practices, sometimes glossed as “maraboutic Islam,” includes diverse instances of individuals being recognized as *awliya* Allah in their lifetimes for various reasons, and a lively discussion of how to define their necessary attribute, *baraka*—a potentially distributable, potentially hereditary attribute which is often summarized, in a Weberian mode, as “charisma,” but “whose definition has run the gamut from ‘blessed virtue’ and ‘spiritual potency’ to ‘power’ and even ‘luck’” (Cornell 1998: xxv).

<sup>3</sup> This is not to say that urbanites don’t also attend muwasem; see Gottreich 2007 and Kapchan 2007.

<sup>4</sup> Transhumant groups travel between two or more sites throughout the year, based on the season, growing crops and/or pasturing animals differently at each site (Charrad 2001: 76).

<sup>5</sup> As Elaine Combs-Schilling describes in her review of the film, “the finales of each scene draw the two events close: as the women inside provide the male audience with the awaited ecstatic moment when they let loose their long tresses and rhythmically toss their heads and bodies, the horsemen outside spur their horses to breakneck speed, manes flying, then suddenly jerk them to a halt, simultaneously firing their long guns into the air” (1991: 517). I discuss the significance of *sheikhat* and their social location further in chapter five.

<sup>6</sup> <http://www.visitmorocco.com/index.php/fre/J-aime-faire/Festivals-et-moussems/Les-moussems> (my translation). Last accessed 13 January 2013.

<sup>7</sup> Hillali quotes a *dahir*, or order, from 1926 which argued that “tourism must be one of the principal resources of the country” (quoted in Hillali 2007: 27).

<sup>8</sup> In 2007, this program lasted around two hours, and closed with all the members of various troupes returning to the stage via a camel “caravan” which wrapped around the inside walls of the open-air ruin. Audiences were limited to the members of package tours or to guests at certain hotels.

<sup>9</sup> “Achiri” is a slang adjective that translates to “working-class,” or for an analogous US slang term, “ghetto.” Young male musickers from Fes used it to describe places and things, as in this example, but also addressed their friends with it in a self-consciously humorous way. As an adjective, it is similar to using the word “popular,” *chaabi*, but it emphasizes the negative aspects of the idea more than *chaabi*, which can connote low-class and backward, but also populist or democratic.

<sup>10</sup> p.c., Sultana, Casablanca, 21 Oct 2009; interview DJ CasaFlayva, Casablanca, 27 August 2010.

<sup>11</sup> Tourism police are given wide discretion to carry out these guidelines as they see fit. I learned this in 2010 when I was strongly discouraged by members of the special tourism forces from entering Fes Jdid, a pre-Protectorate neighborhood with few if any hotels, at night by myself. They did not drive away until I convinced them that a) I knew the way to the home of the friend I wished to visit there, b) the friend was an American female, c) I spoke acceptable Derija, and d) I was not inclined to accept the two male officers' offer of a ride back to the Ville Nouvelle.

<sup>12</sup> On 16 October, 1975, King Hassan II gave his famous "Green March" speech calling for Moroccans to march peacefully into previously Spanish-occupied territory south of the anti-Atlas mountains to hold that territory for Morocco. An estimated 350,000 Moroccans walked from their homes all over the country across the border (speech text at [http://www.lagencedusud.gov.ma/discours\\_royaux.php](http://www.lagencedusud.gov.ma/discours_royaux.php)). One of my interlocutors, the emcee and beatmaker Nores, recalls listening to a televised speech in which Hassan II told youth to get higher degrees. He pointed out that those students found no jobs in engineering and the other encouraged majors when they graduated (interview, Salé, March 30 2010).

<sup>13</sup> Justin McGuinness names "Place Bou Jloud, Talaa Sghira, Talaa Kbira, souk el Attarine and the streets closest to the Qaraouiyyine mosque and the Chouara tanneries," all popular destinations on guided tours and in Fes guidebooks, as targets of renovation. "Without a doubt," he adds, "the affluence inspired by the Festival... convinced the authorities responsible for heritage, in Rabat and in Fes, to bring [three famous *medersas*] up to date" (2010: 31, n 17).

<sup>14</sup> Sites of Jewish religious heritage across Morocco, including saints' tombs, synagogues in Fes and Sefrou, and the Jewish Museum in Casablanca, are certainly visited by tourists, including Jews with Moroccan heritage. To the best of my knowledge, renovations and operating costs at the Fes Jadid synagogue and the Jewish Museum were privately funded.

<sup>15</sup> Ramid belongs to the Parti du Justice et Développement (PJD), a moderate Islamist party. Since 2012, the PJD has had the leadership of the government based on its majority in Parliament; Ramid currently serves as the Minister of Justice and Liberties.

<sup>16</sup> e.g., p.c. Soultana, Casablanca, October 21 2009; interview L-Tzack, Fes, August 2010; p.c. 'Omar Lebbate, Meknes, April 2010.

<sup>17</sup> In Turino's formulation (2003: 62), in its first few years the Fes Festival was an eruption of trans-cultural modernist-capitalist cosmopolitanism into what was still, locally, a modernist-socialist post-colonial social space.

<sup>18</sup> I would theorize this need as a structural deficiency that helps perpetuate what Larisa Mann (2012), following Arturo Escobar (2004), calls a "coloniality of power" in the post-colonial world, but this argument is beyond the scope of this chapter.

<sup>19</sup> "I can affirm that the founders are sincere in their intimate conviction, knowing that spirituality is capable of transmitting peace" (McGuinness 2010: 27 note 2, my translation).

<sup>20</sup> The King's wife, Princess Lalla Salma, has made a recent tradition of attending the opening night of the Festival (as I witnessed in 2011), bringing additional red-carpet glamour to the proceedings.

<sup>21</sup> cite website.

<sup>22</sup> Abd al-Malik had visited Fes as a performer before, during Fes Festival founder, Sufi, and anthropologist Faouzi Skalli's tenure as the director of the Fes Festival of Sufi Culture (2007-2012). As one journalist put it, Abd al-Malik's two performances at that festival in 2008 and 2009 "brought his touch of modernity to the festival" (Slimani 2009).

<sup>23</sup> "Les Face à Face des Coeurs" is the title of Abd al-Malik's 2004 album.



<sup>24</sup> Abd al-Malik was awarded the Prix Constantine his 2006 release *Gibraltar*, from which he performed selections that evening; he received much attention for collaborating throughout the album with Gérard Jouannest, Jacque Brel's pianist.

<sup>25</sup> Both the Bab and the Place were constructed in the first decade of the Protectorate according to General Lyautey's and urban planner Henri Prost's preferences for managing extant urban spaces (cf. Abu-Lughod 1980). The Bab hewed closely to the aesthetics of the medina's buildings, and was built by Fes artisans from local materials, in order to provide a suitably picturesque entrance to this side of the medina (Wright 1991: 146).

<sup>26</sup> Musickers frequently situate their work or the work of others along a continuum between what they and the transnational hip hop tradition refer to as "commercial" and "underground" poles. In chapter three, I argued that in the absence of most institutions associated with a formal music industry in North America and Europe, "commercial" and "underground" no longer refer to affiliations to major or independent labels, nor to the values associated with those affiliations. Instead, they become stylistic markers that may indicate different approaches to enunciating their socio-political commentary, but do not necessarily indicate different political stances.

<sup>27</sup> As a noun "kachela" refers to military barracks.

<sup>28</sup> As in end of the second verse of "Ḥob al-Watan," "Love of the Nation" (or "Patriotism"): "Tell me about that citizen [*muwatan*] who lives in the street/ Without wanting to he hates the country and becomes violent/ Where he runs out of land and the people live with the costs/ The people live with the costs, their world is not nice/ What's patriotism to them?"

<sup>29</sup> Muslim continues to safeguard this reputation now that he is performing again. As I waited in the press area for his concert at Place Boujloud to begin, I asked the director of the Festival de la Ville to ask Muslim whether I could speak with him after the concert. When she returned to the press area she reported that, as she had expected, he declined to be interviewed by a woman.

<sup>30</sup> In Chapter Five I discuss a July 2010 concert at which H-Kayne performed their anti-police-brutality song "La Brigade" on an outdoor stage in their home city, Meknes, surrounded by uniformed and plainclothes police. Don Bigg's landmark concert at the 2010 edition of Mawazine, also in Chapter Five, included his 2006 song "al-Khouf" ("Fear"), which names corruption and police brutality in its lengthy list of things Moroccans fear. In all these examples, the lyrical strategy is the same: entities that interface with the public most often, like the police, come in for scathing criticism. The effects of decisions are decried, but decision-makers themselves are rarely addressed implicitly or explicitly.

<sup>31</sup> According to a May 2010 exposé in the secularist Francophone weekly *Tel Quel*, Mawazine now costs over roughly \$12.5 million/year. According to official figures, Mawazine's budget is \$3.4 million (Akalay et al.: 20). The leaders of two major banks, the recently privatized Maroc Telecom, and an investment group donate an estimated 4.3 million MAD yearly. Foreign sponsors include Accor and Veolia, two European companies with major investments in Morocco from hotels and buses, respectively, and an Emirati-owned energy company called Jlec, which runs a concession provided by the Moroccan government around the port al-Jorf al-Asfar on the Southern Atlantic coast (26). In addition, companies under the banner of Omnium Nord-Africain, a holding company owned by King Mohamed VI and his family, also sponsor Mawazine, as they announce through ads and festival press materials. Finally, Akalay et al. point out that several companies still partially or completely owned by the state (rather than the royal family's personal holdings), such as Royal Air Maroc, Office National des Chemins de Fer, and Caisse de Dépôt et de Gestion (an investment bank the article calls "the financial arm of the state"), contribute to the festival. In its complaints, *Tel Quel* demonstrates that a different standard for public spectacles and public spending previously existed, in which festivals were conceptualized as gifts to the public, rather than enterprises that potentially profit off Moroccan festival goers, nor as investments into the nation's reputation and international social capital.

<sup>32</sup> During my 2010 visit to the Villa Des Arts the Tangier-based radio station Medi1 had also set up camp next door to Radio Mawazine.

<sup>33</sup> From an address to the 27<sup>th</sup> edition of the International Cultural Forum, Asilah, Morocco, August 5, 2005.

<sup>34</sup> Previous years' collaborations included guitarist Al Di Meola and Moroccan guitarist Said Chraïbi (2009 program); in 2010 they included Chinese *pipa* soloist Liu Fang and Moroccan 'oud soloist Driss el-Maloumi (2010 program). I discuss part of Bigg's and Sosa's performance in chapter five.

<sup>35</sup> On different nights the 2010 edition included Amazight vocalist Aïcha Tachinwit, who started her career dancing with Tashelhit-speaking itinerant musicians known as *rwais* (2010 program: 48, Schuyler 1984); an evening dedicated to contemporary performers of "Ghiwanien" music, including Bnat al-Ghiwane (Ghiwane Girls) and Mesnaoua (a Gnawa-oriented fusion band started by relatives of Nass el-Ghiwane vocalist Larbi Batma); and Rabat-based Gnawa *ma' allem* Hamid el-Kasri and his ensemble.

<sup>36</sup> My translation from Derija. Note that the styles Rachid picks to describe Hakmin's affiliation with Moroccan musical heritage are the same musics widely recognized as introduced into the popular arena by Nass el-Ghiwane, as I described in chapter two.

<sup>37</sup> Currently, the rules for Jil Mawazine specify that contestants' music—including the instrumentals emcees use—must be original.

<sup>38</sup> Asked about the choice to drop rock and metal from the competition in 2010, musicologist and longtime jury president Ahmed Aydoun justified the change with a mix of aesthetic and organizational preferences:

“...rock necessitates a strong understanding [*une bonne réflexion*] both to include a Moroccan touch, and to approach international norms. And when during each edition, we notice a “non-competition” (one group who stands out from the beginning...), one must review the method” (Tancrez 2010, my translation).

For Aydoun, winning rock performances demonstrated the same combination of “Moroccan” specificity and “international” competitiveness desired and promoted by Festival Mawazine itself.

<sup>39</sup> Interview, Moulay Amine Idrissi, Brooklyn-Fes, Nov. 10 2012.

<sup>40</sup> Episode 20, first aired summer 2011. My translation from Derija.

<sup>41</sup> I have indicated Amine's orthography in English here by leaving my corrections in brackets.

<sup>42</sup> Allali is not only a journalist and editorialist, frequently writing for TelQuel and other Francophone outlets, but also the lead vocalist for Casaoui rock band Hoba Hoba Spirit.

<sup>43</sup> My edition of the *Lonely Planet* guide to Morocco warns its readers, “For the traveller it can be a pretty workaday place to visit and for its size has a dearth of traditional tourist attractions” (2007: 91).

<sup>44</sup> Foreigners are a common sight in Casablanca, but non-Moroccan tourists are not expected to attend the Festival for its own sake. Members of the tourism and hospitality industries have different expectations for international tourists' tolerances and abilities than in Fes. In 2008, I spent two nights during the Festival de Casablanca in a downtown hotel by myself. Upon learning that I planned to attend a b-boy showcase in a neighborhood outside the city center (as defined by limited tourist-oriented maps), the owner of the hotel, who had checked me in, declared the area off-limits. He demonstrated this by taking a Festival brochure from the top of the stack on the counter, explaining which stages were in walking distance of the hotel, and drawing large Xs through the rest of them. Eventually he insisted on driving me to the concert he suggested I see—minutes away, at the Place Rachidi just south of the central square in the heart of downtown—in the hotel van so that he could persuade the security staff to let me into the VIP section. Three hip hop groups were performing at Place Rachidi that evening, including two Casablancon ensembles who opened for the evening's headliner, progressive Lebanese emcee Rayess Bek.

<sup>45</sup> See table 1.

<sup>46</sup> In accordance with the goals set out in Vision 2010, the Regional Tourism Advisory Board of Casablanca (le Conseil Regionale du Tourisme de Casablanca, or the CRT) established in 2004 the "Regional Tourism Development Program," a public-private plan to develop the tourist attractions and infrastructure of the city called "Casablanca 2012." Under the plan, both the Casa Marina, formerly an industrial zone, and the low-income neighborhood in el-Hank were to be recreated as tourist destinations, both featuring "hotel units (of 4 and 5 stars), a commercial mall, entertainment facilities, a commercial zone and office and residential buildings" (CRT 2006: 49).

<sup>47</sup> And indeed, women with whom I would normally attend concerts preferred not to go to el-Hank, even to see Missy Elliot in 2010.

<sup>48</sup> See description of this location below and in chapter 3.

<sup>49</sup> The foregoing notwithstanding, Abkari's perspective and the state's here are aligned; both reject the simplistic "cultural imperialism" (*al-ghawz al-fikri*) argument, first circulated by journalists and writers identified with Egypt's Muslim Brotherhood in the 1960s, but for different reasons.

<sup>50</sup> Brinner describes Jamal Sa'id making a similar division between "the West" and Westernized tastes (represented by Egyptian pop), and that of older Palestinians (and implicitly "Arabs" more generally), in his discussion of young Palestinians' changing tastes (2009: 49). Moroccan hip hop musickers, despite their own claims, probably do not represent the tastes of the majority of their generation--or at least, most urban Moroccan youths' tastes are not limited to hip hop and international pop.

<sup>51</sup> L'Kounache 2006: 23.

<sup>52</sup> This was much more necessary before Boulevard's own success. Occasionally pro-Boulevard media continues to discuss the Festival and the Tremplin as if they are still as isolated as they were in 1999. In reference to a photo of three Moroccan youth fully decked out in studded vests, artfully torn skinny plaid pants, punk band t-shirts, and multicolored mohawks, reporter Ayla Mrabet (who has covered the culture beat in Casablanca for years) remarks: "At the COC [stadium], no one judges them, except perhaps the [private] security guys, who confiscate [their] studded belts in order to avoid [the potential for] damage" (2010a: 57).

<sup>53</sup> The F.O.L. was originally a branch of a French organization established in Casablanca in 1954 just before the end of the Protectorate, but by 1999 was independent (Callen 2006: 124 note 45).

<sup>54</sup> I clearly remember hearing “we make a pause” rather than “you make a pause” and being struck by the sense of collaboration in Soultana’s teacherly direction. This friendly advice and instruction between generations was not limited to the female members of the network (any more than competition was limited to male members).

<sup>55</sup> It should be noted that the City of Casablanca, and the mayoralty, is a government body distinct from the Wilaya of Casablanca. The *Wilaya* (Ar. lit. state; ministry) is a governmental body under the control of the Ministry of the Interior which covers the city and the surrounding suburbs and rural areas. As such, it is the prototype for the state’s planned provincialization of the nation. Under the provincialization plan, the nation will be divided into several different regions with some government functions devolved to each province.

<sup>56</sup> One longtime Casablancon music producer dismissed the organizers of Boulevard as poor handlers of money in general, claiming that Merhari “bought a 8000 MAD apartment” with the 2009 gift, and used “what was left” on Boultek (p.c. May 2011, Casablanca). This unverifiable gossip demonstrates some of the negative repercussions for the Boulevard organizers of appearing to contradict their own ideals.

<sup>57</sup> In addition to donating to EAC-L’Boulvart, the Embassy intervenes in the integrated social networks of hip hop and rock music in Morocco in two other major ways: by nominating influential musickers, including radio deejays, performing artists, and organizers, to the International Visitor Leadership Program (IVLP); and by bringing American musicians to Morocco to perform, collaborate, and lead workshops through Embassy and Consulate funds or through the American Voices Abroad program (formerly known as the Rhythm Road program), a direct descendant of the “Jazz Ambassadors” program of the 1950s-1960s.

<sup>58</sup> interview Abdelkrim Raddadi, Casablanca, February 18 2010; interview Matthew Long, Rabat, March 23 2010.

<sup>59</sup> p.c., Mohammed Guedira, Matthew Long, and Abdelkrim Raddadi, Rabat, November 18 2009.

<sup>60</sup> As mentioned earlier, it is also easier to put that understanding into practice in Casablanca because it is still considered to be outside the traditional circuit visited by international tourists.

## Chapter Five

### From Subject to Citizen: Embodied Listening, Ethical Citizenship, and the Formation of a Hip Hop Counterpublic

I have been describing the social connections between Moroccan hip hop musickers as a network. However, while conceptualizing the varied ways musickers are connected translocally as a network can tell us how musickers connect, when, and to whom, it does not describe the qualities of those connections. Once established, Moroccan hip hop musickers' socio-musical networks are flexible, dynamic, and influential; a vibrant resource. But are they distinct in values or orientations from other Moroccans in the same age group or urban areas? What impact might the musical, social, and ethical preferences which Moroccan hip hop musickers develop across their networks have on the national public? In this chapter, I theorize musickers' socio-musical networks as a counterpublic: an arena of exchange that is open to the nation-state's general arenas of public discourse but also cuts against them in certain ways. I discuss urban musickers engaging with and performing a particular national identity, publicly exploring what it means to be a youthful Muslim Moroccan today, through the use of the transnational hip hop tradition.

Reference to lyrics alone, in which emcees look critically at police brutality, unemployment, increasing economic inequality, corrupt elected officials, and other issues, might suggest that the counterpublic enabled by hip hop arts helps to counter the state's extensive authority, or at least its handling of crucial socio-economic concerns. However, an analysis of live hip hop performances shows that the emergent hip hop counterpublic joins its structural critiques to a discourse on personal responsibility, shifting the response to these issues from the terrain of the political to that of the personal. I will argue that this formation counters previously important notions of what constitutes political action. By casting solutions to these problems in ethical terms, hip hop performances invoke the rights and responsibilities of individual citizens, rather than older political or class-based solidarities, as the locus of action. This encourages the audience member to take him- or herself as the terrain of change and improvement.<sup>1</sup> Yet as I will discuss, audience members' public, collective audition is central to the effectiveness of this countermovement into the interior and the affective.

I will suggest that this complicates our understanding of the relationship between counterpublics, the agency of members of such publics, and the state. In this case, the Moroccan state is not simply co-opting naive hip hop artists via a few relatively lucrative festival performances; hip hop artists are not simply resisting the norms or policies enforced via state power. By practicing a politics of audibility, and embracing a language of personal responsibility and individual rights, musicians and fans discipline themselves in a model of engaged and educated citizenry at both the intellectual and sensory levels. In making a distinct break from earlier forms of solidarity, this supports and is supported by changing incentives and aspirations under neoliberalization. Thinking through this may open up ways of considering multiple forms of subjectivation under actually existing neoliberalization—simultaneously “from above” and “from below.”<sup>2</sup>

To do this, I adapt Charles Hirschkind's particular formulation of a counterpublic, one which is already distinct from earlier applications of the term (2006). Drawing from Hirschkind and

Michael Warner (2002), I define a counterpublic here as a network addressed by local and translocal hip hop media which uses some of the same media infrastructure as a national public sphere, but is not congruent with that sphere's membership, media consumption, or forms of expression. In order to show why Hirschkind's counterpublic is useful, I start by discussing some of the issues around applying the concept of the public sphere to the Arabo-Muslim world. The promises and problems of this usage are then brought into further relief when one considers the nature of the utterances circulating in Moroccan hip hop networks. Because hip hop songs, like all musical performances with text, carry both lexical and non-lexical meanings, listeners engage with them with both their minds and their bodies. However, the implications of active listening, always an unavoidably embodied activity, are the subject of a long tradition of debate within Islamic thought. In the first section of the chapter, I set out the terms of these theoretical engagements.

In the second section of the chapter, I discuss the ways musickers participate in the counterpublic by describing interactions between artists and audiences in two live performances. I take up and expand John Bealle's reflections on musicians' "stage talk," the banter between themselves and their audiences, in order to describe the affective potential of interactions between hip hop emcees, deejays, and their audiences (or "*publics*," as musickers would say, borrowing the French term). The musickers I know value hip hop as the pre-eminent genre available to them for teaching and expressing a critical perspective, and this critical perspective is vital to their conceptions of a good citizen. Alongside their attempts to inculcate a critical perspective within their audiences, I show that musickers, like other Moroccans, take for granted a certain ground of pious expression and Muslim identification as something common to all Moroccans and to Moroccan public life; in an apparent paradox, this enculturation into Muslim identity allows a wide spectrum of individual commitments and levels of piety to flourish.

In concert with other forces around them, musickers shape themselves and others within their networks to respond in certain ways and value certain approaches; these in turn help to form a counterpublic that circulates debates, ideas, and music in ways that reflect those approaches. To the extent that hip hop artists' comportments and arguments are taken up by their audiences—the amateur musicians, listeners, tastemakers, and organizers that I refer to together with performing artists as "musickers"—these expressions help to articulate an alternative, youthful Moroccan subject.

In the third section, I argue that behind text and actions that seek to delineate a contemporary Moroccan Muslim identity lie concerns about how to conceptualize citizenship in the neoliberal moment. In particular, when hip hop musickers discuss contested issues like inequality, unemployment, personal responsibility, violence, and one's expectations of the state, they work out an ethically informed political response to a generational shift in governance framed and oriented by neoliberalization. I suggest that in the ways hip hop musickers use their counterpublic for contestation, but not necessarily resistance, we can locate outlines of an emergent neoliberal subjectivity—one in which commitments to critical engagement and to representations of national identity are no less sincerely felt because of musickers' entanglements with and reproductions of neoliberal governmentality.

## Listening and Agency in the Public Sphere

### *counterpublics*

In seeking to theorize Moroccan hip hop networks as a counterpublic, I draw primarily from Charles Hirschkind's reformulation of the counterpublic concept for use in his research into Islamic Revival communities' circulation of sermon cassettes in contemporary Cairo (2006). For Hirschkind, the counterpublic of Cairene Islamic activists (*du'at*, sing. *da'iya*, "callers" to Islam) incorporates both "disciplinary" religious speech and "deliberative" Habermasian reasoning in an arena where individuals publicly refine their practice of Islamically acceptable comportment and sociability (2006: 106, 141-142). In order to appear normative rather than simply dominant, the bourgeois public sphere builds in what he calls a "structural blindness" to "the pragmatics of its speech forms: the genres, stylistic elements, citational resources, gestural codes, and so on that make a discourse intelligible to *specific people inhabiting certain conditions of knowledge and learning*" (2006: 106, emphasis mine). Further, the bourgeois public sphere and its members, like those of other publics, do not acknowledge the affective dimension of those pragmatics and the impact of the non-lexical conditions of their delivery on the sensorium. Yet the pragmatics, the affective impact, and the ability to derive meaning from both are mapped onto, and made possible by, socio-economic formations. The counterpublic Hirschkind discusses, by contrast, has developed meta-discourses about the speech pragmatics of Muslim preachers (*khuṭaba'*, sing. *khaṭīb*) and the listening pragmatics of audiences.

For Hirschkind, this counterpublic is not merely "counter" to the state or its policies. Instead, it is grounded in the same national frame as other publics, and made possible by the nation-state: "the position of utterance [the *da'iya*] inhabits and the contestatory discourse he articulates have been shaped by the concepts and institutions of national political life. I have used the notion of counterpublic precisely to register the relationship of complementarity and interdependence linking this arena to the nation" (Hirschkind 2006: 118). One reason Hirschkind can build this picture of such a contingent counterpublic—one that seems at times to oppose or to be autonomous from the state, but also is entwined with it, sparking engagement from all kinds of Egyptian citizens and offering essential services to lower-income citizens—is that the "substrate" of affective and physical reactions to effective religious speech is shared by most Muslims. Hirschkind turns to a series of phenomenological perspectives, including those of Marcel Jousse, to enumerate these reactions and argue that they underpin not just the desire, but the ability, to comprehend and incorporate religious mandates.<sup>3</sup> The "substrate" embodies (literally) the distribution or valuation of the senses, rather than the sensible, learned by Muslims (Rancière 2004). For the *da'iya*, listening to cassette sermons is a technology of the self that continues to hone and discipline listening skills, producing more refined affective responses.

These techniques and responses in turn produce a subject that can participate appropriately in the *da'wa* counterpublic, armed with knowledges of Muslim theology and how to reason through and argue over theological points. Though he draws from Foucault in allowing that cassette sermon listening forms part of a practice of care for the self, Hirschkind is primarily engaged with revealing the physicality that makes such self-care possible—that makes it possible for

practices to promote internal shifts in emotions, conscious thought, and finally behaviors via the engaged sensorium.

This insight into the effects of attentive and properly disposed listening inform Hirschkind's use of the counterpublic. Below, I draw upon his formulation to suggest that practicing the physical and audible responses expected in hip hop performances inculcates the potential for alternative forms of public citizenship at the sensory and affective levels. In applying this formulation to a much different context, I am attempting to explore how Moroccan hip hop musickers, who are overwhelmingly Muslim and who live in a context that routinely conflates Moroccan citizenship with Muslim identification, enact a sense of belonging distinct from other Moroccan forms yet within normative local understandings of subject formation.<sup>4</sup>

In the examples below, the public setting for embodied listening is a condition of its efficacy. As Deborah Kapchan has demonstrated in a series of articles, group audition has the potential to shape meaning and reactions collectively (2008, 2009, 2010). In describing female Sufis' ensemble worship during *dhikr*, Kapchan suggests that initiates into sonic traditions experience performance, in part, as a pedagogy of listening.<sup>5</sup> As part of their enculturation into religiously and ethically significant modes of perception, audition, and communication, active listeners practice a complex of physical, aural, and conscious awareness with and through a group (Kapchan 2009 and 2010).

By making explicit the full sensorial and intellectual extent of participation, Kapchan underscores that meaning is available from many dimensions of the sound and performance of a musical work, including the lexical (lyrics), the syntactical (formal structures of tension and release in the melody, harmony, rhythm and timing of a work), the timbral, the visual, and the somatic-affective. Further, these dimensions are available simultaneously at the moment of performance. Learning through listening to the specific and unique sounds of a group, and those made within the texture of the group, is a distinct experience, arousing different sensorial responses than listening to a solo, or listening to anything—live or recorded—by oneself (2010).

Below, I apply to live performance Hirschkind's observation that "the practice of sermon listening is informed by those Islamic traditions of ethical cultivation that highlight the role of affective, kinesthetics, and gestural modalities of bodily experience within processes of ethical learning - those traditions, in other words, that take the sensorium as an object of pedagogy and ethical attunement" (84). To be clear, I am not suggesting that Muslim hip hop audiences consider consuming popular music in any way similar to listening to sermons or other explicitly religious soundings, no matter how pious the lyrics to hip hop songs might be. The vast majority of young Moroccan Muslims—regardless of the current extent of their religious practice—share a homogenous set of expectations around the powers of music and the role of listening in both sacred and profane contexts. Thus, their ability to learn through listening in performance, and to form a counterpublic around allegiance to hip hop arts, is based in part on shared affective responses and a shared belief *in* those affective responses. These expectations inform the role that pedagogical stage talk plays in performance, and in turn, the role that listening, responding, gesturing, and feeling has for the listener in accepting hip hop performers' lyrical and discursive arguments. The shared experience of being "an object of pedagogy and ethical attunement" whose sympathies are aroused by sensory information, especially the sonic, inspires the sorts of



sounds and actions performers use in stage talk and the reactions of those who listen and respond to it during performance.

Speaking very generally, scholars of Muslim-majority publics have sought to apply public-sphere theory despite the fundamental Habermasian presumption of democratic societies and bourgeois values in which religion is separated from public life. Public sphere research in majority-Muslim nation-states has often focused on the relationship between the public sphere and the circulation of particularly Islamic media, alternately characterizing that relationship as private religion irrupting into the modern public sphere, as religion countering the state's role in the public sphere (Anderson and Eickelman 2003), or as religion being reformulated as consumable entertainment via mass media (Eickelman and Salvatore 2002; cf. Meyer and Moors 2006, Shami 2009).

By discussing counterpublics, I do not presume to fit the spaces, sources, and circulation of public discourse in Morocco within Habermas' formulation of the liberal-bourgeois public sphere. Nancy Fraser stresses how deeply indebted to a "Westphalian-nationalist framework" are American and European commonsense expectations of a bourgeois public sphere (2005). Morocco's media infrastructure, including its print and televised press, lacks the recognized independence from state institutions and the shared language necessary to Habermas' national public sphere. In addition, classic public sphere theory has been criticized as "geared toward an understanding of rationality that excludes other possible registers of critique" (Meyer and Moors 2006: 4). Where rationality has been enculturated as the exclusive or the best-expressed property of the socially dominant group, dominated groups' particular expressions of resistance or critique have easily been coded as irrational (Fraser 1990).

Few Moroccan hip hop artists, and none of my central interlocutors, characterize their project as defining or redefining the role of Islam in public life.<sup>6</sup> Nevertheless, they invoke their religious identities and encourage others to do so in live public concerts. Further, performers do this not only through music but through direct engagement with the audience, whom they involve in the performance with a variety of tactics.

For the most part, in 2009-2010, Moroccan hip hop musickers shared with many other Moroccans an unexamined belief in what Saba Mahmood calls "the laminated character of Islamist-nationalist discourse" (2003: 838). Though not all would identify themselves aloud as "secular-oriented," many musickers demonstrated their assumption of "Islam as constitutive of the cultural terrain" in Morocco just as Mahmood suggests secularists do in Egypt (*ibid.*)<sup>7</sup>

While the counterpublic examples I analyze below display values and orientations that we might recognize as those of the liberal public sphere, these are predicated not on competition between rational arguments, but on the evaluation of morally normative and ethical speech acts. As I discuss further below, responsive, embodied listening to authoritative speech and music does significant ethical work within this culturally Muslim context. In Morocco, where Sufi *turuq* have historically been a powerful spiritual, cultural, and political force, music's ability to orient individual ethical dispositions is considered unproblematic by the majority.

Moreover, embodied listening can be not only participatory, as these examples show, but a creative and productive process. While a counterpublic "exists by virtue of being addressed," members of that counterpublic must also respond in modes appropriate to the media, the arena of

circulation, and perhaps most importantly, the poetics of the speech acts that form the counterpublic (Warner 2002: 67). If, as Warner would have it, public speech makes its persons into subjects of address in the process of addressing them, and teaches them a world-view in that process, then counterpublics must share some values, orientations, and non-lexical aspects of discourse—poetics—with dominant public culture (114). Hip hop artists with whom I have worked depend on this possibility when they describe themselves to me as “teachers,” “advocates,” or even “revolutionaries.”

In this way, the counterpublic formed by interaction with hip hop performers at live concerts shares a certain bedrock of expectations with the dominant or national public. However, addressing everyone within sonic reach of the live performance—and everyone reachable through radio or television appearances—does not make everyone part of the counterpublic. The primary criterion for membership in the hip hop counterpublic, instead, is self-identification as an addressee (Warner 2002: 77). Publicly available music and speech acts are understood as addressing multiple listeners, and referencing multiple other speech acts or media, even when accessed in solitude: “public speech... is heard (or read) *as* heard, not just by oneself but by others” (81, emphasis in original). By identifying, one immediately puts oneself into a relationship with others who identify as being addressed by this particular genre of music and all that it connotes. The counterpublic I theorize here is less similar to Fraser’s “subaltern counterpublic,” in that not all hip hop practitioners and fans are identified as subaltern members of the Moroccan population (Fraser 1990: 67-68), and more similar to the counterpublic depicted by Hirschkind, in that individual members of the counterpublic put themselves into relations with other listeners based on their belief in the ethical and aesthetic project of Moroccan hip hop arts. In a manner reminiscent of Warner, musickers characterize hip hop as a “rigorously argumentative and dialogic” genre of discourse. Having emerged from a liberal tradition, hip hop accords well with the “self-understanding” of liberal public spheres as spaces of rational and reasoned conversation (Warner 2002: 90).

What makes the counterpublic I am describing “counter”? What is it “counter” to? Meyer and Moors summarize Hirschkind’s intervention into the liberal modernism that underpins classic public-sphere theory: “As a counterpublic, the Islamic revival movement claims its own public space precisely by contesting liberal notions of publicity and the public sphere, and cannot be located within a dichotomy of tradition and modernity with Islam and the state at both sides of the opposition” (8). In this sense, the counterpublic Hirschkind describes forming for members of the Egyptian piety movement is not necessarily counter-state, though people active in that counterpublic may be anti-government or take positions counter to government positions. Instead, it is counter-liberalism. One outcome of its counter-liberal discourse is potential opposition to much of the political philosophy of the Mubarak era.

Following a similar logic, I describe a public that is not unified in the sense of being “anti-“ other Moroccan publics, the nation, or the state. The counterpublic I explore below does not counter the state’s role in Morocco’s neoliberalizing economy, nor the state’s fundamental organization as a parliamentary monarchy. In some ways it even expands and intensifies orientations the neoliberalizing state and the transnational hip hop tradition both encourage. Instead, the counterpublic I theorize here presents an alternative to older conceptions of

citizenship through its calls for critical participation in public life. It also presents an alternative to older conceptions of political action. I also theorize hip hop networks as a counterpublic precisely because the number of Moroccans, even among youth, with the access and enculturation to recognize themselves as addressed by public hip hop expressions is relatively small and specialized. In this sense it is “counter” to majority assumptions of what publics do and sound like. At the same time, during 2009-2010, hip hop musickers were given a national platform. If we were to view the hip hop counterpublic solely in terms of the majority of its members’ class locations, then, as Jesse Shipley puts it in his discussion of hip hop entrepreneurship in Ghana, “...this is a public imagined as marginal even as it dominates public discourse” (2009: 661).

*smaʿ*

In Morocco, the verb *smaʿ* is used to indicate hearing or listening across the spectrum of sacred and profane musical contexts. One may listen attentively and with an open mind, or heart (Hirschkind 2006: 79, Kapchan 2009: 12), whether one is listening to music or to sacred sound considered non-musical. In Sufi contexts, the noun form *samaʿ* is sometimes translated as “spiritual audition” (Kurdjian 2004 cited in Kapchan 2008); it can also refer to the sounds to which one listens, including recitation and “musical renderings” during *dhikr* (remembrance) ceremonies (Al-Faruqi 1980: 58). Given the historic and contemporary importance of Sufi *ṭuruq* (lit. paths; brotherhoods) in Moroccan life, the philosophy, ethical significance, and practice of active listening identified with Sufism continue to impact Moroccan cultural traditions around listening.

In the transnational Islamic context, Kristina Nelson refers to the ongoing debate amongst Muslims over the morality of musical audition as the “*samaʿ* polemic.” While the scriptural basis for considering most musical practices and instruments forbidden is continually contested, all sides of the debate share the notion that music and sound can deeply affect the listener for good or for ill, causing him (usually him) to feel a certain way or become disposed to certain acts (Nelson 2001).<sup>8</sup> Lois Al-Faruqi points out the historic low status of secular musical genres, traditionally associated with inappropriate or immoral activities such as drinking, gambling, or mixed-sex entertainment (1980: 59). For those who refuse to disassociate music-making and music-makers from these activities, this reinforces the notion that music is a powerful and seductive force, capable of bypassing rational thought in its work on the emotions and the sensorium.

Defenses of musical audition, often derived from the work of Sufi theologians Ibn ʿArabī and Abu Ḥamid al-Ghazālī, argue that this power can be decoupled from assumptions about the moral health of contexts in which instruments other than the male voice and drums (which are generally accepted by contemporary conservative Muslims) were once heard. Instead, the ethical benefits of any musical performance are determined by the intention (*niyya*) and moral health of the individual listener.<sup>9</sup> Music and sound can enhance, even incite, the proper disposition of the active listener in the right context.

Musical sound of a religious nature permeates everyday life in Morocco. Music derived from, or performed by members of, Sufi *ṭuruq* is used to celebrate milestones such as graduation or marriage, or heard at *muwasem*, festivals celebrating the life and death of Muslim saints. Active, knowledgeable, and embodied listening is at the center of *dhikr* and the musical ceremonies (*ḥilat*) of the Gnawa (cf. Kapchan 2007, Fuson 2009). Some of this musical sound has extraordinary efficacy in moving properly disposed listeners into trance and trance-like states known as *al-ḥal* or *al-jedba*.<sup>10</sup>

At the same time, explicitly non-sacred music is also considered capable of moving individuals—or more precisely, groups of individuals—into differential emotional states in the right settings. In the world of *ṭarab*, a set of linked instrumental forms without explicit religious content, dedicated listeners are seen as crucial to the performance experience for all parties. As Charles Hirschkind puts it, “in the Arabo-Islamic tradition... listener and performer form an interdependent dyad in which the former is often seen to... make possible the performance of the latter” (2006: 35). More importantly, they are considered particularly predisposed to, or to have well-developed faculties for, emotional responses to music and sound (Racy 2003: 40-41). Savvy listeners demonstrate and enhance this heightened experience of listening for the entire audience by contributing their own verbal and physical expressions to the performance (ibid).

In Morocco, the terms *al-ḥal* and *al-jedba* have both sacred and secular uses; the secular signifieds echo or acknowledge the sacred character of the same terms in different contexts. *Nashāt* (lit. liveliness, activity) connotes a state of excitement during live musical performance related to, but distinct from, trance. Moroccan cultural theorist Lahcen Haddad traces the genealogy of *nashāt*'s distance from both sacred performance and class respectability, writing that

“while on the surface *nashāt* looks like a profane practice that grew out of such sacred performances as *ḥal* and *jedba*, it partakes more of a popular and plebeian version of *ḥal* which is itself a maraboutic version of the learned... Sufi notion of *ḥulul* (i.e. the transcendence of the physical state of being and the bodily communication with... the Supreme Being...)” (2009: 199).

Often associated with *sheikhāt*, female singers of the genre *al-‘aita*, who sing and dance in spaces coded as male, *nashāt* carries connotations of intoxication, transgression, and liminality expressed through sexualized movement and dance (Haddad 2009, Kapchan 2003).

Deborah Kapchan identifies sensory components that contribute to *nashāt* states, including fast-paced, rhythmic music, high volume, taste, smell, and movements either sexualized or from “an economy of trance gestures” (2003: 262-3). Like the transnational tradition, Moroccan hip hop relies on a combination of static, cyclical instrumental rhythms and highly variable vocal rhythms from the emcee, who often establishes patterns that cut across or against the four-beat pulse. Though some local beatmakers incorporate traditional Moroccan timbres (in instrumental samples), melodic gestures, or rhythms, these songs are in the minority. Some of these materials may be associated with the musics that accompany altered states, even though they do not promote those states in their new musical context.<sup>11</sup>

Gestures that signify the excessive bodily engagement of *nashāt* are known to nearly all Moroccans. While I have seen young men perform these gestures in a self-consciously distancing and humorous way at *ch'abi* (“popular” song) or even rock concerts, I have never seen someone do so during a hip hop performance. Even ironic use of the shaking shoulders and hips, the outstretched arms of *sheikhāt* dancers during a hip hop concert might render hip hop more disreputable to some, undercutting its critical force. Audience members and musicians alike would be unlikely to seriously enact the experience of *nashāt* in a public, mixed-class, mixed-gender environment. For women especially, doing so would signify willfully disregarding gendered notions of public honor and respectability, as well as the protections they offer (Kapchan 2003).

Because profane musical genres are always perceived as being so close, conceptually, to sexualization—especially rhythmically intricate, dance-inciting genres such as *'aita* and *ch'abi*—it is important that Moroccan hip hop performances express their engagement through other, foreign gestures and comportments, without locally sexualized or disreputable connotations. As I will describe more fully below, local hip hop performance practice is developing its own economy of movement that can signify intensely engaged and embodied listening without fitting into established hierarchies of respectability. Similarly, where *nashāt* is “intricately related to the performance of gender and class relations,” hip hop’s own specified gender and class relations vis-a-vis the general population were not yet set in stone during my research, and this provided an opportunity to reach those willing to listen to its foreign aesthetic with unprecedented critical force (Kapchan 2003: 263).

Active listening requires some knowledge of the aesthetics and forms of a given performance, and is expected to manifest in physical, emotional, and affective reactions. Moroccan hip hop artists frequently admonish their audiences to listen carefully with the imperative *sm'* (“listen!”), live or interjected over the eight-measure instrumental introduction to a song. The musical aesthetic employed in hip hop is heard as quite far removed from that of *tarab* or *ch'abi*, and certainly from Sufi *dhikr* and song. However, the deeply enculturated connection between listening in ways well educated in the subtleties and semantics of the genre and listening with emotional responsiveness and a certain ethical disposition is shared by nearly all the participants at Moroccan hip hop performances.

As the foregoing demonstrates, the practice of embodied listening underpins the power of music and sound across the spectrum of sacred and profane settings. Embodied listening engages not only the ears and the mind, but the limbs and the pulse, the senses of balance and proprioception. It does not have to involve movement or dance, but frequently incites these, which in turn provide more sensory feedback and heighten the listening experience. Across sacred and profane contexts, Moroccans of all regions, genders, and classes credit live musical performance with the power to move bodies and transform mental and emotional states. This way of thinking about the impact of listening on the brain, body, and heart underpins the hip hop musical project just as it does other popular music performance in Morocco. In bringing together a number of scholarly observations on the character and quality of listening in Muslim cultural contexts, and in particular in the contexts of musical traditions that range from explicitly devotional to spiritually-informed to profane, I am seeking to apply the broad expectations that

Muslim listeners grow up with around the efficacy of music and sound, and around the self-care that can be undertaken by listening, to a non-religious (not to say “secular”) musical context.<sup>12</sup>

In the next section, Hirschkind’s and Kapchan’s recent work on listening informs my application of the notion of embodied listening to hip hop performance. The examples I discuss below focus on Moroccan hip hop musicians’ “stage talk” to argue that performers and audiences co-construct a counterpublic with both discursive and affective impact through their responses to music and sound. Within the transnational hip hop tradition, performers encourage audiences’ audible and physical participation through stage talk. John Bealle (1993) suggests that stage talk, including addresses to the audience and between musicians, allows musicians to orient the interpretive frame of the performance. Performers “exploit...conversational speech,” as opposed to rehearsed speech or sung text, “to make sincere claims regarding the framing of expressive...performance” (1993: 64). In the analysis below, I expand upon Bealle’s formulation to encompass gestural and sonic, as well as lexical, dimensions of stage talks’ performative (or illocutionary) force (Austin 1975). During a hip hop performance, stage talk accomplishes several things, not least the confirmation of a shared affect through exhortations to specific movements and call-and-response techniques. Moroccan hip hop performers use stage talk in these ways, but they also address the audience in a pedagogical mode, with exegesis on the upcoming song or a cappella renditions of their lyrics.

How does pedagogical stage talk, in particular, enable audiences to learn through listening (Kapchan 2010) in performances that, while not framed as sacred, refer to ideals of conduct grounded in Islamic ethics? I argue that learning through listening *together* enables practitioners to create a hip hop counterpublic that is at once ethical and open to wide variations in expressions of piety. Examples from live performances show that Moroccan hip hop musicians’ stage talk simultaneously educates and disciplines the audience, providing models of “authentic” hip hop comportment while orienting the audience’s listening in a manner consistent with the position on music most prevalent amongst Moroccan Muslims. In the context of spiritual and cultural traditions in which embodied listening does significant ethical work, learning to participate in the discourse performers’ stage talk invokes allows musicians and audience members alike to undertake the affective work necessary to form a counterpublic, however ephemeral, with its own comportment, expressions, and values.

Among other aspects, these examples demonstrate the gendered quality of counterpublics. Sultana’s case shows that in the domain of gender differentiations, the counterpublic shares many assumptions with the dominant expressions of gender relations and proper gendered behavior, while allowing more space for alternative behaviors at the same time.

These examples also explore the relation between the affective potential of music and sound, the collective experience at live concerts, and the actions or changes conceptualized at the level of the individual. The semiotics of musical style is also important to this relationship, to who speaks to the biggest audiences in the public sphere, and to who is influential in the counterpublic. Yet this does not fall into “commercial” versus “underground,” as in the US context, or as in other contexts within which the formal music industry has a comprehensive hold on hip hop expressions. Instead, a politics of style ensues in which an emcee authenticates him or herself to the audience through critiques grounded in shared Muslim ethics.

In the common Anglophone discourse about publics from which the transnational hip hop tradition takes its own guiding metaphors, "...participation means being able to speak 'in one's own voice,' thereby simultaneously constructing and expressing one's cultural identity through idiom and style" (Fraser 1990: 69). As Hirschkind stresses in articulating the orientations of the counterpublic through members' affective reasoning and somatic experiences, voice—what Jean-Luc Nancy calls "timbre" (2007: 39-42)—becomes even more important in a world of implicitly competing counterpublics.

Finally, the examples below highlight the ultimately quietist nature of the hip hop counterpublic. Messages circulated in the hip hop counterpublic may well be *contestatory* of particulars without being *oppositional* to dominant politics or philosophies (Fraser 1990: 67). To make this distinction between contestatory speech and resistant actions is not to suggest any of my interlocutors are insincere about their critiques of self, society, or institutions. Indeed, their sincerity, their insightful systemic critiques, and their lack of genuine resistance to the prevailing neoliberalizing order poses questions about the limits of commonly accepted conceptions of agency. I am concerned to interrogate agency within neoliberal governmentality at that nexus.

### Two Live Performances

The two examples that follow are drawn from video taken at concerts in Summer 2010. I have chosen examples of male and female performers in two different cities in order to place both in a broader context. In closely describing audiences' reactions as well as performers' expressions, I deliberately analyze audience participation as performance, as an essential part of the "musicking" event (Small 1998).

Multiple authentications are at work for Moroccan hip hop musicians and fans, and especially for the earliest generation of performers. As adherents to a foreign cultural form, the eldest generation of hip hop musicians is continually concerned with demonstrating their competency in hip hop arts and their authentic reproduction of those arts to both local and international audiences.<sup>13</sup> Simultaneously, in both local and transnational contexts, Moroccan identity is often conflated with Muslim faith. Precisely because hip hop is foreign, musicians and fans must authenticate their own Moroccanness despite, or ideally through, their participation in hip hop arts. Both examples below also demonstrate a third authentication, in which musicians take a principled stand on a consequential issue, proactively speaking against powerful groups represented in their songs.

On Tuesday, July 20, 2010, I attended a special concert in Meknes' Place al-Hedim. The pioneering Meknessi group H-Kayne was the only band performing that evening; with a full calendar of commitments at festivals in and beyond Morocco, this was to be their only concert in their home city all summer long.<sup>14</sup> The open square of Place al-Hedim, today surrounded by cafés, souvenir stalls, and Bab al-Mansour, a decorated gate built under the 17<sup>th</sup>-century Sultan Moulay Ismail (reigned 1672-1727), is the heart of the Meknes medina.<sup>15</sup> Along the medina wall on the long northwestern side of the of Place a full outdoor stage had been erected with all the essentials: PAR lights flashed colored beams around the stage, tents for the artists and VIPs clustered to either side of the stage, and modular metal fencing stretched from behind the tents

towards the sound tent perhaps two hundred feet away, carving out a space for favored guests and press. As the audience packed several bodies deep next to the fence, they made the VIP space appear even larger and emptier by comparison. Three different security forces lined the fence from the VIP side.

Under a vinyl banner reading “International Festival of Oualili,” Khalid Douache (a.k.a. DJ Key) of H-Kayne was readying his equipment for the performance.<sup>16</sup> As a music video director, producer, and professional deejay who tours on his own name as well as a member of the group, Douache takes a more active role in performance than many other Moroccan groups’ deejays. As the last hint of twilight faded from the sky, he launched into a dizzying sequence of musical citations, scratching on and combining two different recordings to create the new phrase “H-Kayne the underground” (in English). The hometown audience responded with full-throated cheers as he played famous snippets from the band’s first album, *1426* (2005). After two lines of the chorus from one song, “Cambo,” he switched seamlessly to the instrumental introduction to their best-known song, “Issawa Style.” Waves of arms flew up into the air, and the sea of bodies seemed to ripple as young men jumped up and down in delighted recognition.

With the melody to “Issawa Style” playing through his Serato software on both vinyl discs, DJ Key juggled the tune between turntables, quickly looping smaller and smaller sections of the melody, then letting the whole four-measure phrase play out on the right-hand turntable while slowly backspinning the other at full volume. The brief pause between the end of the phrase and the next four measures seemed to hang in the air. Then, just as expected, the second phrase of the recorded introduction—which added sampled hand drums and a pulsating bass line to the tenuto synthesized strings—began, provoking a roar from the crowd. At concert volume, the lowest bass notes fuzzed and crackled; the drums seemed to resound within my chest.

The image shows a musical score for two songs. The first system is for the chorus of "Cambo" in 4/4 time, with lyrics "We-lo, ma hm we-lo" and an annotation "audience: Cam-bo!". The second system is an instrumental introduction for "Issawa Style" in 4/4 time, marked "accelerando". The third system starts at measure 13, marked "a tempo", and includes a "backspin" annotation and the note "full 'Issawa Style' begins".



Fig. 10. DJ Key transitions from “Cambo” to “Issawa Style” and juggles consecutively smaller units of time. The top staff is the left-hand turntable, the bottom staff the right.

The four emcees of H-Kayne entered the stage one by one during their verses to the first full song of the concert. Next, they prepared to perform a new song critical of police tactics, “La Brigade” (2009). The four emcees’ and DJ Key’s communication during this interlude demonstrated their cohesion as an ensemble. One emcee, ‘Adil, greeted the audience as the other three retreated upstage. “Go on *a sādī* (sir),” he threw over his shoulder. This cued DJ Key to lay down a steady beat by scratching on a synthesized horn sound as ‘Adil engaged the crowd.

“Do we like the new album?” he asked over the beat, referring to the 2009 release *H-Kaynology: The Science of Reality*. As the audience responded, another emcee, Azzedine, walked downstage, raised his arms over his head and crossed his wrists as if handcuffed. Noticing, DJ Key paused his scratching to raise his arms, and emcee ‘Othman did the same, joining Azzedine at the edge of the stage and facing the wing of the audience spreading out to his left.

“Everyone come do some henna, right?” joked Azzedine with his hands outstretched. “Come on, put your hands up!”

“Everyone sing with us,” said ‘Othman to his left, pointing the microphone towards his face with his wrists still crossed above his head.

“Do you know it or not?” asked Azzedine. He glanced back at DJ Key, then started to slowly intone the chorus a cappella, with ‘Othman seamlessly joining in:

*There’s a brigade hanging around, taking people away  
“What’s your father’s name? Your mother’s name? Where do you live and where do you work?”  
God knows they’re still hanging around, [but] drugs are still sold  
I have nothing against the police, except when they’re outside the law<sup>17</sup>*

I turned and watched the security forces watch the audience. A few young men several feet back from the fence behind me raised their arms and chanted along. The navy-suited national police, the khaki-clothed soldiers, and the white-shirted hired security ringing the interior of the fence kept their faces blank and composed. Two women leaning on the fence in front of me looked on as the boys next to them propped their elbows on the top of the fence and crossed their wrists nonchalantly.

Suddenly, Azzedine broke off his recitation and called out “DJ Key!” Key immediately launched the “La Brigade” instrumental.

“Koushi! Koulshi!” (“Everyone! Everyone!”) yelled ‘Othman, and as the arpeggios of the opening four measures began, nearly all the audience members surrounding me threw up their crossed wrists and began bouncing to the beat. One young man on his friend’s shoulders pulled off his tshirt and whipped it around his head in time with the music. To my right, on the far side of the fence, a clump of perhaps ten young men were also propped up above the crowd, waving or pumping their crossed wrists in the air. On stage, all four emcees paced, nodding to the beat.

At the chorus, they snapped into action, lining up downstage and belting out those now-familiar lyrics in unison (see fig. 11).



Fig. 11. H-Kayne in concert, Meknes, July 20 2010.

Later that night, as we walked back to the Ville Nouvelle within the crowds streaming away from Place al-Hedim, I mentioned the powerful response to “La Brigade” to my concert companion. My friend, a Meknes resident in his early twenties who had introduced me to the band members a few months before, was as keyed up as I was from the experience. “It’s amazing, isn’t it?” he said. “They have been singing together since they were just kids in the neighborhood. They could have been singing that song right in front of the police. Now they are up there.”

H-Kayne’s stage talk demonstrated an assurance necessary to “gain control of the interpretive dimensions” of the performance while simultaneously redefining the performance as a collective activity (Bealle 1993: 63). Here I include DJ Key’s mix as stage talk. I consider the scratched prelude a speech act with its own musical syntax, within which the talented deejay creates meaning from the juxtaposition and rearrangement of his or her chosen materials and their local associations. Key’s improvisation upon a hip hop formula showcased abilities and training rare

amongst Moroccan deejays. By mixing together familiar H-Kayne songs, and by cutting together the spoken “H-Kayne” with the English phrase “the underground,” Key literally placed the local band’s recordings in conversation with other authoritative hip hop voices. This framed the performance stylistically and affectively, authenticating what was to come to the knowledgeable listener as well as exciting the crowd in general. Sound and musical style, not just lyrics, were central to the effect (and affect) of this performance. Aesthetic considerations were crucial to the establishing a relationship between H-Kayne’s musical authenticity and their authority to critique.

In this atmosphere the emcees then asked the audience to participate in the performance of a song that accuses the local police of brutalizing the population. Their physical and vocal participation, especially that of the youths nearest the stage, was witnessed by those same police and other security forces. My friend’s comment only hints at how radical this public endorsement of H-Kayne’s critique must appear to Moroccans who remember the “years of lead” during King Hassan II’s reign, a climate of routine political violence and forced disappearance (cf. Slyomovics 2005). By engaging in this critique with the band, audience members signal their endorsement of the band’s argument: as citizens, they have the right to be free of the corruption mentioned in the lyrics.

Soultana’s single “*Ṣawt Nssa*” (“Voice of a Woman”), released in early January 2010, paints a sympathetic portrait of “*bnāt al-zanqa*” or “street girls,” citing a complex of familial, social, and economic issues that might force a woman into prostitution. The text speaks directly to men, and indirectly to all genders, asking them to consider the harm they do in demonizing, patronizing, or ignoring women in need. After its initial launch on the Internet, “*Ṣawt Nssa*” was played on several radio stations with national reach throughout the spring and summer of 2010. The song does not yet have an official video, but several amateur videos have been made by fans. The first was viewed over 44,000 times from its upload January 9, 2010 to its eventual takedown by a pseudonymic fan in early 2012.<sup>18</sup>

The relatively slow tempo (184 bpm) and the clarity of Soultana’s speech throughout “*Ṣawt Nssa*” underscores her didactic approach to the song. In the second eight measures of each sixteen-measure verse, her flow, or word placement, interacts with the accent pattern in the synthesized strings. These tactics focus the listener’s attention on the text and its meaning from the first hearing.

The song’s immediate popularity, helped by Soultana’s clear text and declamation, fueled discussion that fell along predictably gendered lines. Among the many congratulatory comments left on YouTube page for the original fan-made video, commenter “*Silona01*” wrote “What voice? Allah yhedik [may God protect you]. Don’t stay with rap...stay in the kitchen, baby” (posted February 2010).<sup>19</sup>

A woman attempting to be a professional musician in contemporary Morocco faces several sources of discrimination. These are not avoided by the counterpublic. In her own field, Soultana already faces a lack of acceptance from hip hop fans. Some audience members, tastemakers, and musicians with whom I spoke during fieldwork categorically stated that women ought not to rap or cannot be good rappers for a variety of reasons. Soultana is recognized as an early practitioner

of Moroccan hip hop, and is supported by some well-respected Casablanca artists. However, for her and other, less-popular female hip hop artists the professional jealousies they experience are particularly inflected by gender bias. For many Moroccans, professional female performers of any genre continue to be associated with *sheikhāt*. Relative to this song, Soultana's determination to speak publicly about prostitution and to defend hypothetical prostitutes makes some people uncomfortable.

In Summer 2010, Soultana appeared on the talk show *Ajīāl* (Generations) to discuss her song. *Ajīāl* runs on 2M, a state-owned tv channel. In the quote below, she makes an accusation about *Jīl Mawāzine* ("Rhythms Generation"), a state-run music competition; the group won the top prize in the competition, funding and studio time to complete an album, in 2008.<sup>20</sup>

Host: So[...] Tigresse Flow is no longer together because of the Mawāzine album... because, perhaps, the cultural judges didn't choose to [provide the promised prize].

Soultana: They didn't choose it because...it was as if they said, "they're only girls...and after a while they'll go get married and they won't continue to perform much [maghadoush ybqaou fī al-finn bezzef]." I mean, that's what we heard here. [Calls and applause; Soultana laughs]

Host [pointing to co-host]: Well, poor Halima here's not married...[laughter from Halima]

Co-host: Naturally [this situation] is a mess [ghalta]. I mean, there are beginning female artists who insert themselves [ferdou nefshoum] [into the industry], they are married, they have children...[shakes her head]

Soultana: Exactly.

Host: Maybe it's a mistaken idea [fikra ghalta] but being in a musical group? That's tough. You'll sing until one of you gets married and moves to Oujda! [Laughter] Or she'll choose to get married one summer in Sefrou! You won't be doing any more singing! [Laughter] No problem. Okay...

Soultana and her former group members claim that the prize they were entitled to was never delivered. Their group was not the only winner of the competition to make such a claim between 2008, when they won the hip hop portion of the competition, and 2010. However, Soultana explicitly speculates that her all-female group was denied the prize because of their gender. The host of the show, Samid Ghalian, dismissed the applause Soultana received from the live audience, diverting attention to his co-host Halima. After Halima implicitly supports Soultana's interpretation with her response, Ghalian defuses the potential controversy and regains control over the conversation with the very rationale that Soultana suggests the competition organizers might have mobilized. His jokes about female artists marrying and giving up their careers, an expectation commonly held by both male and female Moroccans (including some artists), is bolstered by placing the hypothetical subjects in towns far to the east of Casablanca. By linking society's expectations for male spousal control to places considered remote backwater locations,

Ghalian manages to defend that control while distancing himself and the audience from the supposed enforcers of it, Moroccans outside major urban areas. Whatever their personal responses to Ghalian's jokes, Halima and Soultana are then obliged to laugh along with him in front of the audience.

The way Soultana handles the implicit and explicit criticism she receives as a female performer, especially now that she has chosen to address a controversial "women's" issue, is critical to her continued success. Her stage talk in a performance from Summer 2010 shows how she successfully manages audience interaction around "Şawt Nssa." Maroc Hit Parade is an all-day concert series held each June 21<sup>st</sup> since 2008 at a recently refurbished plaza on the Bouregreg River near downtown Rabat. Hit Parade advertises itself as presenting the "hottest" Moroccan urban musical acts "of the year", and on this day, the bill was nearly 50% hip hop. In addition, the concert featured fusion groups Darga and Mazagan, pop-punk band Gnawa Stone, and the rb-influenced vocalist Oum (see figure 12). Soultana, her younger brother, two friends, and I drove from Casablanca to Rabat for the concert in her parents' battered grey sedan. On the way, she explained the setlist—out of eight songs, "Şawt Nssa" would be performed last. Soultana's set was scheduled for late afternoon. Though the 21st fell on a Monday, the summer holidays made it possible for many students to attend the afternoon performances.



Fig. 12. Poster for Maroc Hit Parade, 2010.

Soultana's performance and addresses to the audience fall within parameters conventional to the transnational hip hop tradition and the Moroccan tradition in particular. Just before "Şawt Nssa," she performed her newest song, "Hiphopology," which defends and celebrates Moroccan hip hop culture. Soultana introduced this new song by placing herself in a position of authority; she referenced the roots of hip hop in the US and asserted that all the hip hop arts, including b-boying and b-girling (dance), deejaying, and graffiti, are well represented in Morocco. This assertion also served as a gloss on the lyrics of the upcoming song to aid the audience's

comprehension. This is especially important for members of the audience who are not already dedicated hip hop fans, and are not accustomed to the concentration required to understand fast-paced rapped speech in context.

Then, she debuted her latest track, in which the chorus goes:<sup>21</sup>

*To all the neighborhoods and all the kids who are struggling  
The culture of hip hop today is in our blood  
[It's] 2010, don't get worried  
[Because] real R.A.P. exists*

By locating “real rap” in struggle, she has shown her support for the amateur hip hop practitioners in her audience and reminded them that, like most Moroccan hip hop pioneers, she locates herself in the tradition of “conscious,” socio-politically active hip hop. More importantly, she has addressed everyone in the audience as members of a hip hop culture, using a powerful metaphor that binds the individual body to the bodies of the audience, and together to a particular genealogy of hip hop arts.

At this point, Soultana has arrived at the final song in her set in a strong position to make controversial statements. In her transition from “Hiphopology” to “Şawt Nssa,” Soultana used several techniques that I often witnessed during performances. First, over the applause, she asked the audience whether they had followed along: “Do you understand what we’re [Soultana, her hype man, and her DJ] are saying?” When she did not receive a sufficiently enthusiastic response, she repeated, “Did you understand or not?” Then, she repeated the lyrics from the chorus of “Hiphopology” a cappella in order to heighten their audibility, finishing with an emphatic “Because real R.A.P. exists *in Morocco*.” Like H-Kayne’s introduction to “La Brigade,” Soultana takes extra time to confirm to her satisfaction that audience members understood the text and its meaning.<sup>22</sup> In both examples, the emphasis on feedback demonstrates the artists’ concern to educate as well as entertain.

Next, she introduced “Şawt Nssa” and asked the audience to sing along, stating “I don’t want to sing it by myself.” The audience responded enthusiastically to the invitation to participate; people behind me shouted her name and called out their approval. Finally, Soultana cued the dj, headed to the apron of the stage, and appeared to begin—but suddenly stopped, waving to her DJ to cut the music and backspin to the start of the track. In this instance, she stopped to obtain a stand for her microphone; as in other examples of this technique, stopping the music (and playing the jarring noise of the backspin) heightens the dramatic effect of waiting for the song to begin. Standing behind the microphone stand, rather than striding across the stage as Moroccan emcees usually do, also emphasizes the seriousness of the subject matter.

In performance to an audience of native speakers, Soultana approaches this song as a collaborative effort. She asks people to sing along; she gives directions such as “everybody raise your hands” and “let’s go”; and throughout the performance, she gestures to underline important words and phrases. Perhaps most important, she points at the audience when the audience is implicated in her text. At the end of the first verse, during the line “hadi waḥda min bezzef wast al-mujtam” (“this [she] is one of many in the society”) she indicates “many” with a twirl of her

finger, then points strongly on “mujtam‘,” visually connecting the audience with the idea of Moroccan society and its citizenry. In the chorus, at the end of the second line, she sweeps her pointing hand across the audience during “waṣṣt bledī” (“in my country”), as if to remind the audience that her country is theirs as well. In the second repetition of the chorus she exaggerates her gesture at that phrase.

In the second verse, during the second line, she points again during the phrase “katchoufo fiha al-ḥem rkhīs kaytb‘a,” or “you see her as a cheap piece of meat one can sell,” bouncing her hand along with the beat in a manner that seems to point to several individuals. (“Katchoufo” uses the plural “you.”) Unlike in the recorded version of this song, in performance her voice rose to an uncharacteristic squeak on the word “rkhīs” (“cheap”), invoking the cadence of a woman scolding someone in Derija for a serious infraction. Sonically, this deviation from the recording indexes her outrage and a sense of shame--the action being spoken about here is morally wrong, and the people being spoken to ought to know this.

During this performance, some members of the crowd did in fact sing along to the verses as well as the chorus. A ponytailed young woman a few feet away mouthed with every word of the second verse, her eyes locked on the stage, hands clasped together in an apparently artless gesture of concentration, head and shoulders swaying slightly in time. The young man standing next to me mirrored Soultana’s gestures, pointing back at the stage as he chanted the couplet “she’s selling her body because you’re in the street [buying it]/ when she passes in front of you, you all act towards her like Muslims.” In performance, Soultana folds her arms across her chest and drops her chin on “Muslims,” miming a disapproving stance. Here “msalmin” does not refer to all Muslims in general, but particularly those who would respond to a prostitute with shaming and humiliation, rather than attending to her moral and financial needs with compassion.<sup>23</sup> With their shared gestures and speech, in this moment both Soultana and this member of the audience are accusing certain people of hypocrisy.

I have shown that Moroccan hip hop performers' modes and techniques of address to their audiences authenticate them in relation to both the transnational hip hop tradition and Moroccan Muslims’ ethical expectations for non-religious musical performance. Likewise, I have shown that audience members act in relation to that tradition and those expectations when they listen attentively and learn the appropriate responses to questions, directions, or encouragement from the stage. Moroccan hip hop fans learn how to *be* hip hop fans through their embodied listening practice. The value placed on authenticating acts in transnational hip hop culture, such as DJ Key’s technical abilities at the turntables or the statements about Moroccan hip hop that Soultana made in “Hiphopology,” is reinforced through the aesthetic of noisy, assertive participation encouraged at hip hop concerts.

Kapchan’s notion of an “initiation,” in which listeners learn to perceive and to react *together* as essential qualities of properly conditioned listening, informs my close analysis of these live performances (2010: 20). Hip hop artists’ sounds, gestures, comportment, and references become intelligible to the audience member through witnessing and imitating them with others. To embody these responses is also to learn to qualify and critique one’s own affective and emotional responses, to educate oneself in the nuances of performing one’s belonging as a member of the



audience or an amateur artist. It is particularly effective to be led through a sequence of appropriate embodied responses by a performer, or by co-members of the audience who can demonstrate their authenticity and thus their authority to teach the unspoken, unsung codes of the practice. Learning the gestures and comportments of the hip hop practitioner this way helps to convey the meanings and affective states accompanying such comportment more effectively than passive learning (such as by watching international hip hop stars' music videos). As Hirschkind argues of listeners to cassette sermons, "one is capable of hearing the sermon in its full ethical sense only to the extent one has already cultivated the particular modes of sensory responsiveness presupposed in the discourse's gestural vocabulary, a vocabulary rich in affective, kinesthetic, and visceral dimensions" (2006: 101). Achieving knowledgeable listenership makes those same dimensions of hip hop practice available as tools for continued self-cultivation.

This, by itself, is an argument about fan competency which could be made of many musical practices, of which *tarab* is only the paradigmatic tradition in the Arabo-Muslim world.<sup>24</sup> More importantly, Moroccan hip hop fans may learn through their embodied listening a sense of the audience as a counterpublic. That is, they may learn to sense themselves and those addressed alongside them as an entity cohering around shared values, aesthetics, and speech pragmatics. As we have seen, responsive, embodied listening to authoritative speech and music does significant ethical work within a culturally Muslim context. While a public "exists by virtue of being addressed," members of that public must also respond in modes appropriate to the poetics of the speech acts that enable the public (Warner 2002: 67). When a Moroccan hip hop artist opens a song with "sm'!" or "sm'ani, drari" ("listen to me, kids"), in addition to demonstrating those poetics, she invites the audience to engage a religiously and culturally valorized set of expectations around listening with the body, mind, and heart.

In this way, the public formed by interaction with hip hop performers at live concerts shares a certain bedrock of expectations with the dominant or national public. Yet hip hop counterpublics put those shared expectations of music and sound to use for distinct purposes. Both H-Kayne and Soultana are members of the first generation of Moroccan hip hop artists; they share with this first wave a strong belief in hip hop emcees' primary roles as commentators, educators, and advocates for the less fortunate. In conversation, artists and fans in this age range frequently opposed their lyrics, full of social, economic, and political critique, to other popular genres, characterizing *ch'abi* in particular as empty "songs about love" (cf. p.c. Soultana, Casablanca, Oct 21 2009).

Soultana's addresses to her audience resonate with both transnational hip hop performance traditions and Moroccan expectations for musical performance in ethically-sound contexts. While her strategies of movement, gesture, and comportment are read by audiences as derived from transnational hip hop performance tradition, they are simultaneously appropriate to performative modes of address that call upon the ethics and senses of belonging of this Muslim community. Her success in framing herself as an authoritative figure within the hip hop tradition lends weight to her argument encouraging more compassionate behavior in "Şawt Nssa." Precisely because women are so often read as the bearers of both tradition and disorder, Soultana's successful engagement with a significant moral issue helps to legitimize her as a female musician in a conventionally male performative space. Her performance is understood by

the active listener not only to call for ethically engaged responses to a social-economic and moral problem, but also to help dispose the listener to that response through the audition of her performance itself.

H-Kayne's best-known song, "Issawa Style," begins its chorus by asserting "kulna Magharba" ("we are all Moroccans"). The "Issawa" of the title adjectivizes a Sufi *tariqa*, the 'Aissawiyya, from Meknes, where the band members are from and live. The song's keyboard timbre indexes the *ghaita*, an oboe-like instrument characteristic of the processions that represent public 'Aissawa music-making. The track includes the pattern of the *tbel*, the lowest-sounding drum in the 'Aissawa ensemble, slightly altered to fit the heavily emphasized backbeat characteristic of hip hop. By indexing those musical gestures that non-members of the *tariqa* are most likely to hear in public on the streets of Meknes, the title links local spirituality with local specificity and pride in a manner well recognized in the transnational hip hop tradition (cf. Forman 2005). Yet the 'Aissawa, who are known for their tendency to fall into trance-like states and perform unusual physical feats during worship, have been regarded by the state in the past as excessive, immoderate, and pre-modern (Spadola 2008). More recently their musical forms of worship have served in tourism efforts big and small, including state-sponsored music festivals such as the Fes Festival of World Sacred Music and the National Festival of Popular Arts in Marrakesh, making them an important reference group in the narrative of peaceful and moderate Moroccan Sufism so important to the nation-state's projected image. Thus, H-Kayne's invocation of the *tariqa* comments on the overdetermination of the 'Aissawa in the dominant discourse.

When DJ Key manipulated this recording live, he cut the sound during the second half of several lines, letting the public hear itself rapping along with the verses. The first lines of the first verse are structured as questions with answers, so that when the public responds to the musical and verbal call, it defines itself to itself:<sup>25</sup>

H-Kayne is who? *Moroccans, Sidi!* [Sir!]  
And do you know where are they from? *Meknes City!*

In performance, H-Kayne hides a teach-in on public protests in plain sight and sound. Their encouragement from the stage leads the audience to demonstrate, with their own bodies, that while a single individual's depiction of handcuffed wrists would mean little, a sea of people raising their arms in the same gesture electrifies everyone at the sight of their combined strength.

In their sonic, semantic, and poetic dimensions, H-Kayne's and Sultana's live performances perform the dual moves that Warner describes in forming a public; they "characterize the world" they perform while "attempt[ing] to realize that world through address" (Warner 2002: 114). In each performance, the artists use their platforms to discuss fraught topics from angles that are morally justified, yet rarely pursued. Compared to the previous generation's experiences during the reign of King Hassan II, in which political violence was routine and press freedoms extremely limited, simply claiming the right to name police brutality or to highlight the role of poverty in sustaining prostitution is novel. These artists and their peers may be said to be practicing a politics of presence, or more specifically, a politics of audibility. By creating a space

for a particular kind of participation, one in which audiences are encouraged to “make some noise,” these performances model the public and the citizenry the artists themselves idealize.<sup>26</sup>

There is a complex relationship here between the formation of a counterpublic and the individual citizen’s actions, responses, and subjectivation (Shami 2009: 31). The issues discussed in the examples above are matters of both individual ethics and public morality. H-Kayne’s song “La Brigade” locates responsibility for brutal or illegal police tactics at the level of the individual, pointing out that “They’re just like everyone/ some are beautiful, some are ugly.” However, it refuses to lose sight of the systemic critique this implies, asking why they aren’t trained better and paid more: “hungry people are furious, why don’t you pay them?/ Where are their rights and where is their service?”<sup>27</sup>

Similarly, Soultana’s “Şawt Nssa” uses the second person to directly reprimand the listener for his or her lack of compassion, but likewise cites economic inequality as the ultimate driver of prostitution. In performance, active listeners rap along with the chorus, embodying the lines in which Soultana “calls” to silenced women “who want to speak” and offers them “an open door of repentance.” In this way, learning to actively listen together promotes an environment in which individuals cultivate affective states with the potential for ethical and political consequences. In turn, this allows dedicated listeners, who have learned to feel these affective states as part of their training in becoming competent hip hop fans, to form a counterpublic with its own dispositions, norms of address, and expectations for its addressees.

### **Citizenship**

While these artists’ public personae reveal their ideal public citizen to be a morally upstanding Muslim who is willing to alienate others in loud expression of uncomfortable truths, they initiate their audiences into this ideal by enabling their participation as a group. As Hirschkind points out, being addressed as a member of counterpublic does not mean being addressed solely on the basis of group affect or group emotional experience (2006: 122). Rather, the shared affect generated through shared expectations of the power of music and sound makes it possible for hip hop performers’ statements, in stage talk and in lyrics, to have their critical, moral, and ethical force. Counterpublic listeners are addressed in the singular; each individual must decide for herself how to respond to the ethical demands of the performers. However, live performance leverages the plural. Listening in a group heightens the pressure of norms within the counterpublic and the broader Moroccan context upon the individual listener, so that each individual must respond knowing that others are watching her do so.

In the examples above, the question of what responsibilities citizens have to each other was answered, sometimes explicitly and sometimes implicitly, through normative religious and cultural expectations for proper behavior towards fellow Muslims. The question of what responsibility the state has to its citizens is raised by “La Brigade,” and answered from within the same framework. In the following example, I show how one musical critique problematizes the role of religion in the contemporary Moroccan public sphere. Don Bigg’s argument in “16/05” depicts Islam and Muslim faith as belonging to the private realm, and properly appearing in public in no other way than as an assertion of cultural specificity.

The suicide bombings in downtown Casablanca on May 16<sup>th</sup>, 2003 prompted the Moroccan state to direct resources towards youth culture in a wholesale attempt to encourage at-risk youth away from potentially violent Islamist extremism. This reorientation of the state's relationship to youth musical expressions fundamentally reorganized the field in which hip hop musickers worked. As I mention in chapter three, over the years since, some of the best-known soloists and groups throughout the country have produced songs about the bombings or their aftermath. Each has taken its own musical approach, but all reject the notion that Islamic doctrines or values permit such violence. "16/05" (from *Byad u K7al*, 2009) is the only song about the bombings to go beyond expressing outrage to imagine the voices of actors in that event.<sup>28</sup> In "16/05," Don Bigg stages a dialogue between an unnamed security official and a would-be bomber in which the bomber gets to tell his own story.

During the Mawazine Festival concert, Bigg and Omar Sosa's performed this song during the second half of their set. The band opened this song with Sosa reperforming the original piano introduction. Unlike other parts of their set, which included departures from the original backing tracks or solos from the band members, "16/05" was played in a manner very similar to the recording, with restrained improvisations taking place during the choruses only. The stage featured three large screens, behind the band, where images were projected during songs. The performance of "16/05" was accompanied by a series of looped videos which showed a young man's torso and hands. Over the course of the song, the young man donned a sweatshirt, buckled on a belt laden with explosives, covered that with a heavy jacket, concealed a trigger in the palm of his hand, and finally rested his thumb on the trigger.

Below, I look at Bigg's argument in this song in some detail in order to draw out his reasoning about the relationship between poverty, radicalism, and violence. I draw most of the detail from the album recording, but also note salient departures from the recording that took place live. Like the other live performances described above, Bigg makes a systemic critique, yet leaves open the question of who or what must change, and ultimately places the impetus and responsibility for change at the level of the individual.

A spare, acoustic piano opens the song. The descending parallel thirds reverberate, giving the impression of a still, open space in which sound radiates in all directions. Into the solemn expanse a burst of white noise breaks.

*Patrol two to center. Come in,* barks a voice, far away on the other end of a hand-held transceiver.<sup>29</sup>

*Patrol two to center,* the voice repeats. *Come in. I'm here, on the spot...Moulay Youssef, Boulevard Moulay Youssef. Come in.* No one answers him.

*After capturing one of them we are in the possession of hand-made explosives. Patrol two, come in, Center—we're starting interrogations now.*

Bigg begins the first rapped verse of the song in an unfiltered sonic present. Doubled by himself at a lower register throughout, supported by a low, muted bass line, his voice sounds nearer to us than the patrolman on the transceiver. The tempo is slow and deliberate, and the musical space is relatively empty, including only the voices, piano, bass, and spiky percussion.

The latter is composed in part from clicking noises that give the impression of metallic pieces being snapped together.

I want to present myself to you  
Eighteen years old and always skipping school  
Every day of the year there's whisky on ice in the fridge  
Between classes I consider: crises of money and school curriculum  
MTV on TV and my beard is wet [from ablutions before prayers]  
Doting on the Top Models passing on TV  
My icon is Akon  
My Motobécane's broken down, he drives a Ferrari  
I'm online circulating  
Pictures of Jay-Z in the Maybach, a clip of Fat Joe's "Lean Back"  
What a plan! What a life! What a tongue  
Born with a spoon of shit between [my] teeth  
The stolen Xbox CD GTA was fucked up  
He brought the original from the secondhand market  
I don't listen to Bigg, I don't listen to H-Kayne, I don't  
Listen to Fnaire, there's no rap in Morocco

Instead of telling the interrogating security official—and listeners—what he's doing on Boulevard Moulay Youssef, a posh section of downtown Casablanca, the speaker describes himself as Bigg's image of an average eighteen-year-old. The character balances, and Bigg implicitly contrasts, his avid intake of "Western" media with his Muslim practice ("MTV on TV and my beard is wet" from ablutions Muslims do before prayer). The character lives in poverty with images of others' material success all around him. He loves hip hop music, but dismisses the leading Moroccan artists H-Kayne, Fnaire, and (of course) Bigg, preferring the wealth and glamour of rapper-turned-CEO Jay-Z and the authenticity of New York legend Fat Joe. Akon is an apt figure for the story Bigg is telling; born in the US with a childhood spent in Senegal, reportedly Muslim, blindingly successful in the US and on the African continent, he's living our narrator's dream.

In the next eight bars, the space where the chorus of the song ought to be, we hear from the security official again, speaking directly with the voice in our ear. He does not rap; he sputters. Plenty of words are censored in the original recording.

*What [expletive]? Help me out, I want to ask you—why do you want to blow yourself up? Why do you want to blow yourself up, and in front of the American Center? ...Why would you make chaos in the country? Everything lives in chaos [already] ... Are you Moroccan or aren't you? Are you Moroccan, or aren't you? ...Respond! Tell me why. Why? Tell me why. Why? Go on then! Go on, burn yourself [expletive]!*

Within the frame of the story, the interrogator is a seemingly unprepared negotiator in a dangerous real-time situation. Outside the frame, he acts as the locus of common wisdom, making the rhetorical points contemporary listeners expect to hear in the dramatization of what is, by 2009, a well-worn argument. Here his voice, picking up speed in anxiety, is the first explicit confirmation of the bomber's plans in the lyrics themselves. "Are you Moroccan or aren't you?" he repeats. His logic is evident to both characters and to listeners: your allegiance is to a specific fundamentalist sect, he assumes, not to this nation; you must not be a "real" Moroccan.

The official's last word in this moment is a vicious double entendre. "Go on, ṭharrag!" he blurts, using the verb that means "to burn (oneself)," but which, in common parlance, also evokes clandestine emigration to Europe. Upon arrival on Southern Mediterranean shores, émigrés from the African continent burn or destroy their citizenship documents in case they are discovered by immigration authorities. Many don't make it to Spain, however, and are sent back to Morocco (sub-Saharan migrants are then deported). The literal meaning of the term is especially cruel in this context--that is precisely what the bomber character was planning to do. At the same time, it makes a link between the actions of suicide bombing and illegally emigrating. For the security figure speaking, both are expressions of voluntary rejections of Moroccan citizenship and Moroccan-ness, and both warrant contempt.

From the bomber character's perspective, it's not that he rejected his nation, but that his nation rejects the poor. In the next verse, he describes how his poverty leaves him unprotected from economic and political violence.

I gave rap everything and it didn't give me nothing  
Unemployment and prison made me powerless, my rap must be my homeland  
In order to get on the radio that has so bewitched me, and the television  
I need to have a Lebanese ass [i.e., be a sexy Lebanese singer]  
I decide to ignore it, I say I'll finish my studies  
They said to me, "you crazy or not? Why, what for?"  
I said I can make money at it, I'll become a high-up official, man  
They killed me with memorization until I nearly suffocated, man  
I changed direction, decided to suck up to them  
Two hours later I came running from those outrageous people  
I fled from the shit, I found myself in the piss<sup>30</sup>  
They threw me in the sea, they threw me in prison  
Fuck it—I said "I'm finishing the path"<sup>31</sup>  
My voice is hoarse [lit: "I have no more saliva"] and people, how come you still don't  
understand?  
Fuck, if I had blown myself up, I'd never have seen that jail

Bigg's character dreams of becoming famous in his own country as a rapper, but is rapidly disillusioned. His lack of connections and capital defeats him at every turn. Despite his assertion, his friends know that finishing his baccalaureate (equivalent to a high school diploma) or even

more school won't guarantee economic mobility. Any listener who has visited downtown Rabat on a weekday over the last several years will recognize a reference to the breadth and depth of the problem of *diplomés chômeurs*, unemployed university graduates who protest the lack of jobs in the public sector, and whose daily demonstrations in front of the Rabat Parliament building have been a feature of national news for nearly a decade.

The character hints that he was kidnapped and tortured by police, and this is the last straw. Worn down by his helplessness, he resolves to kill himself: “fuck it—I said, ‘I’m finishing the path.’” Bigg delivers this verse so that the word on the fourth beat of each measure is emphasized; here, the word *triq* (path) falls on the fourth beat, and silence hangs in the air until the middle of the next measure, when he resumes speaking. During the live performance at the 2010 Mawazine Festival, Bigg departed from the recording and sang the last two lines, stretching the last phrase out on the third scale degree (in the minor mode) and landing on the second degree just before the bassist’s descent from the dominant to the tonic.

Static noises erupt under the last two lines, shifting us back into the sonic and personal space of the man on the transceiver. Each of the security officer’s responses demonstrates that, to him, conceptions of properly Islamic behavior must be at the heart of the matter. “There is no Islam in this,” he points out. Next, he attempts to explain that the attacker is being taken advantage of, that the bomber’s presumed religious motivation makes him a pawn in Islamists’ games. “This is all just politics, you know what I mean?” he protests, to the sound of the other’s dry laugh. Last, he tries another tactic, a reminder of eternal punishment: “To what place are you going, now that you’re going to blow yourself up?”

The bomber character does not respond to this provocation. The last verse dramatizes Bigg’s argument most clearly: palpable economic disparity intensifies the pain, hopelessness, and vulnerability of poverty, and further disenfranchises the poor.

I want to present myself to you  
I’m at the end of my rope  
I’m tired of asking you, of screaming and giving speeches  
I want to arrive, like the sons of the bourgeoisie  
When I hear the national anthem I don’t shiver  
Even if Morocco is my country I don’t kneel  
When I hear the speeches, I shiver  
My country is apparent in the midst of all these struggles  
If I have set off a bomb between my ribs, I’m now suffering because of it

During the live performance, Bigg evened out the rhythm of the last line, dropping the agogic stresses on “bomb” (*bomba*) and “because of it” (*besbabha*, in the line “*hit besbabha kan‘ani*”) and shouting at his highest pitch of the song. With the microphone in his left hand, he gestured to himself with his right. Bigg’s gesture matched his delivery throughout the phrase, intensifying until he was striking at his own ribs with a clenched fist in time with the lyrics.

In the original recording, the last lines are delivered in a fashion much closer to prose than to rap. The percussion, strings, and multitracking on Bigg’s voice drop out of the track, leaving him sounding smaller, alone but resolute.

I didn’t come to say “I’m going, I want to blow myself up”—maybe I want to explode in  
order to say I want to be somebody  
And I want Morocco to give me real citizenship [y ‘atini ‘ala madaniyya]  
Not just some blue paper from the civil office<sup>32</sup>  
If I had followed those bearded men, it would be a mistake  
But if you say I became a terrorist because of religion, then maybe they succeeded after all

During the live performance, the band continued with the pattern of the rest of the verse unabated. Bigg delivered the last five lines in a heightened voice, carrying the energy of his delivery through this last verse rather than quieting down for contrast. In performance, Bigg recited every word of this last section except the phrase “from the civil office” (fil ḥala madaniyya). At that point, without warning, he suddenly held the microphone out towards the audience before the next line. This gesture came as a surprise to me, and I think other to audience members. Bigg had not held the microphone out to the audience during the rest of the song (though he did for parts of other songs). This particular phrase acts as a sort of punchline for the previous line, since it draws a comparison between two uses of the word *madaniyya* (“citizenship” as a noun; “civil,” “civic,” “civilized,” etc. as an adjective). The contrast heightens awareness of the gap between the bomber character’s request and the bland, legalistic, bureaucratic definition of citizenship implied by the image of the ḥala madaniyya, where one goes to get paperwork completed. In the moment of performance, Bigg’s microphone gesture enabled the entire audience to hear itself chanting along, voicing the “terrorist” with every word of the last few lines. A few cheers and whistles went up from the audience in the momentary pause before the final two lines of the song.

Bigg’s protagonist knows—better than his interrogator—that the question “Are you Moroccan or aren’t you?” is a false choice. Citizenship isn’t a word, a birthplace, or a piece of paper, he argues; it’s the promise of employment and the safety of his person. Whether this young man gets to participate in society, to be “a Moroccan” in a practical sense, was decided long ago. But instead of Salafist Islam, hip hop culture is his refuge, his “homeland” (*watan*), where he can speak as if he has the rights and protections enjoyed by the more affluent. In a world in which he has no control, in which he is barely visible, the bomber character’s one strategic act was to choose the available framework of “terrorist” to carry out an irreligious decision. In a painful twist, he realizes with his final line that whether he dies as a result of his bomb or his sentencing, his story will still not be his own; it will still be used to fuel a narrative of dangerous Islamist extremists—one that aids the goals of both the extremists and the state that hunts them.

What kind of citizen does Bigg imagine with this song? Bigg levels a withering critique of inequality in “16/05,” but he also subscribes to a doctrine shared by the state, its international partners, and many Moroccans, in which poverty is an entirely sufficient explanation for



extremist behavior. The state representative in the song, the character of the interrogator, represents normative post-2003 reasoning about Islamist terrorism. He functions as the voice of the (presumed) listener to the song, asking the questions frequently asked by editorialists and citizens in the aftermath of the bombings. He is not necessarily sympathetic—in voicing the outrage of the Moroccan public, his speech is uncouth, filled with inappropriate language, and brutal—but enabling the listener to imagine the accused terrorist as more sympathetic by contrast does not signal endorsement of the accused’s monologue or actions. Rather, in creating space for the listener to understand the motives and worldview of the figure of the impoverished, youthful terrorist, it places that figure within the grid of intelligibility that emerged in public discourse after the event.

Both the bomber and the security figure dramatize the logic of public discourse. This discourse minimized and de-legitimized the role of religion in the real Casablanca bombers’ decisions. At the time, in 2003, commentators from across the political spectrum refused the possibility of any reading of the concept of *jihad* that could permit suicide or the taking of innocent lives. Within the frame of the song, the security figure insists on fitting the accused into a box labeled “radical Islamist,” then attempting to talk him out of that box, suggesting a false-consciousness-style argument in which the real bombers are assumed to have been duped by certain Islamists’ incorrect interpretations of Islamic doctrine. When the security figure dismisses the bomber character’s presumed motivations, saying “this is all just politics,” he suggests that the (again presumed) Islamist handlers behind the bomber character are merely camouflaging a geo-political struggle with faith rhetoric.

By contrast, Bigg gives his bomber character compelling agency and critical faculties in order to present a counter-argument that presumes poverty is the root cause of his actions. In this argument, addressing poverty and the social and emotional dislocation that comes with inequality would render young people like this character less vulnerable to violent extremism. Placing the argument in the mouth of a fictionalized suicide bomber who is, like hip hop musickers generally, quite capable of “critiquing his own culture” allows Bigg to avoid pathologizing poverty (Alim 2006: 6). Neither of the viewpoints presented in the song asks why some impoverished young men find the violent fringe of Islamic fundamentalism compelling when many more do not. Both arguments suggest the problem is one of national scope and importance, rather than isolated to the slums of Casablanca. Thus both arguments point to the need for a national, and a state, response.

Bigg’s bomber character makes a persuasive case that the state and the citizenry have responsibilities towards the poor, but he does so from a classically liberal standpoint in which individuals’ choices and rationality are paramount. The state’s responsibilities are to alleviate the worst material effects of poverty in some unidentified way. In claiming that the state is failing in that responsibility, Bigg insists that economic violence is within the state’s monopoly on violence. Yet he makes no suggestions for how to combat poverty, whether those might be the sorts of direct support common in the post-Independence era (e.g. government-sponsored housing, food subsidies), or the market-based or non-governmental solutions common today (e.g. NGOs tackling the consequences of poverty, such as unequal educations, with programs in hygiene, computer skills, or English acquisition).

The responsibility of Moroccan citizens is to treat the impoverished more equally from moral and social standpoints. Bigg insists that social and political inequality result from economic inequality, since money commonly protects people from harassment or indifference. In the second verse, Bigg's bomber character cannot get a job, hates the rote learning required of him in the public education system, and is harassed by the police for no explicit reason. In the last verse, the character suggests the state can give him the "citizenship"—the protection from political, social, and economic violence—that he needs to survive. Here as well, Bigg suggests no particular course of action, except to imply, echoing H-Kayne's "La Brigade," that the police should refrain from violence and exploitation.

The song is not didactic, as Soultana was in "Sawt Nssa"; the bomber character does not suggest, for example, that his fellow Moroccans should donate more to charity or feel more compassion. "16/05" can be read as encouraging Moroccans to treat their fellow citizens, especially impoverished youth, with more respect. It can also be read as predicated upon a deep disillusionment, a disbelief in the eradicability of poverty. In such a reading, a perpetual division between "winners" and "losers" is mitigated only—never erased—by individuals' empathy. These two readings do not contradict one another; rather, the former may simply be the most moral way of dealing with the latter.

"16/05" recuperates the figures of the young Casablanca bombers, who, in their factual adherence to a particular violent Islamist group, were paradigmatic examples of bad citizens.<sup>33</sup> Speaking from within a nation-state defined by its identification of Moroccan-ness with Muslim faith, Bigg sidesteps the "good Muslim, bad Muslim" rhetoric fueling the counterterrorism efforts of both the US and the Moroccan state.<sup>34</sup> By rendering Islam unimportant to his discussion of the bombers, Bigg implicitly takes Islam out of the public sphere, returning faith practice to a private sphere in a manner consistent with a liberal conception of public life. By staging a "public" debate in which the bomber character's rational, though passionately delivered, argument trumps the panic and assumptions of the interrogator, Bigg stages a discussion of what makes a good citizen, and presents himself as that properly individual and private citizen as well.

### **Conclusions**

"Just as it is important to recognize the 'imagined' quality of 'publics' and political communities, it is also important to examine the ways in which participation in collectivities and constructions of self vis-à-vis publics takes the form of bodily practices, visual and symbolic cues and performative interactions. The making of the self and the public are thus intertwined and interconnected processes" (Shami 2009: 31).

The examples of stage talk explored here, and responses to them, help to make explicit some of the values upheld by musickers in the counterpublic. These may be best described as a series of tensions. First, I have observed a tension amongst Moroccan hip hop practitioners between honing and expressing a critical outlook and exercising that critical voice in specific and effective ways. Artists routinely avoid describing the social, economic, and political situations that they critique as failings of the monarch or other specific members of the government.

Instead, they generally frame their critiques in a sonic parallel to the “politics of presence,” simply naming the offensive behavior or situation. It should be noted that even this “politics of audibility,” as we might call it, marks a genuine change from the violently enforced silence of the previous generation under King Hassan II, in what are known as the “years of lead.”

Second, hip hop practitioners struggle to balance their critiques of individuals’ willingness to work hard, take risks, and innovate, often cast in moralized and neoliberalized terms as the importance of personal responsibility, with an ingrained expectation that the state can and should ameliorate difficulties perceived to be structural or resulting from the ongoing process of “modernization.” I consider this less a failure of imagination than an expression of the struggle to reconcile emergent forms of subjectivity with the ongoing belief that the state does in fact maintain this power and control. Hip hop practitioners frequently place an emphasis on an individualizing ethos of entrepreneurship, valorizing competition and individual achievement. Yet, if and when they do propose solutions to their systemic critiques, they also return to what they argue is Moroccan Muslims’ proper orientation toward and obligations to the community.

My goal here is not to argue that these tensions are wholly new or contradictory. Nor do I wish to suggest that one or more poles of these tensions are opposed to Muslim piety and expression of that piety in public life. To the contrary, as I mentioned in the introduction to this chapter, the dominant articulation of Moroccan identity with Muslim faith makes space for people to express that piety in a variety of ways, from Sultana’s overt lectures to her audience to Bigg’s implication that both the state and Moroccan citizens have failed poor youth. Instead, I frame these aspects of the Moroccan hip hop counterpublic’s discourse as tensions in order to highlight the changing stakes of the neoliberalizing context. These prompt different responses and make possible different results.

Moroccan hip hop shares with many examples in the transnational hip hop tradition, and with other counterpublic formations, a double bind in its public-ness: on the one hand, it brings non-bourgeois figures, texts, and values into public discourse to serve as a rejection of the foundational exclusions of both the bourgeois public sphere and the state. On the other hand, it must enter the public discourse to bring that exclusion to wide awareness, and so cannot escape some kind of relationship to the state, the bourgeois public sphere, and the processes of commodification that unite them in the neoliberalizing moment.

This is further complicated by the intertwining of what are nominally understood to be public and private institutions in post-privatization Morocco. The sponsorship of both concerts discussed above highlights the prevalence of public-private partnerships in Morocco’s media and tourism industries. H-Kayne’s concert took place at a festival funded in part by the Ministry of Culture, the municipality of Meknes, and organizations including Groupe OCP (the Sharifian Phosphates Office), the National Society of Radio and Television, and 2M Media. All three of the latter underwent partial privatization between 1998 and 2004 (Khosrowshahi 1997). Sultana’s concert took place during a two-day event organized by Dima-Maroc (“Always Morocco”), a local *association* or NGO. Hit Radio, a privately owned radio station, was its “official partner” for the event. However, funding and support also came from the municipality of Rabat; the *wāḥī*, or regional government of Rabat-Sale-Zemmour-Zaer; the public agency overseeing the development of the Bouregreg River and its infrastructure; and SNRT and 2M, among others.

Similarly, “16/05” is presented from within normative Moroccan discourse, and the Mawazine Festival performance in particular is funded entirely by the state or the state’s corporate partners. All the artists discussed here maintain the capability to broadcast their incisive critiques precisely because they are participating in performance and telecommunications infrastructure the state has set up since 2003. Just as the transnational is always present in local expressions, the state’s contribution to and limits on public discourse is always present in arenas of circulation supposedly scaffolded by private interests.

Does this mean that hip hop narratives are rendered toothless by state support, evacuated of their potential to critique? Such a view places limits on the agency of practitioners and listeners alike. Presuming co-optation suggests that Moroccan hip hop musickers had to be brought into a framework that the majority of them have never been outside.<sup>35</sup> The lack of privately owned infrastructure around recording and performing music in Morocco does place artists who wish to perform to large audiences in a position of dependence on state largesse. However, to assume state support invalidates these performances’ critical force would both narrow our notions of agency and obscure the significance of this counterpublic formation in a context where state and public are frequently intertwined. This counterpublic is always in relation to the state, but that relationship is not its sole determining factor, nor is that relationship static.

In addition, the effects of embodied listening with a group in public depend upon the particularity of sound as a public medium. All three concerts discussed here were set outside in central urban locations, at historic sites of public gathering. The sounds of these concerts at once define the extent of public space and radically expand its boundaries, as powerfully amplified music seeps through walls, windows, and absorptive crowds of bodies to the private homes beyond. Individuals attending such a concert, or just passing by, cannot choose to physically disengage from its sounds. They cannot ignore, talk over, or cover up the music until well out of visual range of the stages.

Many of the most successful hip hop performers are from comfortable socio-economic positions (what might loosely be called the “middle class”). Yet even the least connected, least upwardly-mobile performers appear to be rendered temporarily powerful by these sites and their amplification, whether or not those concerts are wholly or partially sponsored by state agencies. The concert setting can provoke audience members to imagine the leveling of social distance within the crowd, as everyone is subjected to the same waves of light and sound, regardless of their position in the crowd or in the ubiquitous VIP sections next to the stage.

However, as Fraser wrote of Habermas’ idealization of the bourgeois public sphere, “declaring a deliberative arena to be a space where extant status distinctions are bracketed and neutralized is not sufficient to make it so” (1990: 60). Following Hirschkind, I have characterized public hip hop performances discussed here as both “deliberative” and “passional.” Both aspects together enhance the ability to *imagine* the neutralization of social distance, even when in practice those distances are reasserted afterwards. That imagining is central to the performance experience for some hip hop artists, especially those who described themselves to me as “teachers” and “advocates,” who saw reaching these massed audiences in Derija as a potentially equalizing and unifying act.<sup>36</sup>

In their explicit addresses to audiences, Moroccan hip hop artists frequently invoke national identity as one quality of the individuals making up the public for their music.<sup>37</sup> But that national identity is subject to change. Musicians and their fans may be said to be performing an alternative to older conceptions of Moroccanness, in which Moroccans were seen as and saw themselves as political subjects, by making and listening to hip hop that sets out implicit and explicit expectations for Moroccans-as-citizens. At the same time, where older conceptions of Moroccanness included ethnic, class, or political solidarity as means of resistance, the hip hop counterpublic loses the ability to form those kinds of solidarities precisely because it cuts across those divisions and reaches for a normative ethics which, though outspoken, aligns with rather than contradicts the individualization central to the political and economic project of neoliberalization.

Thus the model of engaged and ethical citizenship I have sketched here, while frequently contestatory, is not necessarily resistant. H-Kayne's and Soultana's critiques implicated the state, but returned to individuals' rights and responsibilities as citizens for the means of resolution. Few hip hop performers have been visible in public demonstrations that call on the state for large-scale change, such as the recurring sit-ins by the *diplômés chômeurs* (unemployed university graduates) calling for a return to policies of full employment via the public sector, or the February 20<sup>th</sup> movement, which arose in early 2011 to demand, amongst other things, the reformation of the judiciary and a gradual move from a monarchy to a parliamentary democracy.<sup>38</sup> While Moroccans' hip hop lyrics frequently include insightful systemic critiques, lyrics and live performance practices often locate the possibility of action and change in the terrain of the self.

This chapter has attempted to address Moroccan cultural theorist Said Graioui's call for research that compares Habermasian public sphere theory to "everyday experience...in different political and social environments," even as I have sought to complicate a view of hip hop that presumes what he calls the "liberationist aesthetics of plebian cultures" (2011: 29). "Plebian," "popular," or lower-income cultures may well practice a liberationist aesthetics, but there is no reason to essentialize their aesthetics to the exclusion of accommodationist or quietist politics. In the neoliberal moment in Morocco as elsewhere, citizens are encouraged to conceive of their relationship to the state in terms of both rights and responsibilities. Those rights are, in turn, framed in terms of positive freedoms or mobilities, rather than as a right to housing, to education, etc. as might have been claimed by the generation living through and immediately after Independence. These "new" rights are discursively presented as something one obtains for oneself from a properly withdrawn and unresponsive state and a properly active market in the wake of growing inequality and economic instability. Thus, though they are discursively enjoined upon all Moroccans, in practice these rights are disproportionately enjoyed by the economic elite. I have argued that the Moroccan hip hop counterpublic combines rights-based claims with commitment to particularly cultural, thus particularly liberal-modernist<sup>39</sup>, displays of public religiosity, and to moral norms consistent with most of the mainstreamed mores of urban Moroccan society. For some of my interlocutors, this is not only viewed as part of efforts to publicly enjoin the good and forbid the bad, but simultaneously as promoting more vigorous and aware citizenry as part of the high value they place on personal responsibility.<sup>40</sup>

I have argued in this chapter that musickers most often perform political quietism through, not despite, their embrace of the discursive and aesthetic norms of the transnational hip hop tradition, including its tradition of critique and debate. I have called this a politics of audibility, but it is also a politics of depoliticization. That is, many musickers claim to be articulating arguments that “all” citizens hold, and calling for changes at the personal, interpersonal, structural, and national levels that “all” citizens would like to see. Precisely because they cast their opinions as unanimous, they thus appear to transcend normative discourse about what “politics” is and what “politicians” do.<sup>41</sup>

Warner summarized counterpublics as “spaces of circulation in which it is hoped that the poesis of scene making will be transformative, not replicative merely” (2002: 122). I have argued that live hip hop performances, as one expression amongst others between hip hop musickers and between musickers and heretofore casual audience members, can aid hip hop artists in their stated goals of transforming Moroccans into a certain kind of citizen. Through invoking shared orientations and senses of belonging via sound, performers promote the values of critical citizenship and personal responsibility. By framing the individual Moroccan subject as the terrain on which change can and should be effected, the performances I have described here sidestep traditional solidarities, including lineage-, class-, or party-based formations, as possible tools in the work towards a more just world. In chapter six I explore this further, ultimately suggesting the impossibility of other kinds of politics for the neoliberal subject.

## Notes

<sup>1</sup> Following Michel Foucault, I take ethics to refer to practices and technologies of self through which a subject cares for and improves herself in relation to a (often moral) goal, while morals are the prescriptive ideals of propriety and behavior enforced by a group (1990: 25-28).

<sup>2</sup> For “actually existing neoliberalism,” see Brenner and Theodore 2002b. For the distinction between globalization “from above” or “from below,” cf. Anderson and Eickelman 1999.

<sup>3</sup> As Saba Mahmood puts it, “different concepts of subject formation require different kinds of bodily capacities and demeanors within specific discursive (rather than cultural or class) contexts” (Mahmood 2003: 846).

<sup>4</sup> Kapchan describes the result of learning to listen, in a different context, as a “literacy of listening, an ability to hear the components in the mix” (2008: 480). In this formulation the properly enculturated listener “reads” aspects of world music performance, cultivating the ability to “locate [her] own identity as [a] global citizen in its iconic resonances” (478).

<sup>5</sup> Though hip hop musicians with explicitly Islamic projects do exist in Morocco, most notably the emcee Cheikh Sar, who was until recently supportive of the Islamist Party of Justice and Development (PJD) (Boum 2012b, Leghrouss 2012, Akdim 2013).

<sup>6</sup> Some of my interlocutors actually did suggest or demonstrate that they preferred to keep theirs and others’ faith practices in a private sphere, but they were a small minority.

<sup>7</sup> There is no explicit repudiation of music in the Qur’an. Scripturally, the debate over the permissibility of various musical sounds revolves around three *aḥadith* (sing. *ḥadith*), observations from the life and words of the Prophet Muhammad, and whether those *aḥadith* are sufficiently well-attested to be taken as authoritative. See al-Faruqi 1980 or Beeman 2011 for succinct introductions to this debate.

<sup>8</sup> In book 8 of *Iḥyā’ ‘ulūm al-dīn (Revival of the Religious Sciences)*, al-Ghazali writes that “...wine was forbidden, and man's excessive addiction to it required...that the command should extend at first so far as to involve the breaking of wine-jars. And, along with wine, was forbidden all that was a badge of people who drank it, in this case stringed instruments and pipes only. ...[J]ust as...a little wine is forbidden, even though it does not intoxicate, because it invites to intoxication” (trans. Macdonald 1901: 211). Al-Ghazali quotes Abu Sulayman as saying, “Music and singing do not produce in the heart that which is not in it, but they stir up what is in it” (220).

<sup>9</sup> *Al-ḥal* (lit. state or condition) can refer to liminal states in several different contexts; within Sufi devotional practice, it refers to a trance-like state that can assist the Sufi seeker in reaching a state of oneness with the divine. *Al-jedba* (lit. *jedhba*, attraction) also refers to trance or trance-like states, but more consistently connotes spirit possession.

<sup>10</sup> In particular, the late Hicham Belkna, beatmaker and producer for the Marrakshi hip hop band Fnaire (“lanterns”), pioneered combining traditional rhythmic patterns and melodies with the quadratic meter and heavily emphasized backbeat characteristic of hip hop (*Yed el-Ḥenna*, 2007). Timothy Fuson calls these traditional meters and rhythms, which occur across genres with some variation, the “Maghrebi 2/4” and the “Maghrebi 6/8” (Fuson 2009).

<sup>11</sup> The idea of “secular” musicking is not very useful here, as part of my argument rests on the twin enculturation and identification of musickers as Muslims. Neither is Saba Mahmood’s use of “secular-oriented,” rather than “secular,” particularly applicable, as it would suggest that all hip hop musickers agree that religion belongs in a private sphere compared to the public of musical performance (Mahmood 2003). In my experience, some people did believe that, many did not, and still others did not see the point of the distinction.

<sup>12</sup> Within the transnational hip hop tradition, authenticity may be provisionally defined as a combination of sincere affect (cf. Jackson 2005) and competent practice, which includes competency in the styles deemed most important locally. The majority of pioneers of Moroccan hip hop claim allegiance to what is often referred to as “conscious” hip hop, defined in part by an emphasis on socio-political commentary.

<sup>13</sup> The members of H-Kayne have been performing together since the late 1990s, and under this name since 2003. The name translates to “What is there?” or, more colloquially, “What’s up?”

<sup>14</sup> In this context *medina*, Arabic for “city,” refers to the “old city” as opposed to the Protectorate-built Ville Nouvelle.

<sup>15</sup> Oualili is the Arabic name for Volubilis, a Roman settlement whose ruins are located about an hour’s drive from Meknes.

<sup>16</sup> In the original Derija and French:

*La brigade raha katdour, štafiṭ khadama tjma ‘  
Smitu bak? Smitha muk? Fin sakan u fin khadam?  
Lah ‘arif baqa katdour, ladroug ma zal katba ‘  
Je rien contre la police, sauf quand il devient hors la loi*

I thank Matthew Streib and an anonymous native speaker for their help with translation.

<sup>17</sup> “Soultana 2010 Ṣawt Nssa [www.ostora.co.cc](http://www.ostora.co.cc),” since removed, last accessed 24.2.11. <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mRvT42g9oeg&feature=related> The 44,000 figure thus does not include any more viewings between February 2011 and 2012.

<sup>18</sup> The original text and orthography from commenter “silona01:” “Blà Blà Blà Blà ... Achmén SàWt Làh YéHdik BlàStéK MàChi f rap .. F Là Cuisin Bébé”

<sup>19</sup> “Soultana Ṣawt Nssa / Ajjal,” since removed, <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sJqHgTbz5x8>, last accessed 4 March 2011.

<sup>20</sup> In Derija:

*L ga ‘ droub l ga ‘ drari lī dayqa sem  
Taqafat al-hip hop al-youm kayna fī dem  
Al-fayn u ‘ashra bla ma thez l hem  
Kayn real R.A.P.*

In performance, Soultana and the vocalist accompanying her on the chorus spell out “R-A-P” instead of the word “rap.” Lyrics quoted here and below are translated with the help of Youssra Oukaf, a.k.a. Soultana, and used by permission. See the appendix for lyrics to the entire song.

<sup>21</sup> This can be linked back to the important place of poetry in Moroccan and Arab cultures more generally. While from a musical perspective, the text cannot be divorced from the sound of its delivery or its musical environment, the lyrical content of hip hop is the part most easily analogized to other valued cultural practices. When Soultana remarks, as she frequently does, that hip hop is “a noble art,” the ability to deliver meaningful lyrical content is her central defense of that statement.



<sup>22</sup> A less generous interpretation of this purposefully ambiguous lyric might link the “Muslims” of the line to male Saudi and Gulf residents, who are sometimes stereotyped as visiting Moroccan female prostitutes, thereby contributing to sex tourism and to a poor reputation held regarding Moroccan women in their home countries. Many Moroccans are very sensitive to negative portrayals of Moroccan women from other Muslim countries. These are sufficiently widespread to have serious material effects, as in 2010 when Saudi Arabia temporarily banned all Moroccan women from the *‘umra* due to suspicions that some might engage in prostitution (Almiraat 2010). The line can also be read as a reference to Islamist Moroccans, in that some of my interlocutors claim that Islamists prefer what they consider disproportionately harsh responses to feminine transgressions of the moral order. I cannot confirm that Sultana intended the line in either way.

<sup>23</sup> For example, Daniel Cavicchi has recently described the various and carefully cultivated forms of consumption and engagement of middle- and upper-class white Americans of the late nineteenth-century with the term “audiencing” (2011).

<sup>24</sup> In the original Derija and English:

H-Kayne shkūn? *Magharba sīdī!*  
Ū bash t ‘arif medinathoum? *Meknes City!*

<sup>25</sup> I am implying that sonic and physical participation enables a conceptual shift from an audience full of individuals to a singular, if momentary, public. As Nancy writes, “So the sonorous place, space and place...*as* sonority, is not a space where the subject comes to make himself heard...; on the contrary, it is a place that becomes a subject insofar as sound resounds there” (2007: 17, italics in original).

<sup>26</sup> On individual police officers: “Hetha ḥalhoum bḥel ga ‘ al-ness/fihoum al-zwīn, fihoum al-khaīb,” or “They’re just like everyone/ some are beautiful, some are ugly.” On salaries: “Shd diblom hetha/ khalsa naqsa, khadama naqsa/ bna dem ka ‘i bī al-washma ‘alesh matzidouhoumsh?/ fīn ḥaqqhoum u fīn khadamtihoum?” or “here, take this diploma/ incomplete salary, incomplete service/ hungry people are furious, why don’t you pay them?/ Where are their rights and where is their service?”

<sup>27</sup> For a fan-made YouTube video of “16/05,” see <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ig89Yc5WMEY&feature=related>

<sup>28</sup> My translation was revised with Sarah Hebbouch, a graduate student in Cultural Studies at Sidi Mohamed Ben Abdellah University, Fez. Any remaining mistakes in translation or interpretation are fully my own.

<sup>29</sup> Bigg says “al-boul,” which means “piss,” but is also short for “police” (“al-bouliss”). The implicit meaning is more directly narrative and leads to the next line.

<sup>30</sup> “Fuck it” is in English. Bigg’s impoverished bomber character would likely know only a little English. The next use of “fuck” is in Derija.

<sup>31</sup> “mashi warqa zarqa fil ḥala madaniyya,” i.e., a copy of his birth certificate.

<sup>32</sup> As in Mahmood Mamdani’s summary of post-9/11 rhetoric, in which for US commentators, “good” Muslims are “modern, secular, and Westernized, but bad Muslims are doctrinal, antimodern, and virulent” (2005: 24).

<sup>33</sup> As Bourquie et al. and Mohamed Tozy have separately found, only a minority of university students in Rabat are explicitly hostile to “political discourses with Islamic sensibilities.” At the same time, an even smaller minority identify “with Islamist organizations” or “Islamist militants,” even if they are neutral or positive about “Islamic” discourses in public (Bourquie et al. 2000: 18-19).

<sup>34</sup> Aomar Boum writes that hip hop performers were “appropriated” by “government agencies,” victims of “a capitalist domestication,” post-2005 when YouTube became widely used (2012a: 162). My point is not that the government doesn’t seek to “domesticate” hip hop, but that it ultimately robs musickers of their agency to consider their actions solely within this frame.

<sup>35</sup> Derija is cast in these conversations as the lingua franca in contrast to French or Modern Standard Arabic, despite the fact that many Moroccans, including some urbanites, speak a dialect of Tamazight as their first language.

<sup>36</sup> Of course, some artists also make straightforwardly patriotic songs, especially about hot-button issues like the status of the Western Sahara.

<sup>37</sup> For *diplômés chômeurs*, see Emperador 2007. The only emcee publicly associated with the February 20 reform movement, Mouad “al-ḥaqed” (“the Enraged”) Belghouat, was arrested and jailed twice between 2011-2013 in relation to his song “Klab al-Dowla” (“Dogs of the State”). The case centered on a YouTube video created by a fan which visually specified certain government officials. After the constitutional reforms voted upon in July 2011, the person of King Mohamed VI is no longer named in the text as “sacred,” but is still “inviolable.”

<sup>38</sup> As Talal Asad has argued, the modern, secular, liberal state encourages framing religion as a matter for the private sphere (2003: 205).

<sup>39</sup> Enjoining or commanding the good and forbidding the bad, *al-amr bi al-ma’ruf wa an-nahy ‘an al-munkar*, is generally considered an obligation upon all Muslims (*Sura-s* 3:104, 3:110, and others; see Ali 2001: 62, Cook 2001: 598 for translations). This obligation may be read as one background upon which normative moral claims are made within hip hop lyrics as well as other expressions.

<sup>40</sup> Bourquia et al. write of the university students they surveyed in the early 1990s, “Political action inspires amongst our youth...fear; it is synonymous with a lack of interest and a discredited political class who meets with derision” (2000: 16).

**Chapter Six**  
**From Citizen to Subject:**  
**Professionalism, Translocal Networking, and Neoliberalizing Subjectivities**

The goal of this final chapter is to bring a close reading of ethnographic encounters to bear on the longer-term project of theorizing neoliberal subjectivation.<sup>1</sup> As I described in the introductory chapter, our understanding of how subjectivities form in conjunction with neoliberal regimes of value, especially in post-colonial contexts, is still emergent. While much of the preceding chapters has focused on the ways that musickers represent and authenticate themselves to their network peers and to Moroccan publics, this chapter attempts to extend that analysis in two directions—outward to musickers’ contacts beyond their cities and nation; inward to musickers’ work on themselves in the service of making those contacts.

In chapter five, I argued that musickers’ activities in live performance most frequently effect political quietism through, not despite, their embrace of the transnational hip hop tradition’s normative ideology of critique and opposition as both a stylistic and an ethical goal. By locating the proper response to their systemic critiques in the terrain of self, artists communicate a concern with the ethics of citizenship in the face of widespread cynicism regarding the *Makhzen* and the possibilities and benefits of change. In this chapter, I move from citizen back to subject—not to the political subject of an earlier royal state, but to the individual subject forming in the neoliberal moment, who manages him or herself to attempt to achieve the goals advocated by hip hop musickers. This chapter demonstrates that hip hop musickers undertake self-management, or entrepreneurship of the self, in ways that valorize professionalization and translocal mobility. As aspirational discourses, these concepts are invoked and idealized across socio-economic strata. As everyday practices, these concepts are attained mostly by those whose upbringing enables them to take advantage of the effects of neoliberalizing policies.

I draw on Jocelyne Guilbault’s formulation of musical entrepreneurship under neoliberal regimes of value throughout the chapter (2008: 239-265). I use this formulation to consider musicians and non-musician participants, such as organizers and managers, as market actors—as heads of self-designed projects whose goals are to gain various kinds of capital and mobility from competitive settings “predominantly activated by neoliberal practices” (264). In what follows, I discuss entrepreneurial activities in different cities and reaching across different competencies. First, I discuss self-funded, self-organized, amateur hip hop competitions billed as “festivals,” in the mold of le Tremplin and Jil Mawazine (see chapter 4). Next, I contrast the activities of these amateur musicians with the professional and aesthetic history of MC Bigg, possibly the nation’s best-known solo emcee, and ostensibly a model of entrepreneurial savvy. Among other points, each of these examples demonstrates the high priority musickers place on translocal connections. In the last example, I discuss the perceived benefits of those connections in particular, comparing and contrasting two non-musicians’ articulation of their networks across several physical scales and their attempts to establish professional selves within an increasingly closely connected web.

Across many contexts integral to the life of a musician—performing, rehearsing, recording, distributing recordings, collaborating—artists frequently invoke a discourse of professionalism.

Non-artist musickers, including fans, organizers, and media makers, likewise contribute to this discourse by using the term to judge their own work and that of musicians. As I discuss further below, this discourse of professionalism and professionalization is closely intertwined with both the post-colonial project of “modernization” and the contemporary project of neoliberalization. In each of the examples below, professionalism appears as both an externally and an internally defined goal.

Following Ben Brinner’s (2009) adoption of techniques from network analysis, I also draw maps of amateur musickers’ networks to show how musickers build translocal ties into their networks. Internet-based social media and connected physical sites of musicking both constrain and enable these ties between cities in and beyond Morocco. Translocal connectivity is a recurring feature in the narratives of many of my interlocutors throughout this text; here, I turn towards musickers’ valorization of that connectivity, their instrumentalist view of translocal ties, and their senses of belonging to a larger Moroccan or hip hop network. For this generation of Moroccans, “the local,” which has long been shaped by the constant circulation of migrant students and workers between Moroccan and European (and less frequently, North American) cities, is further interpellated into a translocal defined through associations with hip hop musicking and the introduction of Internet-based social media technologies.

I also discuss the role of class positioning in musickers’ efforts to build translocal networks, and further, to deploy those networks in search of social, economic, and geographic mobility. The interaction of economically diverse youth within hip hop networks is important and inspiring, but the ability to access and exploit the benefits of neoliberalization are mostly limited to those individuals whose families benefited from the full employment, educational, and housing policies of the post-Independence era. Today, musickers’ discourse valorizing personal responsibility, another dimension of the drive to professionalization, cuts against ideals of solidarity as they were commonly expressed by their parents’ generation. Finally, I conclude the chapter by discussing how these examples contribute to theorizing on neoliberal subjectivation in a post-colonial context.

### **The Self as Entrepreneur: Professionalism Discourse**

In a well-known passage from his lecture of 14 March 1979, Foucault outlines a transition from the classical liberal conception of homo oeconomicus to that of neoliberalism—specifically the Chicago School of American neoliberalism (2008: 224-226). Homo oeconomicus is no longer a “partner of exchange” with a partner theoretically equal in the moment of exchange, as between the laborer and capital at the moment of the sale of one’s labor, but “an entrepreneur of himself” in multiple domains of life characterized by an ethos of competition (143, 226; cf. Lemke 2002: 60). Foucault summarizes Gary Becker’s theory of “human capital” through the figure of the consumer. In Becker’s theory, each individual has skills, knowledge, and abilities, aspects of competent practice that cannot be divorced from the practicing person and as such cannot be sold like labor(-time). For the neoliberal consumer, consumption is an “enterprise activity” because his human capital helps him to “produce...his own satisfaction” in conjunction with what he consumes (226; cf. Donzelot 2008: 130 quoted in McNay 2009: 58).

Under this logic, the neoliberal subject acts in a capitalist relation to him or herself. The entrepreneur of the self makes investments in him or herself in order to acquire and develop human capital which can then be further invested or deployed. These investments can be identified expansively, as American neoliberal theorists do, as “much broader than simple schooling or professional training” (Foucault 2008: 229). To the extent that a subject reasons about the benefits her actions will bring her in the future, “investments” extend to all the techniques of self-management and self-care that the subject engages in.<sup>2</sup>

In the introduction and chapter four, I noted that performances are the only way that Moroccan hip hop performers see financial income from their musicking, but even then, many performances are not remunerated financially. Completing an album was a personal goal for some of the artists I interviewed, but at the same time, several felt that the album was foremost a way of credentialing oneself in order to compete for paid performances. From this perspective, the choice of some emcees to release not just songs, but entire albums on the internet for free was a logical step in one’s entrepreneurship.<sup>3</sup>

Why then, with so little opportunity for income, do musicians in particular and musickers in general invest so much time, energy, and even financial capital into hip hop musicking? It may seem that neoliberal self-entrepreneurship cannot exhaustively answer this question. After all, competence as a musician or a non-musician practitioner offers emotional, social, and reputational rewards regardless of financial gain (or lack thereof). But self-entrepreneurship does not have to exhaustively answer this question in order to provide us with theoretical purchase on musickers’ aspirational discourses and practices toward competence. Under neoliberal governmentality, in which one relates to oneself as a resource to be developed “based ultimately on a notion of incontestable economic interest” (McNay 2009: 56), both the resources musickers dedicate to their practice and the non-monetary rewards they perceive are investments in the self.<sup>4</sup> If this investment does not portend immediate monetary gain, it does raise the possibility of future social or physical, and then finally economic, mobility.

It has become a truism to point out that neoliberal rationality and governmentality act differently in different times and places.<sup>5</sup> In each “actually existing” neoliberalization, neoliberal economic and political ideologies and normative reason reinforce each other at both institutional and personal scales, even as they articulate with extant norms and forms (cf. Cohen 2003). The extension of market rationalities to formerly non-market domains of life reinforces and feeds back into conceptions of oneself as an entrepreneur developing different sorts of capital in and for oneself, or having, as Wendy Brown puts it, a relation of “opportunistic development” to oneself (2012).

Despite the lack of literal professional opportunities, and despite the general informality of the hip hop music industry—or perhaps because of it—musickers have a well-developed discourse of professionalism, using it to evaluate, promote, or dismiss friends and competitors alike. The goal of professionalism, as defined by both one’s peers and oneself, takes on an ethical weight for those who relate to themselves as an enterprise.<sup>6</sup>

In the majority of contexts, the term “professional” applied to people, actions, or musical choices was deployed to explain what the object of discussion lacked, not what it exhibited. Parameters of professionalism were thus implied rather than stated, and the contours of the ideal

were not necessarily agreed upon. I frequently encountered accusations of non-professionalism when something was considered ineffective, or lacking in what was held up as an international standard of quality. Attitudes around considering artists' performances as valuable labor and paying them appropriately were often targets of this discursive strategy.

Often musicians understood non-paying performances outside of competitions as free publicity for the artist, or alternately, as a favor for a friend or acquaintance that could obligate them to return the favor at some later time. The latter understanding fits musical performance into an economy of cooperation and turn-taking that continues to be important in other domains of social life.<sup>7</sup> Several of the pioneering artists I interviewed were explicit about the inadequacy of both these approaches. For example, in March of 2010 Soultana canceled a concert she had been scheduled to perform at a conference in Fes. When I asked why, she said, "I had to cancel the whole concert...it wasn't professional. They were talking about no contract, and stuff like that, so I told them I couldn't do it" (p.c., Casablanca, 18 March 2010).

In this moment, Soultana's explanation to me showed her living up to a standard she had frequently talked about in the abstract. In comments on the unjustness of favoring international artists for state-sponsored festivals, Soultana had previously pointed out that American or European artists not only cost more, but demanded written contracts. For Soultana, refusing to create a written contract between the organizers and the artist that set out the terms of performance, including what the artist would be paid, was unprofessional because it could enable attempts to take advantage of a local artist, and thus violated her idealized norms of honesty, transparency, and fairness. On the other hand, by this standard, canceling a concert after the performance had been advertised could also be seen as unprofessional because it violates an idealized social obligation to keep one's word after making a verbal commitment. In this case, Soultana's decision demonstrated that her definition of the professional was more reliable, to her, than an older assumption that one's word was as good as a written contract.

It should also be noted that Soultana's decision to cancel the concert in Fes enabled her to attend the hip hop day of the 2010 Tremplin competition in Casablanca, where we had the conversation quoted above. The Tremplin competition was a major site of translocal networking that year, bringing in respected artists and fans from across the city and as far as Meknes, Fes, and Tangier. The fact that her decision allowed her to go to Tremplin, thus trading one "unprofessional" opportunity for one that underscored her place in the hip hop network, might lead an analyst to suggest the contract issue was merely an "excuse." I do not equate her strategic choices with insincerity or duplicitousness. Instead, I suggest that, if attending Tremplin is also seen as a professional obligation or investment in one's self, then it is another example of Soultana's attempts to professionalize.

Similarly, K-Prime, an emcee well known amongst hip hop musickers in Salé with experience working in a New York studio, defined an "artist" through a discourse of professionalism during our interview. "I've performed for free, you've performed for free," he began, gesturing to the friend sitting next to him.

"You spend money for music, you spend time, you work hard, why do you perform for free? That's what I wanna tell the public especially—we artists, we work really hard. ...It's

not that you're gonna pay because I wanna make money. I don't care about the money, I got already enough money. ...But everybody who spends money for something, it's a business. ...Not all Moroccans are artists. 'Cause you know some people, you just call them and say 'Can you come? There is a concert.' ...He doesn't know that he has to be professional and he has to think before answering yes. Which kind of concert? Which microphones? Which speakers? ...I wanna see the stage, first of all. ...If you are a professional, [if] you do professional work, you have to get paid to get on the stage. If we all do that, people, they gonna pay us to get on stage" (interview, Salé, March 26 2010).

K-Prime argues that people should value musicians' investments of time, labor, expertise, and money—including the musicians themselves ("you work hard, why do you perform for free?"). I interpret K-Prime's next statement, that an artist's work is "a business," as normative, not descriptive. Because he prefaced the statement with "I don't care about the money," I interpret K-Prime as arguing that "a business" is an important category deserving of respect, and once someone devotes money (or time, or "work") to an endeavor, it should be considered as such. The way people—specifically concert organizers—should express their respect and the value of artists' work is by paying for performances.<sup>8</sup> Further, "artists" choose carefully which performances best display their talents ("I wanna see the stage, first of all"). The argument eventually becomes circular: "If you are a professional...you have to get paid to get on the stage." Of course, K-Prime is also signaling that his affluence allows him to act in this way ("I got already enough money"). He implies that he chooses professionalism because it is morally superior. His stint working in the New York studio also gives his argument significant influence; the listener may assume that authentic American hip hop practitioners share his opinions.

These examples demonstrate the normative force of professionalism discourse, especially when wielded by respected musicians from the first wave of hip hop musicking, those who pioneered the indigenization of the genre in the 1990s. Sultana used a presumed standard of professionalism to describe a group of organizers; K-Prime used it to describe an attitude he claims is widespread amongst Moroccan artists. Both invoked the discourse to characterize a gap between their ideal and actual conduct ("I've performed for free, you've performed for free").

Less often, professionalism discourse was deployed positively to enhance the image of an object under discussion. For example, the 2006 press booklet for that year's Boulevard Festival introduced some of the festival headliners, most of whom were from Europe, in terms of their beneficial effect on Moroccans: "These guests lead music workshops, in the course of which they share their experiences with young Moroccan artists in order to put them on the path to professionalism" (2). The Festival's parent organization characterized its work "developing" an "alternative scene" as a process of professionalization: "L'EAC-L'Boulevard ensures support for these youth in their careers by offering them an opportunity to play under professional conditions on a large stage [during the festival], but also in events following throughout the year. ... Concerts are regularly organized in different cultural spaces in Casablanca" (2).

This dimension of the professionalism discourse, which revolved around access to material and environments considered standard in the global North, could also be invoked sardonically. One afternoon, I accompanied Fares Vox, the Rbati emcee who had spent several years in the US

and spoke idiomatic English, to a run-down section of the Rabat medina. “I’m picking up some instrumentals from my friend. He put them on my flash drive,” explained Fares. “He’s my guy at the cyber café. I trust him to do it. In the ghetto we get shit done better than the professionals” (p.c. Rabat, March 23 2010).

Under Morocco’s actually existing neoliberalism, one can see tension between two logics: that of an ethos of obligation and redistribution, classically illustrated through Muslim institutions as well as the socialist policies of the post-Independence era, and that of an ethos of individual competitiveness and investments in human capital. I do not suggest here that there are no elements of each ethos in the practices of the other. Rather, this tension emerges between competing visions of professionalism—which may even be held by the same person at different times.

Fes emcee L-Tzack grew up in low-income neighborhoods in Fes with his mother and younger brother; his father died when he was young (interview, Fes, August 2010; cf. chapter 4). Like many other first-wave Moroccan artists, he began working towards competence in the hip hop arts as a b-boy in the early 1990s. A former member of the nationally-known group Fez City Clan, he left the band in 2008 as a result of differences with the other four emcees and the group’s manager.

Even with the band’s name recognition, he felt he lacked opportunities in his solo career for historically and culturally specific reasons. After a facebook post where he complained that one can’t “do it big” in Morocco, I wrote to him to ask why (facebook post, February 7, 2010). His frustration was palpable in his email to me on the subject. “[I]’m mad about my co[u]ntry [‘cause] i’m real[l]y tired of all this thin[gs] work[ing] incorrect[ly],” he wrote.<sup>9</sup> Having framed his complaints as a national issue, he returned to a familiar theme of amongst musickers from all the cities I researched: that of inadequate social, material, and commercial support.

“...no music tv, for people to [see] faces of rappers, I mean something real to transfer our image and culture and music [and] music video to the planet... no stores to [sell] music CD[s], no industry, no marks to support bands, no sponsoring...so what [do] we have [for] the big event of hip hop...one day of hip hop in [B]oulevard [F]estival??? ...come on it’s really not [enough]. ...a lot of collaboration[s] ask [emcees] to travel in Europe to make concerts and promotion there, but her[e] they say rap is nothing, so it mean[s] we will never have this normal support from people.”

One might read this as a confusion of arguments. There are many instances of hip hop musicians being interviewed and performing on shows aimed at youth audiences since the early 2000s, including *Korsa*, *100% Chabab* (“100% Youths”), *Ajjal* (“Generations”), *Top Tarab*, and news coverage of hip hop concerts in the major summer festivals and Boulevard.<sup>10</sup> Moroccan hip hop artists have even appeared on Nessma, a Tunisian television channel. Similarly, one could point out that some local stores sell hip hop CDs—though they are nearly always pirated, like the CDs of every other genre. But L-Tzack is making a bigger point about what the lack of a formal music industry and his expectations for translocal circulation. In other countries, he implies, listeners enjoy dedicated channels for music and music videos, famous rappers get endorsements



from clothing, shoe, telecom and beverage companies, one signs contracts that return a percentage of each CD sold, and anti-piracy measures are in place. Additionally, he compares the demand for hip hop in Europe, as evidenced by the experiences of Moroccan emcees who have performed with European emcees for Francophone or Arabophone audiences, to the anemic demand in Morocco.

The national frame and, within this, the historic power of the state hang over L-Tzack's email. As mentioned in my discussion of Amine Snoop's rehearsal of Nass el-Ghiwane's "Lebțana" in chapter two, contemporary musickers continue to use the rhetorical tactic of accusing an unnamed "they" of something they wish to critique ("but here they say rap is nothing"). This habit, ingrained during the "years of lead" (roughly 1960-1990; cf. Slyomovics 2001 and 2005), allows the speaker to claim a sort of plausible deniability in an atmosphere of generalized insecurity and repression.<sup>11</sup> It also highlights the fact that under Hassan II's rule, before the beginnings of economic and political liberalization in the late 1990s, one could reasonably assume that state power had strong influence over any given situation. Given this history, when a musicker uses similar language today, one must at least consider the possibility that the "they" in question are state actors or the *Makhzen* in general—or that the speaker himself is unsure. In this case, I think L-Tzack is asserting a lack of support from both governing actors or institutions and ordinary listeners. Further, when he concludes "so it means we will never have this normal support from people," I read him as despairing of the continuing strong influence of official opinion on his fellow citizens.

How could L-Tzack reasonably make such complaints when the hip hop arts saw an unprecedented wave of interest from public and private telecommunications and state-sponsored festivals since 2003? For L-Tzack, these developments are a drop in the bucket compared to the formal music industries active in other countries. He continues by comparing Moroccan efforts to those of other places, again within a national frame.

"look [at] Egypt not in hip hop but in music b[usi]ness, look we all know about Rotana T[V] ... look to [Saudi Arabia], they have MTV ARABIA right now, we all know about it here, it's normal it's mtv and it's arabic... in 1996 we [heard] albums of arabic rap coming from [Algeria], and it was really the N#1 arabic country in rap, and in that time we see shows and videos in Algerian TV... directly Morocco [stood] up and just with nothing, it's right now the #1 in arabic rap. but we need really to jump right now to the professionalism step. I mean this every fucking *responsable* in this country have to do something for all [these] young [people]. they have to stop to think...about [how] to make all this lost energy go in [the] right way, and let all [these] artist[s] make [their lives] and dreams...and [e]specially not [end up] like the old artist[s]. I mean not [spend] all my life in music and in the end finish[...poor]" (p.c. Rabat-Fes, February 7 2010).

For L-Tzack, the conditions that must be established for hip hop to thrive are still the responsibility of the state, precisely because only the state has the means to ensure and maintain those conditions. The invocation of Algeria's mid-1990s, when hip hop flourished for a brief period and influenced Maghrebi musickers in France and North Africa, is especially significant.

Like Morocco in the 1990s, Algeria's telecommunications industries were also state-controlled. Yet the government allowed hip hop onto its airwaves. L-Tzack implies that Moroccan hip hop musickers have talent and drive, since they are making music and dance without the sort of sustained validation that Algeria's "golden age" of hip hop or MTV Arabia evokes here. "Professionalism," in this comment, refers not to individual artists' practices or expectations, but government actors and heads of business (either can be referred to by *responsables*) taking responsibility for the lives of "all these young people." L-Tzack believes creating the conditions for a flourishing, regulated music market similar to those that Moroccan artists wish to break into across Europe and North America will redirect "lost energy" and ensure that artists can earn a living from their music.

My intention in this discussion is not to create boundaries between "old" Muslim ideas of redistribution, obligation, and charity, and "new" neoliberal ideas of individualization and competition. Indeed, I am most interested in those moments when both redistribution and competition are invoked at the same time. In the example I have just given above, L-Tzack desires to compete in a formalized market similar to those found in Europe and North America. Contrary to normative neoliberal discourse, he insists the state ought to be (and is) responsible for creating it. Not because all practices should be circulated, and their value discovered, via markets, but the opposite—because the state has an obligation to care for its citizens even if they choose to pursue a career without a "natural" market.

While L-Tzack's rhetoric was distinct from other artists who explicitly embraced the idea of building up market infrastructure themselves (e.g. Don Bigg, discussed below), he engaged in the same entrepreneurial tactics as many other musickers. In addition to the collaboration on the music video "M'dina Majnouna," discussed below, he also leveraged his connections for a translocal collaboration with two other musickers, an up-and-coming producer and beatmaker from Casablanca called West, and a Moroccan emcee based in Washington D.C., RS-Lou. They entered the song they produced together, "Go Hard," in an online competition for best hip hop song sponsored by a local website, and aggressively promoted it via his and his friends' facebook pages in order to incite network members to vote for it. Throughout 2010, he released a series of "freestyles" to gauge interest for a complete album. Despite these practices, L-Tzack was still frustrated by his lack of invitations to perform.

It is important to underline here that L-Tzack comes from an impoverished working-class background, while most of the musickers discussed in this chapter have more family wealth and more opportunities. Unlike them, he lacks access to the same kinds of formal and informal education that allows musickers to invest in their own careers, even on a small scale, and to take advantage of the effects of neoliberalization. His collaborations in particular earned him respect throughout the hip hop network, but his poverty and family obligations prevented him from professionalizing moves others undertake, like moving to Casablanca.

As he indicated with his comment on the impact of tourism on his neighborhood's safety, mentioned in chapter four, L-Tzack experiences the repressive side of state power more frequently than the other musickers in this chapter as a result of his socio-economic level. Precisely because the repressive side of state power is more visible to him than to more well-off musickers, he was more keenly aware of the state's productive power as well. He closed his

email to me by summarizing the inequality of the playing field with words that could apply equally to low-income Moroccans' experiences of the post-Independence and the neoliberal eras: "talent don't make money and future...money make[s] money and future."

In the next sections, I describe how musickers—including amateur musicians, one particularly successful musician, and non-musicians—act as entrepreneurs of themselves, participating in hip hop musicking in ways that develop their human, social, and cultural capital. Continuing from the example L-Tzack provides above, I bring out tensions between competing visions of professionalism in some of the various contexts in which I witnessed valorizations of professionalism and entrepreneurship. Exploring these tensions helps to delineate musickers' imagined, if unsaid, goals. It also helps to delineate the limits of entrepreneurial imagination in the face of chronic immobility and political cynicism.

### **Becoming Professional**

#### *amateur competitions*

Between fall 2009 and fall 2010, I learned of five amateur competitions billed as festivals in four different cities, and attended three. All of the competitions I attended were modeled on le Tremplin or Jil Mawazine. They were created, organized, executed, advertised, and funded by small teams of youth whose goal was to give their friends and acquaintances who were not ready for those competitions a chance to perform. All three were designed as competitions which charged a fee to enter, funded the needs of the festival out of those fees, and then rewarded the winners with the remainder of the income. This system was and is an elegant way to sidestep the young organizers' lack of initial capital, but its success depended on the amateur performers' agreement with the premise and values of the enterprise--or, rather, their agreement that a festival could be both a competition and an enterprise. Below I describe the demonstrations of professionalism discourse I witnessed in one amateur competition.

The poster advertised "the first edition of the Hip Hop Non Stop Festival" on Saturday, May 15, 2010 (figure 13). The organizers had worked for months to put the competition together, including a facebook marketing blitz starting in late 2009. They could not have known so far beforehand that they would be overshadowed by the Boulevard Festival, which only announced its dates a few months before. In fact, this Saturday turned out to be the day devoted to hip hop at Boulevard. Instead of staying in or making the trip to Casablanca for the free festival, where they could see performances by the 2010 Tremplin winners, two solo emcees from Casa, Muslim, and a US group called Delinquent Habits, eighteen solo emcees or groups packed a small auditorium at the municipal "cultural complex" in Sala al-Jadida (New Salé), a small planned community outside Salé. Each contestant had sent in two original songs, a CV, a photo of the group, and 200 dirhams in their application the month before.<sup>12</sup> In addition to this, the competition also charged 20 MAD to audience members. However, with eighteen competitors with one to four people each, a total of sixteen invited musicians, plus judges, organizers, and volunteers, non-musician supporters were a small minority of the audience. In addition, it is reasonable to assume that

some supporters attended with performers or judges, as I did, and were not asked to pay, as I was not.



Fig. 13. Poster for the “Festival HipHop Non Stop.”

Like le Tremplin, the Hip Hop Non Stop Festival had advertised its competitors and the three groups who had been invited from al-Jadida (a town south of Casablanca on the Atlantic coast), Casablanca, and Fes. Unlike le Tremplin, the Festival had also advertised five judges: Soultana, whose song “Sawt Nssa” had been getting lots of radio airplay and praise since January; Amiral, respected locally for his early Salé group 19-Contre-Attack; One Fire, another local emcee; Si Simo, the leader of Fes City Clan who was generating buzz about his upcoming solo album; and Fatman, an emcee from the Agadir-based collective Style Souss. Though the judges were not

expected to (and did not) perform, they helped to legitimate the new competition and to draw fans and contestants eager to meet them.<sup>13</sup>

Doors opened at 1 that Saturday, and the first competitors were scheduled to go on at 2pm. I arrived near 1:45 to a near-empty auditorium where soundchecks were in progress. One of the judges arrived at 2:35. By 2:45, the seats were filling with contestants and friends, all of the competitors' deejays had finished testing out their burned CDs and checking levels on the single pair of CD turntables set up to the right of the stage, and the competition was ready to begin.

Without necessarily using the term, the organizers exhorted the competitors to what they considered professional behavior. Before the first contestant began, the main organizer of the competition, a fresh-faced b-boy in his early twenties named Karim, welcomed everyone. He explained the order of events and laid down some ground rules for performers. Contestants had no more than 10 minutes, including the deejays' set up and take down, to perform two songs. Contestants were to rap over the instrumentals they had sent in with their applications, and not over pre-recorded versions of themselves (what musickers called "playback," from the English). All lyrics must be original.

Soultana also stood up before the assembled competitors and explained that in addition to Karim's points, the judges were looking for original instrumentals instead of downloaded or "stolen" (*mashfor*) beats. She mentioned that the judges were paying close attention to sonic and visual aspects of delivery, including the "mise en scène," by which she meant the way emcees moved on stage; timing or flow; and a lack of curse words or rude epithets.

From its start, however, the competition encountered some of the same issues about which musickers frequently complained during concerts of any kind. These included technical problems with the equipment; unfamiliarity with the equipment and the acoustics from both the technicians and the performers; late arrivals and no-shows, including the two judges coming from several hours away (Si Simo and Fatman); and confusion about the order of performances.

In addition, the organizers' and judges' preferences were not entirely respected. Despite the judges' request for "clean" raps, plenty of contestants swore on stage (in both Derija and English). From my seat a row behind the judges, I watched the three judges exchange glances and comments about instrumentals they recognized. They also noted instrumentals that seemed to be made by the contestants, but used the original musical material in ways that put the emcees at a disadvantage. For example, one group's use of an almost untouched Bob Marley song drew criticism for its slow tempo. Another, more daring emcee tried to rap over a compound meter, but failed to ride the beat, losing his timing and stumbling to catch up.

These were understandable lapses. Each of the competing emcees had memorized their verses. In order to take inappropriate words out of them at the last minute, they would have to replace them with a meaningful term that also fit the rhyme and rhythm of the verse, a difficult thing to do on the spot. Even if they had been able to do so, in the moment of performance a nervous emcee might just as easily fall back on what he had practiced. Likewise, while using familiar and obviously downloaded instrumentals was generally frowned upon, the contestants were not explicitly informed that this would hurt their chances with the judges until the opening minutes of the competition.

In addition to these, though, organizers found that they had to manage the behaviors of competitors in ways they had not anticipated. The eighth group to compete had special difficulty rapping over their instrumentals, despite the fact that they were “singing playback.” Perhaps confused by the sound coming back to them from the hall, which easily overwhelmed the three monitors on stage, each of the three emcees were unable to stay on top of their previously recorded flow. The audience’s reaction was immediate and palpable: as soon as people heard the distance between the “playback” voice and the live voice of the first emcee, they turned to one another and began to talk. The third emcee missed his entrance and received boos from some of the audience.

Despite this, the group now prepared to move on to its second song. Their timing issues continued. Many in the audience were expressing their view of the performance by talking or texting, but a small group concentrated in the back of the auditorium continued to boo, nearly drowning out the first verse from the now-shaken emcees. At this point, with many in the front of the audience looking back at the culprits, Karim appeared in front of the stage. Waving to the deejay to pause the music, Karim turned to the audience and lectured them on their inappropriate behavior. With the crowd now silent, he sat down and gestured to the group to begin again. However, they had conferred during Karim’s speech. Instead of restarting the instrumental, each emcee delivered his verse a cappella. Their brave finish garnered applause from all of the judges and a few members of the audience.

After several hours of competitions, three invited performances, a half-hour of deliberations by the judges, and final performances by the first- and second-place winners, tempers were short by the end of the day. Some competitors left dissatisfied, and their complaints also took the form of commonplace tropes from within the professionalism discourse. The second-prize winner, a duo from Salé named RedLine, were accused of using a downloaded instrumental in their performance. Disappointed competitors asked how RedLine could have reached second place over other groups with original instrumentals. Contestants also complained that RedLine’s songs, including a long call-and-response routine with the audience, had been longer than other competitors’. Suggestions of favoritism, inconsistency, and hypocrisy on the part of the judges were aired on facebook and in conversations for days after the competition.<sup>14</sup>

Eighteen soloists and groups, from Salé, Rabat, Casablanca, Meknes, and several smaller suburbs, passed up one of the biggest hip hop events of the year at the Boulevard Festival that Saturday. Instead, they chose to contribute a significant amount of money to perform for a tiny but dedicated audience made up almost entirely of their friends and fellow performers. While the winning groups took home some of that money, the prizes were not the most important reason to compete. The Hip Hop Non Stop Festival offered an opportunity for amateur musickers—both the competitors and the first-time organizers—to put themselves on the map, so to speak, to enter the general hip hop network and form their own links within it. It also gave them an opportunity to negotiate what to expect from each other aesthetically and socially. Throughout the afternoon, disagreements over seemingly minor issues—how long a group stayed on stage, whether a group that arrived late could compete later in the program, whether English curses were as offensive as Arabic ones—showed that understandings of appropriate behaviors were fluid.

As in the examples I gave above, exhortations to a certain standard of behavior illuminated the gaps between idealized norms and everyday practice for both performers and organizers. Some performers flouted rules they knew in advance, but some were hamstrung by rules seemingly made up on the spot. In theory, organizers had collected at least 3,600 MAD from the competitors, but despite this they were unable to combat the technical difficulties that so often plagued performances at all levels and assured the entire day would run late.

One might argue this event demonstrates that the competitors, all members of the second wave of hip hop musickers, do not value originality, politeness, and camaraderie as much as the judges, all members of the first wave. Instead, I suggest that the competition framework itself encouraged the competitors to a certain aggressive approach in their performances and their expressions of opinion. Instead of the friendly ciphers and *ḥalqat* of first-wave musickers' recollections—themselves idealized, no doubt, in the retelling—second-wave musickers must reckon with the standards of established festivals, competitions, and concerts, as well as tv and radio. The professionalization of hip hop musicking which began after Spring 2003 has rarely been remunerative, but it has had genuine effects. One of its effects has been to shift performance opportunities away from informal and ad hoc events towards the festival and competition examples established by events like Boulevard and Jil Mawazine. Soultana recalls her first “real” performance taking place at a student talent show in the mid-1990s (p.c. Casablanca, October 21 2009). To perform on a “real” stage in front of their peers today costs aspiring musicians much more in time, energy, and money than a performance amongst friends could have done ten or more years ago.

### *Don Bigg*

One of the most recognized Moroccan rappers in his country and abroad, MC Bigg's (aka Don Bigg) career trajectory resonates with the experiences of many hip hop artists in Casablanca and other Moroccan cities, though few have become quite so audible or successful. In turn, he has become a role model for some musickers and a cautionary tale for others. Here, I provide a brief artistic biography, then discuss his narrative of himself as an entrepreneur and some reactions to his entrepreneurial and aesthetic choices.

A self-described product of “the middle class,” Bigg was born Toufik Hazeb in 1983. He was raised in Roches Noires, an area within Hay Mohammedi, a Casablanca neighborhood known for its artistic pedigree as the home of the members of Nass el-Ghiwane and, today, fellow artists from the hip hop and fusion genres.<sup>15</sup> His family benefited from the policies of the post-Independence years; his father worked for the *Office National des Chemins de Fer* (ONCF), the public railroad agency. Bigg earned his baccalaureate degree (equivalent to a high school diploma) from *Lycée Imam Malik*, a well-respected school in central Casablanca dating from the Protectorate era, and began to study law (Maréchaud 2006). He grew up in a home that enjoyed music from the US, and where the Beatles were frequently played. Later he listened along with family and friends to Whitney Houston and Michael Jackson via vinyl records, cassette tapes, and satellite television. He heard US hip hop, characterized in the late 1990s by a much-

marketed division between East and West coast styles and performers, most often through tapes borrowed from or listened to in the company of friends.

Bigg formed a group inspired by East Coast hip hop called Thug Gang as a teen (Callen 2009). In a 2006 interview for the Francophone Moroccan weekly *TelQuel*, he described the six different short-lived musical groups he belonged to between 1999 and 2003 (Maréchaud 2006). The last group with whom he would partner was named Mafia-C; it included two other emcees who continue to work in hip hop today—Caprice (a member of Casa Crew) and MC Jo (a solo artist). Mafia-C was the first of his groups to gain any significant recognition, in the early 2000s. He subsequently associates himself with Mafia-C first and foremost when retelling his own history, starting at the point that his career began to be successful.

At first, like other musickers I interviewed, Bigg attempted to rap in the language of the recordings he loved. For some, that language was French; for Bigg, it was English. In the song “1983...2006,” an autobiographical narrative, Bigg claims his first public performance was in 1999. He performed with Mafia-C at L’Boulevard in 2001, but quit the group afterwards to work on solo material. He would perform at the festival again in June 2006, two months after his first album *Magharba tel Mout (Moroccans Until Death)* was released amid a flurry of media coverage, and the same year that the legendary US hip hop group De La Soul headlined the festival.

With his debut release, in which Bigg unleashed formidable rhymes on a wide variety of targets, and his participation in L’Boulevard, then widely seen as both culturally progressive and financially and politically independent, Bigg was at the center of a buzz around the oppositional potential in hip hop and other popular musics in 2006. Then, in 2007, Bigg reportedly performed at a rally for the Socialist Union of Popular Forces (USFP) (Graiouid 2010). The USFP was created in 1975 as the descendants of the National Union of Popular Forces (UNFP) (Gilson Miller 2013). The UNFP was created in 1959 by former, left-wing members of the dominant pre- and post-Independence party, the pan-Arabist Istiqlal (lit. “Independence”). In their respective heydays, the USFP and its progenitor carried the majority of the opposition to Istiqlal’s political and social conservatism with an explicitly socialist platform, and counted most of the urban leftists, democracy activists, and trade unionists amongst their members.

In 1998, the USFP somewhat reluctantly took the lead in the “alternance” government established by King Hassan II when the King chose the leader of the USFP, Abdelrrahmane Youssoufi, as the Prime Minister from the opposition. While Hassan II appeared to create conditions for political reform under alternance, the USFP appeared to take the role of trailblazer, thus also taking on public responsibility for this innovation’s success or failure. By 2007, when Bigg performed at a rally in the run-up to that year’s elections, the USFP was, like other parties from the 1960s and 70s, looking for ways to attract more youthful members to the party.

For some audience members, who assumed Bigg’s support for the USFP, this was a disappointing choice from an emcee that they had hoped would retain his independence from tired party politics.<sup>16</sup> Bigg himself claimed that he did not support the USFP, nor any other party.<sup>17</sup> For other audience members, the instrumentalist stance Bigg signaled by performing for a political party without publicly declaring support for any party or the political process in general was the more disappointing aspect of the episode. Some of the weight of the distinction



frequently made between Bigg and Muslim, a Tangerois emcee with an “underground” reputation, stems from this event.

In speech and action, Bigg has become a leader in the professionalization of his genre. He has pioneered several of aspects of musical entrepreneurship I discuss further below. He is the most outspoken champion of higher wages for festival artists and Moroccan musicians in general, the first to institute a point-of-sale system for his albums, and the first to aggressively diversify stylistically both in his backing tracks and the types of musical collaborations he undertakes.

In 2008, Bigg was again scheduled to play at L’Boulevard. Though he had not released an album in two years, he was still revered by many hip hop fans, and had taken advantage of the increasing access to Internet and increasing willingness to cover hip hop musicking from the television and print media to promote himself and release a steady stream of music in the meantime. From 2006 through 2009, he uploaded one track at a time to his Myspace page, eventually collecting those songs and a few others into a mixtape for free download. His songs “Joumhourī Hkem” (“Only Fans Can Judge Me,” as he translates it on a t-shirt of his own design, a reference to Tupac Shakur’s “Only God Can Judge Me”) and “iToub,” which would be re-released on *Byad ou Kḥal* and the compilation *Les Eclectiques Raptiviste*, were already hits by Spring 2008 despite little radio airtime.<sup>18</sup>

Yet Bigg declined to perform at L’Boulevard that year, walking away from the festival a few months before. According to his statements, he asked for a price that he felt was commensurate with his status—about 100,000 MAD, or \$12,500 USD—and was accepted. A few months before the festival, his fee was cut to 60,000 MAD by the organizers, who claimed (again according to Bigg) that they could not afford the original fee and were free to alter the terms of the agreement since there was no written contract (Callen 2009). In the interview I attended in 2009, Bigg claimed that once he refused to perform for the lesser fee, festival organizers in Morocco “boycotted” him in order to reject his self-advocacy and his view that Moroccan artists ought to be paid identically to foreign musicians. The dispute with L’Boulevard was probably exacerbated by a monetary gift made to the organization by King Mohammed VI that same year (cf. chapter four). Bigg performed outside of the country that summer, but not, to my knowledge, at any festivals in Morocco.

In addition to refusing to perform without a fee that is, in his estimate, “respectful,” Bigg has sought a measure of control over and profit from his recordings by instituting a “point-of-sale” system. Each major Moroccan city had a single designated venue from which one could purchase “real” physical copies of the album. Bigg attempted this for his 2006 release and expanded the system in 2009, adding venues in more cities and producing an accompanying booklet of lyrics unavailable with copied or downloaded versions of the album. In addition, Bigg was one of the few emcees to sign with the short-lived Casablanca label Clic Records. More recently, he has marketed his music and those of his protégés as coming from his namesake production company. Bigg also employs a manager to ensure control over his image, his personal information, and his time. As I learned through several attempts to contact Bigg, his managers—at least three since 2008—act as gatekeepers, making the first-line decisions about who may meet and interview Bigg.<sup>19</sup>

Other tactics are rhetorical. He has publicly distanced himself from Muslim, a former collaborator to whom he is often contrasted, in a much-discussed “beef.” While the apparent mutual dislike is widely recognized, and disparaged, as a copy of the infamous public disputes between US rappers Notorious B.I.G. and Tupac Shakur in the mid-1990s, the energy given over to criticism of the move by musickers themselves serves as free, effective, word-of-mouth marketing.<sup>20</sup> In an interview, Muslim’s manager Hakim Chagraoui, the founder and owner of independent promotion company Genius Communications, explicitly addressed this as a successful publicity tactic (Casablanca, November 10 2009).

Bigg has also voiced mild disappointment over the release of the documentary *I Love Hip Hop in Morocco* (dir. Asen and Needleman, 2007), which includes interviews with Bigg and footage of his performances from 2003 and 2004. In his opinion, the film showed Moroccan hip hop at the beginning of a period of professionalization that was much further along in 2009.<sup>21</sup> Its visibility in the present risked leaving audiences with the impression that Moroccan hip hop musicking was merely imitative and several years behind the latest musical trends. This impression could, in turn, hurt Moroccan artists attempting to get gigs or circulate their music outside the country.

Bigg also leads other musickers in his comprehensive translocal networking strategy, including his collaborations with fellow musicians and his portfolio of Internet-based social media. Since 2007, Bigg has recorded with several of the leading Moroccan musicians from across the spectrum of “Western” popular musics, including rock band Hoba Hoba Spirit, ragga vocalist Momo Cat, and R&B-style vocalist Oum. In addition to his famous concert with Cuban jazz pianist Omar Sosa and Sosa’s band, arranged for the 2010 Mawazine Festival, Bigg has also appeared on recordings with American remix artist Maga Bo and Junior Reid. In 2011, during the height of Anglophone media coverage of the Arab Spring, he was also in talks with MTV to put a version of his anti-protest single “Ma Bghitch” (“I Don’t Want It”) on the channel (see below); this would have made his the first Moroccan hip hop song to appear on the network’s television platform. In late 2012, he began to promote his latest project, a “mixtape” of younger emcees he is curating and promoting as the “Don Bigg Family” rapping over beats from *Byad u K7al*.<sup>22</sup>

In terms of social media, like most hip hop musickers Bigg has a professional and personal presence on facebook, YouTube, and myspace. Unlike most Moroccan artists, he also is represented on iTunes, twitter, and other less popular platforms. His publications on YouTube extend well beyond music videos to excerpts from concerts, television and radio interviews, miniature “making-of” documentaries, and an occasional series called “qrib men les fans” (“straight from the fans”) where he addresses fan questions on camera. This is complimented by a wide range of fan-made material, such as YouTube videos with lyric transcriptions, interview segments taped from Moroccan television, amateur recordings of concerts, and point-by-point exegeses on song lyrics.<sup>23</sup>

Like his music, his understanding of professionalization closely follows the models of entrepreneurial hip hop artists from the US top 40 charts, sometimes more extensively than for his fans and fellow musicians. He shares with US artists a consistent discourse on personal responsibility, evidenced in both lyrics and comments. For example, in a 2009 interview, Bigg claimed one of his goals was to educate his Moroccan public on their own capabilities. In his

opinion, two generations of Moroccans had grown up assuming they could do little to take charge of pressing personal and social problems in the face of bureaucracy, inequality, and inadequate political representation. His entrepreneurial innovations and his lyrics were both directed, he said, at getting listeners to realize they might not succeed in making the changes they sought, but that they should "just try. Even try."

Perhaps more importantly, Bigg is explicit about the complicity between his role as a musician with a strongly worded brand of socio-political commentary and as an entrepreneur. In the conversation about his refusal to lower his concert fee for L'Boulevard, he drew a spatializing and equalizing distinction between art and commerce, saying, "When I'm inside the studio it's one hundred percent creativity and feelings. When I'm outside, it's one hundred percent business."

Bigg's entrepreneurship extends to his musicality in ways that complement his critique of self, society, and institutions. He actively seeks to produce tracks that resonate with the newest hip hop trends internationally. *Magharba tel Mout* was strongly influenced by the beatmaking work of Kanye West, whose multi-platinum selling album *Late Registration* was released the year before. Four songs on the album use West's trademark technique of speeding up and looping a female vocalist; four songs use a loop of the full texture of a well-known song, adding further instrumentation on top of that, another common practice from West.<sup>24</sup> For Kanye West, the audacious use of recognizable chunks of songs is now affordable despite rising licensing fees in the US; for Bigg and his other beatmakers, who are independent and unregulated, there are few consequences to using well-known music for samples. For example, "1983...2006" is built on a sped-up sample of Frank Sinatra's "My Way," and "Skizo Fri3" (also from *Magharba tel Mout*) uses a quickened sample of Nina Simone's "Feeling Good," chopped into small pieces during the verse and played in its entirety during the chorus.

Next, in 2008, he departed from the practice of using samples as historic citations with the release of "Joumhourî Hkem." Instead building the backing track from samples whose origins in original songs were clearly audible, this track adopted several characteristics of the popular "dirty South" sound of the late 2000s. As represented by Atlanta's T.I. and Swizz Beats, or Miami's Rick Ross, these included synthetic drum sounds with attacks on every sixteenth of a measure; choruses and antiphonal responses by groups of male vocalists; long tones with a buzzy electronic timbre; and a quick, tongue-twisting flow.<sup>25</sup> His 2009 release *Byad u K7al* demonstrated familiarity with a broad range of hip hop instrumental styles, prominently featuring both his own production work and the work of a US-based beatmaker of Moroccan descent.

To my knowledge, Bigg has never used traditionally Moroccan musical material on his tracks, preferring to produce or commission original beats fully in line with the trends of his primarily US listening habits. Some are so closely related to US hip hop styles that they use the same samples as songs by reasonably well-known artists. For example, "Banda Hamra" (2006) follows California group Dilated Peoples' "Worst Comes to Worst" (2001) in sampling from William Bell's 1968 single "I Forgot to Be Your Lover." In the US, the choice of these samples is heard as a form of historic citation and authentication (cf. Schloss 2004). In Morocco, where many create their own beats using free, downloaded software and instrumental patches, producing in this style indexes US currents.

In keeping with strong normative expectations that rappers will “represent” their home spaces and cultures, Bigg’s lyrics address Casablančan and national socio-economic issues in a way that reflects his relatively comfortable urban lifestyle, generally free of references to his own faith practice, while refusing to see this as anything less than Moroccan (p.c. 21 October 2009; Callen 2009). In chapter five, I used a close reading of “16/05” to discuss the impact of the May 16<sup>th</sup>, 2003 suicide bombings, and the state’s reaction to the bombings, on the nascent hip hop counterpublic. One theme apparent in “16/05” that sets Bigg apart as a lyricist and entrepreneur is the liberal argument embedded in that piece; as the author, Bigg fully agrees with the discursive link between poverty and violent extremism made by the state and its international colleagues. The song “Ma Bghitch” (2011) is another example of this rhetorical strategy, in which Bigg critiques state policies and actors, yet ultimately acquiesces to normative Moroccan politics.

The video for his single “Ma Bghitch” (“I Don’t Want It”) was released in late June 2011. Directed by Khalid Douache (a.k.a. DJ Key), the head of a boutique production studio and the DJ for Meknessi hip hop pioneers H-Kayne, this video represents a self-conscious effort by the duo to set a new local standard for production quality and narrative cohesion (p.c. Jeff Callen, Berkeley-SF 10 August 2012; Taoufik Hazeb, Brooklyn-Casablanca 10 Nov 2012) while demonstrating a deep grasp of transnational hip hop aesthetics.<sup>26</sup>

Based on his past critiques of corruption (e.g. “Bladi Blad,” “Casanegra”) and his consistent exhortations to actively pursue one’s goals despite what he sees as enculturated deference and depoliticization (e.g. “Al-Khouf” [“Fear”]), one might expect Bigg to be sympathetic to the Feb 20<sup>th</sup> movement. Yet as he makes clear throughout the song, Bigg is equally suspicious of all participants in political life, whether they are ordinary citizens or elected officials. During the first verse, he uses text and images to make two analogous contrasts between “real” and “fake.” On one hand, he contrasts his own music-making with a “fake” rapper, shown wearing bling, driving an SUV, and surrounded by miniskirted girls. On the other hand, he contrasts the working poor getting on a crowded bus with protesters in a pointed parody of a march, where a tiny group of people wave signs that read “al-Hizb al-Hmar,” or “the Donkey Party,” closely followed by an expensive car. During the choruses, a series of familiar Moroccans, including actors Mohamed Ben Brahim and Aicha Mahmah, and rappers Would Chaab and MC Jo, speak with Bigg’s voice.

During the second verse, Bigg asks “Who gonna represent the crowd? Is it 4 teenagers eating [in] [R]amadane for fun or some so-called radical islamists [?] Or a corrupted journalist?” In the video, he depicts the relationship he imagines to obtain at this moment between MALI (a group advocating for changing the law around eating in public during Ramadan), Islamists, and “corrupted” journalists. Visually, he summarizes this by depicting a “corrupt” journalist and an Islamist exchanging a briefcase full of cash, while a MALI representative looks on from behind a fence. This staging renders the MALI representative’s position ambiguous—he may be watching in shock and disgust, or he may desire to take part in the transaction.

In conversation, Bigg summarized his intentions in a way that underscores this distrust of political actors, describing “Ma Bghitch” as “a BIG (NO) to the fake protesters from the 20th february movement.” He echoes a familiar line about such “fake” protesters, dividing them from “the real one[s] who wanna make a good change in morocco,” labeling them as “just some

opportunists [who] want to make anarchy” (p.c. Taoufik Hazeb, Brooklyn-Casablanca, 10 Nov 2012).<sup>27</sup> When I asked who was sincere and who was an opportunist, Bigg clarified that to him, the Feb 20<sup>th</sup> movement had lacked credibility even before the Islamist group Jami’at al-‘Adl wa al-Ihsane (“Justice and Charity Association,” or JCA) joined the coalition.<sup>28</sup> Thus Bigg consistently separates citizens who are active in politics, or politicized, from a somewhat romanticized view of “the people,” communicating the idea that “doing” politics doesn’t actually “do” anything constructive.

The end of “Ma Bghitch” features a long “outro” where Bigg speaks over a distorted guitar solo. As Bigg summarizes in his English gloss of the lyrics, “...politics don't do nothing for the people. Yes, we know but people don't do nothing for themselves.” Bigg distrusts those who try to represent “the people,” but he has made a career—like other rappers—of promoting himself as a representative. Likewise, in this and other songs he criticizes his fellow Moroccans for what he sees as a lack of personal responsibility, but then distrusts the actions they do take. In his critique of the political as ultimately corrupting and empty, Bigg recalls ‘Omar Es-Sayed’s refusal to approve the politicization of Nass el-Ghiwane’s lyrics (cf. chapter two). In both cases, these artists are not apathetic—they certainly have opinions—but they also claim they are not participating.

Despite the historic continuation of this rhetorical strategy, for Bigg, the rhetoric connects to his entrepreneurship in two ways. First, Bigg cannot afford to alienate only one group exclusively, but he does rely on a reputation of fearless and insightful condemnation of corruption and hypocrisy. Thus he must make savvy choices over who to defend (e.g. the poor or “oulad chaab,” “children of the people”) and who to criticize (e.g. a strawman elite, Parliament). Second, his entrepreneurship depends upon market infrastructure propped up by the state. Even if Bigg were to complain about the state exclusively and specifically in a way could escape practical censorship, he would still be taking advantage of that infrastructure during performances at concerts and via radio and television distribution.

One may view Bigg’s tactics from 2006 through the present day as an attempt to chart his own star course, despite the lack of institutions to support star-making in the largely informal Moroccan music industry. These include musical tactics (e.g., adapting current musical and lyrical styles, staying ahead of other Moroccan emcees), marketing tactics (e.g., translocal collaborations, efforts to get people to buy non-pirated CDs, television and radio appearances, use of social media), and personal tactics (e.g., striving towards a vision of professionalization cast in the image of the US popular music industry, making a personal division between “creativity” and “business”). The unique intensity and clarity with which Bigg pursues this vision, and the passionate like or dislike he inspires in other hip hop musickers, makes him an interesting exemplar for both the opportunities and the problems facing professional musicians in the wider field of new “current” musics (*musiques actuelles*). Bigg’s explicit pursuit of material success, his statements and actions that emphasize his self-presentation as an individual creator, are somewhat unusual next to Moroccan Muslim traditions of modesty and of defining oneself through family, region, or lineage. Yet some part of Bigg’s outsize success can be attributed to a sense of his authenticity within hip hop aesthetics—the sense that Bigg fully and accurately

embodies hip hop culture as it is practiced outside Morocco, even in the US—and his presentation of self-assured entrepreneurship falls squarely within those aesthetics.

From a Foucauldian perspective on neoliberal subjectivation, Bigg's entrepreneurial tactics towards his business and himself are entirely consistent with the sincerity he claims in his critiques. The values he seeks to cultivate in himself and others are, in the language of human capital theorists, investments for future success. For neoliberal subjects, who are encouraged to think of themselves as a flexible "bundle of skill sets" to be deployed in marketplaces of labor, love, and other endeavors (Gershon and Alexy 2011: 799), a relation of constant cultivation or entrepreneurship to oneself *and* a genuine belief in the virtues of that relation are equally necessary assets. Bigg articulated this quite succinctly in an interview held in 2007 for the online magazine Magharebia.<sup>29</sup> The interviewer asked, "You won the prize in the last Maghreb Music Awards [in 2006 for *Magharba tel Mout*], how do you feel about this success?" Bigg's answer: "I'm very happy and I say that authenticity and sincerity are *values that pay*" (Magharebia 2007: n.p, my emphasis). With his focus on using hip hop's assertive new forms of critique to promote personal responsibility and a particular kind of self-management, Bigg does not resist, but leads the cultural aspects of Morocco's neoliberalization.

### **Translocal Connections Through Social Media**

In this section I will stress how online activities and relationships have become inseparable from offline reputations and performances. The two musickers I discuss below, Fouzia and Amine, play multiple roles within their hip hop networks. They are promoters and managers first, and musicians second. Both are in their twenties, unmarried, and supported by their families. While the relative wealth of their families differs, both are from homes with one or more working parents, and both have access to high-quality education with some form of private post-secondary instruction. In addition, both are from cities other than Casablanca, the nation's economic and hip hop cultural center. This means that both find alternative ways to connect to hip hop networks that are often routed through Casablanca's people, spaces, and institutions.

The discourse of professionalism advanced by Bigg, and the practices of professionalization in all kinds of competitions, demonstrate the increased importance of self-entrepreneurship to the possibility of social and economic mobility under neoliberalization. In the next section, I compare the backgrounds of Fouzia and Amine in order to situate their entrepreneurship with respect to their access to technology, and to social, financial, and cultural capitals.

When I met Fouzia in 2009, she was 21. She has received her baccalaureate, and started but not yet completed any further degree. The fact that Fouzia has filled her time learning various roles in hip hop cultural production, and not in finishing her studies, is a continuing source of conflict between Fouzia and her parents, and brings her much criticism from well-meaning adult figures.

Fouzia became involved with hip hop culture in her teens while living in Meknes. Between 2003 and 2006 she worked at a studio in Meknes, and under the tutelage of the head DJ and owner she learned how to use beatmaking and recording software. She also started her first group, in which she was the only girl, and they practiced writing raps and making beats together.

By 2005 she had taught herself to produce websites and started to set them up for musician friends. During our first interview, she told me that she administered over 25 websites. As an employee of a boutique production company in Rabat, she has launched more than one web portal dedicated to Moroccan hip hop; one which allows users to post their own music, rapmaroc.org, has been very successful.

In 2007, Fouzia returned to Salé, and after some time started a group with two other girls which then became a duo. The band was named S-Girlz, or “*Système* Girls.” As Fouzia explained to me, their band was not “*contre le système*” like other rappers, because “we truly need the system.”<sup>30</sup> Instead, they openly supported the current political-economic order and envisioned themselves providing constructive criticism from within (p.c., Rabat, 14 December 2009). As of late 2010, they had recorded three songs with a well-known rapper and producer from Salé, and were saving money to continue working with him.

During 2010, Fouzia began to manage other groups, learning on the job. After some time as the manager of her own duo, Fouzia and her partner adopted a new full-time manager. Significantly, the person they chose was both a friend and a well-connected person in his own, unrelated networks. As a graduate student with experience in organizing events at university, their new manager had access to a different web of people, some of whom had valuable expertise in organizing events. This collaboration initially resulted in several invitations to perform during the summer of 2010. As Benjamin Brinner notes, this is a textbook example of Mark Granovetter’s (1973) insight into the utility of “weak ties,” in which connections beyond one’s immediate network lead to new opportunities (2009: 170).

Fouzia’s behind-the-scenes training in both recording and promotion taught her to choose her collaborators and clients strategically. In her interactions with me, Fouzia presented information about the groups and artists with whom she is connected in a way that simultaneously valorized them and herself. The following example shows Fouzia depicting herself as a tastemaker who is on her way to more visibility and success.

As I waited for Fouzia at our appointed time and place, I reflected on how we came to set up an interview. Although I was referred to her by a colleague, and initial contacts took place by phone and in person, I asked for an interview through email, and I prepared my questions based on information available to the Internet-using public on her various webpages. Since she had added me as a “friend” after our first meeting, I based my questions about her home life and studies on her facebook page. Before the interview, I listened to her group’s songs on MarocZik.com, a streaming music site that allows artists to post their own tracks. Fouzia arrived with a friend and, as we ordered coffee, informed me that one of the artists she managed at the time was also on his way and willing to be interviewed. When that artist arrived, she deliberately switched roles, recusing herself from questions about musical preferences and only discussing his future plans to record and perform.

At our next meeting, Fouzia and I met her co-artist in S-Girlz. We sat at the same café and sang along to their songs, played on Fouzia’s cell phone, and discussed their plans to record a full album. Later that afternoon, we returned to her house. As we sat at her workstation, Fouzia took me through the backstage, so to speak, of some of the websites that she coordinates, updating announcements and moderating messages to forums. Most importantly, she gave me a

guided tour of the photos on her facebook page, pointing to herself posed with others at various events over the last 4 years, and informing me who she was standing next to and why.

Significantly, Fouzia did not name every person in every photo. Instead, she deliberately prefaced her trip through her photo albums with the statement “come here, I’ll show you some people you are going to want to know.” Then, she moused over specific people who were tagged in her facebook pages to reveal their names, and gave me more information about how they were related to her and to other artists. These photos had been taken in Salé, Rabat, Casablanca, Meknes, and elsewhere, mostly at concerts, competitions, or music festivals. In this way, the documentation of Fouzia’s offline, interpersonal networks continues to work for her online, where she and facebook users can access them on their own time after events have taken place.<sup>31</sup> Fouzia’s photos provide compelling evidence of her attempts to become a mediator in the emerging hip hop network. Not only does she desire to be seen as centrally connected, but also to leverage the supposed quality of those connections in order to continue accumulating prestige and, in my case, to appear to control access to parts of the network (Brinner 2009: 173, 196).

At the same time, it is important to note here that at the time, Fouzia’s personal facebook page was also her professional one—that is, her friends and her musical acquaintances overlapped in her online presentation, and have often overlapped in the rest of her life. Learning about her relationships and the web in which she was embedded was an important way of learning about Fouzia herself, and how much these relationships define her self and her work. While Fouzia did assess her relationship to me in terms of my potential influence and social standing, this does not negate or undermine the non-transactional aspects of her friendly overture. Precisely because of this overlap between self-definition and professional aspirations, this was not only a self-valorization—a convenient way to show the foreign researcher how connected she is, how valuable her social capital is—but *simultaneously* a gesture of friendship, one of remarkable openness and sincerity.

Amine lives in an older but well-off housing development outside of the center of Fes’ Ville Nouvelle. Amine’s entry into hip hop musicking in Fes was as the manager of his good friend and neighbor, ‘Adil. The two men, now in their early twenties, grew up together and attended the same private college of information sciences in Fes. In 2010, Amine was in his last year of the degree, and graduated with a certification in website programming and design. Throughout his studies he taught himself basic techniques in other skills he needed as a manager and producer, including video and music editing, photography, and marketing. As I got to know Amine and his friends, I learned from jokes and offhand remarks that his family is connected to structures of power within the municipalities of Fes and Rabat. Amine prefers to keep that information vague, but it puts his fashionable clothes, comfortable home, and private education in perspective.

Although Amine lives in Fes full-time, I first met him in Casablanca, in a café that functions as a well-known physical node in a network of hip hop and fusion musicians from Casablanca and beyond. Amine was there on business, meeting with another musician he managed at the time. The next time we met was in Fes with a group of hip hop musickers from both Fes and Casablanca. The third time was in the same Casablanca café, with a different group of Casablancon rappers. Despite his personal friendships with hip hop musickers in Fes, Amine and his clients are more connected to another area of the national hip hop network, one mostly based



in and circulating through Casablanca. Because of its more developed musical and social infrastructures, Casablanca acts as the central hub connecting regional sub-networks.

When I asked Amine how he met the musickers we saw together, he answered that he sometimes had a face-to-face introduction through mutual friend. Sometimes they had met at competitions or performances. But on other occasions, he had begun corresponding with another musicker through facebook messages or online comments, and had eventually had reason to meet him in person. In all cases, even with those musicians who also live in Fes, Amine does most of the work for his clients online without dealing with them face-to-face. He sends announcements, posts videos, photos, sound files and graphics, secures performances, and cultivates his networks through sites like facebook, myspace, and Skyrock, a blogging site popular among Francophones. In this way, Amine has accumulated a number of useful contacts among Moroccans who live abroad in the UK, the US, and elsewhere. At least two different rappers that Amine manages have recorded collaborations, or “featurings,” with artists from outside Morocco. From his network of collaborators within Morocco, Amine has brought together his clients from Fes, Salé, and Casablanca to use their skills on each other’s songs, whether that means rapping a verse, producing a beat, or singing on the song’s chorus.

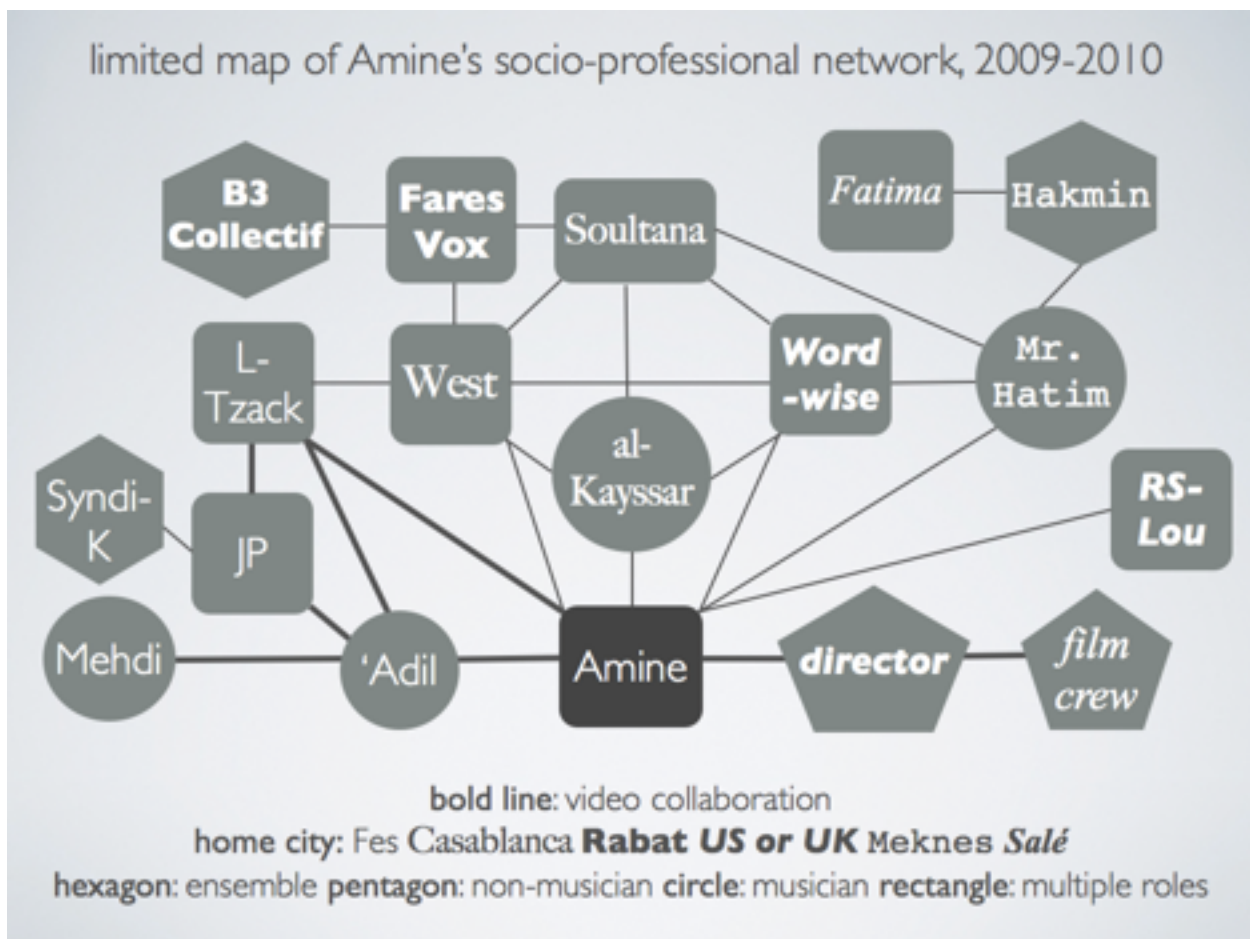


Fig. 14. A limited network map for Amine, September 2009-September 2010.<sup>32</sup>

One of those contacts resulted in a video collaboration that activated several scales of translocal interaction. According to his explanation to me, Amine found and emailed a Moroccan director based in London through facebook. The director agreed to work with Amine's artists, and arrived in Fes with a crew of workers based in Salé, near Rabat, whom he occasionally hires. The artists in the video include Amine's neighbor and client, 'Adil (DJ Sekhfa); L-Tzack; several extras from within Amine and 'Adil's housing development; and Amine himself.

All of these individuals, from different neighborhoods of Fes, different cities in Morocco, and different countries involved in the circulation of Moroccans abroad, converged on Borj Sud (Southern Tower), one of the fortresses overlooking Fes el-Bali, during the last hour of sunlight on the third day of shooting (fig. 15). When I asked why they had chosen this site, Amine and the artists involved agreed that it provided a great view of the oldest part of Fes. L-Tzack pointed out that one could see his neighborhood, Batha, if one knew where to look. Additionally, because busloads of tourists visit Borj Sud in planned outings for precisely this view, the site was a recognizable landmark to Fes residents, Moroccans in general, and non-Moroccan visitors.

In the opinion of Amine and his artists, the inclusion of a director from the UK would provide marketable prestige within and beyond Morocco for the two artists involved (p.c. Fes, 17 January 2010). Not only would this result in a more "professional" product, in Amine's words, but it would make Moroccans abroad more likely to view the video. In August 2010, I met with Amine and his clients again in Fes. At the time, Amine was frustrated by multiple delays in receiving the finished product from his director, who had returned to London directly after finishing shooting. Worried that the video would take so long that interest in his artists would have faded, Amine used footage from the shoot to create a 60-second advertisement that hinted at the lyrical narrative. He and L-Tzack showed me the "teaser" for the video before Amine released it through facebook, Dailymotion, and his YouTube channel. The final version of the video for "M'dina Majnouna" ("Crazy City") was not released for another month.



Fig. 15. Left to right: ‘Adil and Amine standing at an overlook at Borj Sud during shooting for “M’ dina Majnouna” (2010).

For Fouzia and Amine, who are simultaneously fans of hip hop, part-time musicians, and members of a growing group of do-it-yourself musical professionals, social media provide a way to maintain, enhance, or even create socio-professional networks. It is tempting to say that these networks have no geographic restraints, but this is not entirely true; instead, Fouzia and Amine, as well as other musickers, tend to adhere to some place-based constraints while transcending others. For example, Amine seeks out musickers of Moroccan heritage living abroad, and Fouzia still maintains strong relationships with musickers from Meknes as a result of her earliest training. In both cases, however, individuals who lack the infrastructural advantages of having grown up in Casablanca are able to forge ties to that network while continuing to cultivate other areas. And in both cases, individuals within their networks make little to no distinction between relationships created and conducted mostly through translocal online tactics and those which are based primarily in face-to-face interaction.

In these two examples, online tactics are one set of actions that these musickers take to integrate themselves fully into interpersonal, socio-musical networks for their personal and

professional gain. I have argued that these tactics are part of an identity-defining feedback loop: the entrepreneurial self presented in one's facebook and blog pages is the self presented at face-to-face musical events, especially to those whom one knows only through online interactions. This seems to reinforce a strong alignment between the musickers' personal and professional identifications. This is important for two reasons. First, the lack of a formal economy in hip hop music production means that most musickers are not paid a living wage to work in their musicking capacities. Of all the practitioners discussed in this chapter, only Bigg gets paid to work with any regularity, and can literally be called a professional. Even in his case, "professionalism" is judged within their networks based on perceptions of competency and of financial, emotional, and temporal investments. Second, learning to be a competent musicker, with the technical and social skills that this requires, is sometimes seen by musickers as a route to increased social and economic mobility at a time when few avenues to mobility are open to young Moroccans at any educational level.

As I mentioned above, I find Fouzia's technical expertise to be unusual among Moroccan women who identify themselves with hip hop musicking. Several in my acquaintance are rappers, singers, or dancers, and one or two others are known as managers of important groups, but none that I know of have her self-taught exposure to and success with Internet-based content creation. This could be a significant asset for Fouzia; she can continue to work within the hip hop cultural field as a valued producer of content, whether or not she succeeds in gaining the respect of her peers as a musician or a manager. In fact, working "behind the scenes" may benefit her more, not least because she can avoid negative views of women's public performance commonly held by Moroccans, including some hip hop musickers.

Despite such views, Fouzia speaks of hip hop as her "life"—something she's dedicated herself to and made sacrifices for, despite the wishes of her family. Taken together, these actions and statements suggest that for her, Fouzia's various roles as rapper, manager, and internet entrepreneur articulate and blur, forming a persona that is constituted by its actions and successes in an informal musical marketplace. Significantly, those successes are themselves defined by increased network reach and visibility—in other words, increased social capital.

Like Fouzia, Amine's professional and personal goals closely align with each other and within the burgeoning cultural economy of Moroccan hip hop production. During an interview in March 2010, he specified that he wanted first to finish his degree in information technologies; second, to finish producing and releasing the album of his friend and client, Adil; and third, to open his own production and promotion company in Fes. In his rhetoric, the increasingly long-distance connections that he forges and maintains through social media are worth the trouble because they provide him with access to high-quality technical skills. He also described his network as one of his assets that will, he hopes, benefit him during the launch of his future production company. When I asked Amine why he wanted to found this company in Fes rather than in Casablanca, he responded, first, that he was from Fes, and second, that "the market in Fes is free now. There's no one...working in Fes now" (interview, Fes, March 12 2010).<sup>33</sup>

After our interview, we joked about the possibility that Fes would again become the political capital of Morocco—"two thousand twelve, *a sa7ebi!*" exclaimed Amine to the group—but in that joking was a note of seriousness. Many of the initiatives that have defined Fes' cultural

scene in the past decade, including music festivals, are funded in part by the municipality. Festivals provide the most secure source of live performance income for hip hop musicians. If Amine succeeds in opening his business in the next few years, while the city and the Moroccan state are still interested in providing funds for start-up businesses and for tourist-focused musical events, his production company could benefit from the state's efforts to position Fes as an essential tourist destination.

Finally, I note that the seamless integration of online tactics into these musickers' socio-professional lives that I have described here do not negate other aspects of their identities; instead, they enhance them. Both of these interlocutors have access to high-quality educational opportunities. They are also able to obtain from their families the freedom, if not whole-hearted support, to follow their entrepreneurial paths. In fact, these accounts demonstrate that their success in adopting and adapting internet-based media is based upon their families' ability to provide them with training and opportunities.

Both Fouzia and Amine's use of social media show that these tools can promote identification within a nonscalar, translocal space. But simultaneously, that space remains very Moroccan in its linguistic and cultural expressions. The local and the national are conflated in relation to the international, while at the same time, in keeping with hip hop traditions, musickers clearly announce their loyalties to their cities and neighborhoods. This does not have to be a contradictory state of affairs, since the particularity of the local is often valorized among hip hop aesthetes, and held to re-energize the local and the translocal. However, the Moroccan "local" emergent within social media is already constrained by historically significant class formations based on divisions particular to Moroccan culture, including the discursive division between the rural and the urban, and the distribution of wealth via personal ties epitomized by the *Makhzen*. These class formations, I argue, are subject to further retrenchment, further inequality, under neoliberalizing processes.

### **Conclusions: the impossibility of oppositional politics for the neoliberal subject**

"The model neoliberal citizen is one who strategizes for her or himself among various social, political, and economic options, not one who strives with others to alter or organize these options" (Brown 2005: 43).

Chronically un- or under-employed, Moroccan hip hop musickers creatively strategize amongst their available options as they seek to invest in themselves, including by forming translocal connections, however tenuous these may be, in Internet-based and "real life" situations. Musickers' networks act as both the fulfillment of, and a resource in, their entrepreneurial tactics. Further, entrepreneurship and an entrepreneurial viewpoint appear as socially-defined competencies in hip hop musicking. To the extent that these competencies are integral to one's sense of belonging as a hip hop musicker, then, they are also techniques of self-care.

McNay argues that the neoliberal notion of the person as entrepreneur of herself "subtly alters and depoliticizes conventional conceptions of individual autonomy. Individual autonomy

becomes not the opposite of, or limit to, neoliberal governance, rather it lies at the heart of its disciplinary control” (62). Consonant with neoliberal governmentality, the work musickers do on themselves is politically quietist regardless of the cultivation of critical voices and faculties. By definition, it is undertaken individually, even while musickers establish the contours of their expression of that work collectively (e.g. through professionalization discourse; cf. chapter five). Further, musickers’ forms of self-management and self-investment conform to the neoliberalizing state’s vision of “modern,” entrepreneurial citizens who (most often) depend on themselves, rather than their government, for coveted access to the money, objects, and habitus of affluent citizens of the global North. As Jason Read puts it, “As a mode of governmentality, neoliberalism operates on interests, desires, and aspirations rather than through rights and obligations” (Read 2009: 29). In this way, hip hop musickers submit themselves to neoliberal governmentality when they engage in network-building and other (self-)entrepreneurial acts as musickers.

Citizens living neoliberal governmentality thus see both themselves, their workplaces, and their national government as enterprises, or as Wendy Brown puts it, as “firms.” Work and citizenship are both “modes of belonging to the firm one works for” (2012). This analogy raises the question of whether those who do not work as hard (e.g. the sick or elderly), or have not worked there as long (e.g. youth, immigrants), or do not work in a particular way (e.g. the poor, political opponents), are considered full citizens. Similarly, it begs the question of whether one can be released from the obligations and benefits of citizenship just as one can be let go from a downsizing firm. To the extent that neoliberal power is productive power, when neoliberal individuals act as entrepreneurs of themselves, they exercise productive power on themselves and their future in the same ways that the institutions of their societies exercise productive power upon their privileged populations.

As Jason Read makes explicit, Foucault’s *homo oeconomicus* both reimagines and is reimagined by the continuous extension of market rationality into new domains, as his or her citizenship is reconfigured “as an *exchange* of certain freedoms for a set of rights and liberties” (2009: 27, emphasis mine). Yet because the state is so thoroughly involved in propping up and extending markets into these new domains, *homo oeconomicus* is no less a subject of state power than in earlier periods. To put this differently, the citizen-*qua*-subject of neoliberal governmentality exchanges his or her negative freedom, or “freedom from” state interventions of an earlier kind, for positive freedom, “freedom to” pursue those “rights and liberties” granted through the combination of market extension and state power (cf. Berlin 1969[1958]). Neoliberal governmentality works on the terrain of freedoms, but insofar as individuals conceive of themselves as entrepreneurs of their selves in the markets of their lives, those freedoms are themselves modes of subjectivation.

This is not to say that hip hop musickers, or any neoliberal subjects, are not also fully a part of Moroccan society, and subject to its norms and expectations. As we have seen throughout this chapter, hip hop musickers articulate their entrepreneurship of the self to the habitus appropriate to them, across a variety of socio-economic locations. The majority of musickers discussed in this chapter identify themselves as “adi” (“normal”)—that is, from a typical socio-economic location—though this designation obscures a variety of distinctions. Some, such as Amine, demonstrate a

higher level of family income and social capital. The small group of “middle” or “upper-middle”-class youth that were mostly represented in this chapter does not share the same concerns as the majority of Moroccans under 35. Indeed, unlike the widespread leveling of satellite television availability, successful entrepreneurial leveraging of social media may serve to further distance young Moroccans with the proper training from those who need the additional mobility most. The social networks, educational preparation, and techniques of self inculcated by families who previously benefited from the state’s post-Independence middle-class building policies now allow certain musickers to better succeed at framing themselves and acting within an emergent, if informal, marketplace.

The previous generation’s discourse of modernization and the current generation’s discourse of professionalization follow similar logics. In the post-Independence era, individual ethical work on oneself was an integral part of the nation’s hopes for change and improvement. In the neoliberalizing era, individual investment in one’s capacities is encouraged by the state, but does not necessarily help the nation. In both cases, the individual acts in the face of enduring inequality within the country and relative to the global North.

In addition to this, amongst many musickers in their twenties and thirties I have noticed a presumption that political change is not possible. This has continued to be true amongst those I worked with in 2009 and 2010; to my knowledge, none of my interlocutors openly support the February 20<sup>th</sup> movement, the reform movement that emerged in the wake of Tunisia’s and Egypt’s mass protests in February 2011. Some actively repudiate it. Part of their lack of interest may be due to their class positionings, though I do not suggest class position entirely determines one’s political preferences. Most non-elite Moroccans, aspirational middle-income urban youth included, lack the advantage and privilege that could allow them to “make up for the deficits and penalties” of fighting or opting out of the neoliberalization of their country and its effects--even if they have identified some of those effects as targets of their opposition (James 2012, n.p.).

Despite claims to the contrary by some musickers and observers, the hip hop networks taking root in Morocco are not automatically opposed, simply by virtue of the genre’s rhetorical and stylistic associations, to the neoliberalized goals, valorizations and policies of the Moroccan state. On the contrary, musickers’ entrepreneurship of themselves, and their expressions of that relation, may reinforce the dividing effects of the neoliberalizing moment that has made widespread hip hop musicking possible in Morocco.

## Notes

- 1) My use of subjectivation is drawn from Foucault's understanding of the concept. This includes both "the way a human being turns him- or herself into a subject," i.e. the methods through which a person reaches or attempts to reach a valued state, and the external forces that structure that human being's ability to do so (Foucault 1983: 208).
- 2) For example, I could reason that I need to get 8 hours of sleep not because I want to, but because "investing" in my own rest and well-being allows me to meet my goals the next day more easily. Conversely, I could also reason that staying up all night to meet a deadline is an "investment" in my future. The latter brings us closer to Wendy Brown's formulation of the neoliberal subject, who exists in a "relation of sacrifice" to both her own self-as-enterprise and the enterprise for whom she labors for a wage. Brown argues that "sacrifice is moralized in a neoliberal society;" that is, one's willingness to work ever harder, on oneself or for pay, is a mark and an expression of one's moral fortitude (2012).
- 3) Emcees generally follow US tradition in differentiating between a "maxi" or EP, a mixtape, usually a shorter collection of songs with remixes or previously released material, and an album, a longer collection designed to make a more complete statement on which often more time and resources had been spent. However, unlike the US tradition, both mixtapes and albums are released for free by a majority of those emcees who complete full albums. A counter example is presented later in this chapter.
- 4) I read McNay's description as suggesting the mode of self-interest that neoliberal subjects live is an economic, competitive one (cf. Read 2009: 32).
- 5) "Actually existing neoliberalism" is lived, as Noel Castree suggests, as "an articulation between certain neoliberal policies and a raft of other... phenomena" (2006: 4; cf. Brenner, Peck and Theodore 2009: 107).
- 6) I use "ethical" here to convey the sense of obligation towards management and improvement in Foucault's formulation of ethics. In his later work, he summarizes "ethics" as the "relationship you ought to have with yourself... which determines how the individual is supposed to constitute himself as a moral subject of his own actions" (1983: 238).
- 7) Small-scale examples of this pattern include invitations to dinner at one's home, or, amongst same-sex friends, taking turns buying coffee or tea at cafe visits—though these might also be subject to friendly, half-facetious battles over who would get to pay for the drinks, thus winning the competition for "most generous."
- 8) Few concerts in Morocco, hip hop or otherwise, charge admission (though there is evidence this is changing since 2012). Exceptions, such as the ticketed performances of international stars at Festival Mawazine or the Fes Festival of Sacred Music, are usually seen as designed for tourists because the tickets are so expensive. When K-Prime says "you're gonna pay" for a concert, he is referencing concert organizers rather than individual ticket-buyers.
- 9) I have edited his English for grammar and clarity, but I have kept all of my changes in brackets in order to communicate that L-Tzack's choice of words is his own.
- 10) Korsas (a slang term for the VW bus that features prominently in the show), Ajjal, and Top Tarab are on 2M. 100% Chabab is on al-Aoula ("The First"), a channel in the mixed public-private Société Nationale du Radio et Télédiffusion (SNRT).



- 11) A system of local governance through fear was in place during this time in which the *muqaddem*, a local man in the employ of the municipal government, would report back to superiors on all the goings-on in his neighborhood. In theory, the information could travel all the way up the chain of command to the man ultimately responsible for national security, the feared Minister of the Interior, Driss Basri.
- 12) Le Tremplin and Jil Mawazine ask for the same requirements, though their entry fees differ.
- 13) I arrived and left the festival with Soutana. The draw of the judges was demonstrated at the beginning of the afternoon, when Soutana was greeted by a small crowd of mostly male fans and emcees, and promptly started dispensing photo ops and advice on mic technique.
- 14) As Fares Vox, an attendee, put it in a later conversation: “Soutana is my best friend, but I gotta comment on one thing... She told them that they get points for instruments, originality, they get points for playing live, and for not cussing. What type of shit is that?” (p.c., Rabat, July 24 2010).
- 15) Biographical information is drawn from personal communication, Casablanca, 21 October 2009, unless otherwise noted. Bigg used the phrase “middle class” to describe his background during the interview I attended: the journalist asked “Is that [Hay Mohammedi] a slum?” and Bigg responded “no,” following that with, “Let’s say I’m comin’ from the middle class.” When asked about his excellent English, he said “MTV was my best teacher”—without specifying whether he had ever taken formal lessons. English was not compulsory in Moroccan secondary schools until 2002.
- 16) During his talk, Said Graiouid answered a question about resistance and government influence on Moroccan hip hop with the example of Bigg’s performance, ending with another question: “What does it mean to perform...[for] the specific political party? If the party goes down then you also go down?” (24 April 2010, Rabat).
- 17) In a 2007 interview, when asked whether he was now “the mascot of the USFP,” he responded “The USFP is the last party I would support. After the PJD, that is.” The Party of Justice and Development (PJD) is the leading Islamist political party in Morocco. In the same interview, Ziraoui remarked that Bigg must “love money a great deal” in order to perform for a party he does not support. Bigg answered “It’s true, I love money, but no more than most human beings. And the difference is, as far as I can tell, that I say it loudly and strongly” (Ziraoui 2007). In this interview and others, Bigg discursively links artistry, entrepreneurship, and sincerity, here implying that his entrepreneurship is merely human nature and his honesty about that nature gives him the moral high ground.
- 18) *Les Eclectiques Raptiviste* (2009) is a compilation album produced by Youssef Amerniss, the creator and webmaster of a defunct message board called Raptiviste.com (interview, Rabat, February 25 2010).
- 19) I never conducted a solo interview with Bigg in Morocco, but after yet another introduction from another gatekeeping figure, held conversations with him via facebook in 2012.
- 20) For example, in a roundtable discussion on hip hop amongst Moroccan and Dutch-Moroccan students, several Moroccan students agreed the Bigg-Muslim “beef” was faked—and worse, a “copier-collier” (imitation) of the US in the early 1990s (p.c. Rabat, February 23 2010).
- 21) He specifically said the film “ain’t showing us in a professional way,” which I interpreted as being out-of-date with Moroccan hip hop in 2009 (p.c. October 21 2009).
- 22) See <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=znjzP8wifZ0> (last accessed March 1 2013).

- 23) The English-language description of him accompanying the “portrait of Don Bigg,” published on a fan YouTube channel in December 2012, emphasizes both his focus on personal responsibility and his marketing savvy. According to the description, “Very early, Don Bigg becomes aware that his success depends only on him. He then decides to fight on two fronts,” his studies and his music. Regarding his entrepreneurial genius, the description continues, “Don Bigg definitely knew how to export the moroccan rap, with tours in Great-Britain, Europe and in the middle-east. He is also the first arab rapper having been able to impose his art in TV programs produced by the biggest international channels...” However, groups like DAM from Palestine and Fnaire from Morocco had appeared on MTV Arabia and al-Jazeera as early as 2006. This video appears to have been made as a student project with the participation and permission of Bigg, who was interviewed for it, in 2007. See <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NFPKE3wYJNo&list=UUjEUeq4uU-sf90zd81X85Pg&index=3> (last accessed 1 March 2013).
- 24) For examples of Kanye West’s work using these techniques, see “Champions,” “Poppin’ Tags,” “Diamonds From Sierra Leone,” “Can’t Tell Me Nothin’,” and “Gold Digger” (2004).
- 25) See, for example, “Swagga Like Us” and “Swing Ya Rag (feat. Swizz Beats)” from T.I.’s *Paper Trail* (2008), “Hustlin’” from Rick Ross’s *Port of Miami* (2006), or Lil’ Jon’s “Snap Yo Fingers” (2006).
- 26) See Bigg’s English-language gloss of the lyrics to “Ma Bghitch” in the appendix.
- 27) I have kept Bigg’s original English spelling and capitalization here.
- 28) The JCA is the largest Islamist group in Morocco that is not part of the government. Since the JCA prefer a caliphate to the current monarchy and hold that the monarch is not the legitimate spiritual ruler of the country, they are banned from participating in parliamentary politics and are not considered a political party.
- 29) Magharebia is a multi-lingual online news portal for North Africa funded by the US Department of State.
- 30) As we have seen, this argument is to some degree disingenuous; most of my interlocutors during 2009-2010 also considered themselves generally supportive of the current political-economic order, despite their critiques of social ills.
- 31) Fouzia’s facebook privacy settings at the time were such that the majority of her photos and her profile page were visible to the public, i.e., even people with whom she was not yet “friends.”
- 32) For visual clarity, this map does not extend beyond some of Amine’s closest socio-professional relationships of that period, and not every existing link is drawn. In the language of network theory, each of these links is “multiplexed,” i.e., they encompass relations that would be analyzed as belonging to separate social, musical, and economic domains (Brinner 2009: 171).
- 33) Amine said “Ana min Fes” (“I’m from Fes”), rather than “Ana Fassi.” The latter would indicate that his family’s *asl* (lit. root, origin) or lineage was Fassi, or more precisely Andalusian, the most prestigious of Fes residents.

## **Conclusion: Neoliberalization, Citizenship, and Translocal Forms of Belonging**

In this study, I have attempted to show that a combination of factors encourage young, urban hip hop musickers in Morocco to live a particular Muslim, postcolonial, neoliberal subjectivity. These include, in no particular order, 1) historically significant expressions of Moroccan music and culture and of Moroccan Muslim practice; 2) neoliberal economic doctrine as expressed through Moroccan policies over the last thirty years; 3) relationships including but not limited to commodification between globalizing markets, local practitioners, and the state; and 4) hip hop's constitutive background in and relationship to neoliberalization in New York and other post-industrial US cities. Framed by a Foucauldian reading of neoliberal governmentality,<sup>1</sup> I have striven to trace the outlines of such a subjectivity in order to better understand how popular musicking in general, and hip hop musicking in particular, contributes to and expresses lived experiences of neoliberalization. I have examined musickers' attempts to discipline themselves and others through their networks, aesthetic claims, and performances in order to show how neoliberalization, in each of its distinct local expressions, may be productive of new forms of citizenship and senses of belonging even as it renders older forms of political participation and belonging less effective.

At the same time, in each chapter I have extensively historicized my claims in order to show that neoliberalizing norms do not have to erase or uproot older cultural, political, or religious norms and musical forms in order to be powerful. In the introduction, I summarized neoliberalization as only occasionally provoking easily visible and traceable changes; more often it is less discernible, reshaping the stakes of historically important desires, expectations, and ways of conceptualizing the subject (and oneself) while maintaining their surface continuity. What, then, have been the stakes of youthful Moroccan musickers' work on themselves through their art? What have been the stakes of this project for the study of the transnational hip hop tradition and for ethnographic work on neoliberalization? In what follows, I draw out themes woven throughout the dissertation, raise questions designed to extend those themes, and suggest directions for future research.

### *neoliberalization, agency, subjectivation*

Contrary to normative rhetoric within neoliberal ideology, I have shown how the Moroccan state has been integral to the neoliberal project since the early 1980s. Many of my more affluent interlocutors have witnessed and indirectly benefited from the simultaneous reduction of public provisions in education and labor markets, and the aggressive construction of new, often public-private markets in tourism and telecommunications. However, as I have shown, musickers often made sense of these changes by situating the effects of neoliberalizations within a long history of changing expressions of state power. Hip hop musickers' various intimations of state power and state responsibility have helped me to think through the absences and presences of neoliberalization in Moroccan urban youths' lives. This in turn enabled a more nuanced analysis of the disciplinary and affective power of neoliberalization when it is articulated in local discursive constructions of age, socio-economic location, and citizenship.

Throughout the preceding chapters, I have theorized neoliberal subjectivation with the understanding that agency does not inexorably lead to resistance. Instead, I have attempted to extend current scholarship by analyzing musical practices I have characterized as critical, but not resistant. As a result, I have traced some ways Moroccan hip hop musickers' views of themselves and their art both align with and depart from how normative neoliberal discourse figures the moral and political person. Various threads of neoliberal doctrine imagine the subject as both a self-managed entity constantly participating in multiple markets, and as a bearer of rights and freedoms. These are alienable rights, and freedoms within a particular mode of subjection. Yet as my interlocutors insisted when they argued for the force of their lyrics and their public audibility, even neoliberalized rights and freedoms are still exercised in ways that are meaningful to their bearers.<sup>2</sup> By recognizing various expressions as agentive, scholars can think productively about agency as an attribute inherent to all individuals, whether they resist, conform to, or otherwise engage with power in diverse situations.<sup>3</sup>

It is important to continue to research the affective dimensions of lived experiences of neoliberalization in postcolonial spaces, as exemplified by Ferguson (2006) and Rudnykyj (2010). In this study, musickers' activities in a mostly informal economy of music production, circulation, and performance often collapse distinctions between artists and audiences, professionals and amateurs, laborers and consumers. I have also shown that musickers at all levels of competence and success engage in similar work on themselves and share similar feelings about their passion and dedication to the hip hop arts. Further work on subjectivation and agency under neoliberalization must ask about the affective content of particularly neoliberal forms of labor, both for a wage and on oneself. What kind of labor is the entrepreneur of the self doing when she is curating her photos on facebook, or practicing her mixing skills on a friend's borrowed equipment for a concert she will not be paid for, or when she is donating her time and skill to create a poster for a colleague's concert? How are these experienced in a translocal, postcolonial context, where such activities may be accompanied by a discourse of aspiration towards the material standards of the global North? The themes of sincerity and integrity often invoked by my interlocutors have become important markers in my research, guiding me beyond apparent contradictions even as I also document musickers' strategies for personal gain.

### *the network and the networker*

I have referred to musickers throughout the country as members of a single network, with looser or closer-knit affiliations in different cities, neighborhoods, or key physical locations. Eliot Bates describes the overlaps and differences between traditional categories of musicians and those that make up the studio production network in his dissertation, noting that "Istanbul's arrangers, engineers, and studio musicians differ technically and in mindset from classical conceptualizations of 'musicians,' 'composers,' and other individuals" (2008: 276-277). In Bates' theory of digital audio studio practice, despite their departure from "classical" expectations, individuals hold clearly defined roles that encompass technical skills, aesthetic values, and social positions. Moreover, individuals can move to new roles over time, as when

apprentices enter the studio environment as tea-makers and slowly move up a career ladder (268).

In the network I researched, individuals' roles and skills were much less well-defined, a fact I underscore with the use of the term *musicker* and the description of many different types of activities as *musicking*. The brisk online and offline circulation that characterizes this network does not prevent highly connected people who mediate access between individuals or groups from arising and influencing sections of a network. Such people are known as *hubs* with high degrees of *betweenness centrality*—to use the vocabulary of network theory (Brinner 2009: 172-174). Tastemakers, gatekeepers, or hubs sometimes held their influence because of their institutional or socio-economic positions. For example, *animateurs* on national radio and television enjoy a high level of in-network popularity, are well-paid by Moroccan standards, and meet many national and international artists through their programs. Musickers thus seek out these hosts to connect with prominent artists and to be promoted, creating a cycle of popularity that encourages other musickers to see the hosts as credible arbiters in the network.

But other highly connected people were widely influential because of their successful work in several different fields of hip hop musicking. 'Othman Benhami, the rapper, beatmaker, studio owner, and de facto spokesperson for H-Kayne, and Moulay Amine Idrissi, the photographer, videographer, manager, graphic designer, rapper, and beatmaker discussed in chapter six, are both good examples of this. Both brought musickers together as part of their production work; both were recognized for their musical and non-musical skills; and both were seen as well-connected individuals whose good opinion could help musickers meet people, gain visibility, or find performance opportunities.<sup>4</sup> This creates a cycle in which both influential musickers meet more people and are recognized as further connected.

Simultaneously occupying several different roles has been an important part of Moroccan hip hop practice since the early 1990s. It can also be understood as an expression of neoliberal governmentality amongst musickers, where maintaining “flexible bundles of skills” (Gershon 2011: 537) and network connectivity become their own fields of competence and competition. Cultivating multiple skill sets out of desire, necessity, or both encourages and is encouraged by the pragmatic, economic rationality attendant upon forms of neoliberalization.<sup>5</sup> Seeing network connectivity and multiple skill sets as essential to one's professional survival is not new for those with precarious employment in music or other fields. However, as I have argued throughout the dissertation, neoliberalization intensifies this situation, in that it reduces opportunities for stability—and, further, celebrates unstable figures like freelancers and gigging musicians as the proper self-marketing, self-reliant worker.

Here as elsewhere, there is a feedback loop between the aesthetics and cultural values of the transnational hip hop tradition, the ways those are interpreted within the Moroccan network, and individuals' beliefs and behaviors. As I argued in chapter six, the standards of professionalism set within the network and encouraged in musickers' discourse take on an ethical weight for musickers striving to become literally and figuratively professional. Likewise, competency in several network-valued skills—and the ability to deploy those skills flexibly, that is, entrepreneurially—takes on an ethical weight for those managing themselves in order to obtain mobility and become better (neoliberal) persons.<sup>6</sup>

Thus honing one's abilities in one or many skill sets enables Moroccan hip hop musickers to manage the risks of musical and social competition. During one of my last long conversations with Soultana in 2010, we sat at Café Yasmina indulging in a gossipy critique of her peers' skills. This kind of talk was a frequent topic of conversation amongst many musickers I knew; I often found it discomfiting. But on this evening Soultana concluded her disparaging remarks with a striking insight. She recalled her teenage love of basketball and compared it to her experience as an emcee, saying she loved to compete on and off stage. "I don't compete with people to make them feel bad. I do it to get better. When we compete we all get better," I remember her saying. "And if I cannot compete with them because I am already better, I will compete with myself. I will be better than myself."<sup>7</sup>

Competition always risks failure. For Soultana, taking that risk is at once an entrepreneurial and an ethical imperative. It was both a pragmatic response to insecure conditions for professional musicians, expressed through the same conceptual frame that supports private marketplaces, *and* a certain kind of self-care that enabled a valued state of continual improvement.<sup>8</sup> Soultana was no less a member of the network because of her drive to compete or her gossiping; she also loves to teach younger musickers, as examples in chapters four and five showed, and has frequently spoken out for better payment for Moroccan performers who share billing, but not status, with international artists invited to state-sponsored festivals. Like other musickers, she values her friends and her place in the network, and simultaneously values the network as a market in which she has the potential to earn reputational capital. One's reputation and potential for artistic and social leadership are thus defined both by competence at one or more skills and by the extent and quality of one's network.

### *citizenship in an era of translocal circulation*

In the previous chapters, I used the frame of culturally valued forms of citizenship to discuss the relationship between state policies, various kinds of markets, and hip hop musickers. In chapter two, I argued that hip hop musickers depend on and work to extend an image of the national citizenry developed in the music of 1970s fusion bands, especially Nass el-Ghiwane. In chapter four, I argued that hip hop's adoption in festivals sponsored by the Moroccan government or other states signals the kind of youth that the state, in its alignment with countries in North America and Western Europe, currently encourages national and international tourists to imagine as the proper "modern" Moroccan. In chapter five, I examined live performances as evidence of the kind of citizenship first-wave emcees and deejays wish to promote amongst their publics. In each case, ideas of the nation—what it represents and who best represents it today—are the field upon which different, but overlapping, sets of values are negotiated.

There is an enormous literature on "cultural citizenship" within which three main approaches have been taken since the 1990s.<sup>9</sup> Yet I have avoided the term in this text, in part because my interlocutors and the transnational hip hop tradition in general, drawing from a tradition of African-American critique, deliberately avoid making distinctions between economic, political, and cultural rights. Examples have included Muslim's song "Ḥob al-Watan" ("Love of the Homeland" or "Patriotism"), in which he argues that impoverished people cannot love the state

that does not provide for them; H-Kayne's "La Brigade," in which the group complains about police brutality while pointing out that the police are underpaid and overworked; and Don Bigg's "16/05," in which his fictionalized suicide bomber explicitly claims that he is disenfranchised through and because of his poverty. This insistence on the essential unity of these rights is precisely the strength of the transnational hip hop tradition's most trenchant analyses.<sup>10</sup>

The importance of citizenship discourses may lead us to focus on this network and its artistic expressions at the national scale. However, one of the themes of this dissertation has been the ways that Moroccan hip hop musickers experience multiple scales simultaneously. There is no necessary contradiction between musickers' discursive (and sometimes musical) focus on Moroccaness and their translocal relationship to nodes in the broader hip hop network in France, Algeria, Spain, Holland, the US, or elsewhere. Discourse about "modern" Moroccan Muslim citizenship forms an important part of hip hop musickers' lyrics and discussions. At the same time, national pride and national signifiers both differentiate Moroccan hip hop in circulation abroad and link its practitioners to other postcolonial musickers. Moroccan musickers are intricately embedded within the transnational hip hop tradition, both as translocally linked practitioners sharing aesthetics across national borders, *and* as consumers of its commercially circulated form as a product of multinational corporate capital.

As recordings and as practice, Moroccan hip hop musicking resounds across local, national, and regional scales. It circulates across borders through pathways carved by history, politics, and commerce, though these pathways are also continually renewed through senses of belonging to a shared religion, racialized minority status, musical tradition, or combination thereof. All sites on the circuit, or nodes in the network, are influenced and revitalized by the others in direct, horizontal cross-fertilizations. Though for most of my interlocutors, US hip hop styles and artists are still the most influential, in the Moroccan network one may dialogue with multiple localized practitioners rather than recursively return to a "global" arbiter of the tradition.<sup>11</sup> Such connections produce multi-sited, multi-scaled senses of belonging to states and non-states that are generated and sustained through social and musical practice. Within this network, national and civic belonging may be vital, but it is not necessarily one's primary attachment.<sup>12</sup>

### *belonging in Afro-diasporic aesthetic space*

The collaboration between Cuban jazz pianist Omar Sosa and Don Bigg had been widely advertised as some of the most exciting programming that the 2010 Festival Mawazine had in store. With every seat filled, cameramen at the ready behind their tripods, and simultaneous translation headsets handed out, a roomful of journalists waited for the press conference to begin. Soon the chatting around me subsided as three young men filed through a hidden wood-paneled door and took their seats behind a long table at the front of the room. Camera flashes glittered off Sosa's sunglasses, the thick golden rope around Bigg's neck, and the elegant watch their producer wore.

The first journalist to speak was from al-'Arabiya, one of several channels belonging to Morocco's National Society of Radio and Television (SNRT). He asked if combining rap music,

which is “known throughout the world,” and the music of Cuba was a difficult task. “It’s the other side of the world, it’s completely different,” he exclaimed.

Don Bigg was quick to answer, noting that Sosa did not play Cuba’s traditional genres but “*essentiellement* jazz,” and that “*le jazz et le rap*” were “*du même origine, c’est à dire...Black music.*”

Sosa extended this point in English. “Is nothing complex in mix[ing] Don Bigg music and the music...that we do because both music are from the same...root. Africa.”<sup>13</sup>

The al-‘Arabiya journalist could be forgiven for misinterpreting the press book he might have read, which described the collaboration as “[an] original creation between the major Cuban pianist and composer Omar Sosa and our national star, Moroccan rapper Bigg” (2010: 40). In correcting him, both musicians sought to transcend assumptions that would link their music to their national identities, and instead to foreground their shared aesthetic affiliation. Bigg noted a shared beginning for their genres in a group of people—Black American musicians of the twentieth century. Sosa repositioned his and Bigg’s “roots” in a static imagination of the African continent. They evoked the same ideas about the supposed geographic and biological determinants of culture underpinning the journalist’s assumptions, but they did so in order to defend their current musical mixture, and by implication, their choices to perform musics that are seen as foreign to their home cultures. Yet in their performance that evening, Sosa and Bigg made a musical case for the continuous, vibrantly contemporary circulations that take place daily in Afro-diasporic aesthetic space.

The transnational hip hop tradition resides in Afro-diasporic aesthetic space.<sup>14</sup> Contemporary Afro-diasporic aesthetic space is dominated, in a commercial sense, by the expressive forms of the Black Atlantic (Gilroy 1993) and of US popular music in particular. It is, of course, no longer geographically congruent with the Black Atlantic (including the Atlantic coast of sub-Saharan Africa), precisely because Afro-diasporic musics have so successfully spread to many parts of the world through the same logics of circulation which brought hip hop to Morocco in the early 1990s.

While Bigg’s and Sosa’s remarks seemed to support each other, they emerged from different histories and implied different perceived relationships to Afro-diasporic aesthetic space. Like Morocco itself in relation to constructs of Africa, the Mediterranean, and the Francophone world, Moroccan hip hop musickers are in but not of this space. To a greater extent than their predecessors, the fusion musicians of the 1970s, Moroccan hip hop musickers build their sounds and address local and national concerns on an Afro-diasporic aesthetic foundation. Like their predecessors, musickers do this despite common constructions of Moroccans as Arab, rather than African, and despite widespread discriminatory attitudes toward sub-Saharan Africans residing in Morocco and Moroccans of (partial) sub-Saharan descent.<sup>15</sup> While Sosa’s rhetorical move to Africa is especially familiar from Afro-Caribbean perspectives on diasporic identity, Bigg’s comment follows a favored hip hop origin story by rooting his work in “Black music”—music of the 1960s and 70s, an era when prominent politicized African-American musicians chose to rework the term “Black” as a sign of pride. Instead of affiliating with a unifying, if diverse, African identity, Moroccan hip hop musickers affiliate themselves to Afro-diasporic aesthetic



space through their imagination of the politics signaled by hip hop's Afro-diasporic sonic and narrative resonances.

The *perception* that one shares a politics—however diverse musickers' politics may be in practice—links musickers translocally as much as hip hop's genre conventions do. Through this affiliation, Moroccan musickers share a sense of belonging with postcolonial musickers from the rest of the African continent, from the Middle East, and from ethnicized and racialized settings in Europe and North America. Moroccan postcoloniality is different from other North African, Middle Eastern, sub-Saharan, and European postcolonialities in critical ways.<sup>16</sup> Yet hip hop musickers often choose to concentrate on the perceived similarities between their different local concerns and struggles, again insisting on a holistic view, as they do in demonstrating the inseparability of political, economic, and cultural disenfranchisement.

In making this point I am nuancing Halifu Osumare's coinage, "connective marginalities," which she defines as "social resonances between black expressive culture within its contextual political history and similar dynamics in other nations" (2001: 172). Instead of taking for granted that there are "similar dynamics" in other nations or locations, since the degree of similarity may be disputed depending on one's perspective, I am arguing that the perception of "similar dynamics"—or faith in someone's assertion of them—is what is really at stake in the sense of belonging both Osumare and I are describing. This faith is, in itself, a gesture of sincerity and generosity central to the spread of a fiercely competitive genre, an expression of the marriage of solidarity and individual expression at the heart of the hip hop tradition. If we are to seriously engage with the notion of the "hip hop nation" as a locus of translocal connection,<sup>17</sup> it is perhaps this faith that allows for citizenship in that nation with, or despite, one's other affiliations.

The "local" in Moroccan hip hop musickers' translocal network is connected to other locales through technologies of circulation characteristic of neoliberalization. At the same time, translocal networking encourages sincere senses of belonging that exist alongside a market-based way of experiencing and pursuing that circulation. That such networking can and does enable meaningful connections does not make the current neoliberal formation less unequal. With their predominant lyrical focus on the nation as their field of critique, Moroccan hip hop musickers display a reflexive awareness of that which is "internal" to the nation, that which is "external," and the porous, changeable, power-laden boundary between the two perspectives.<sup>18</sup> They work the uncomfortable, uncharted space between them, using a form identified first with African-American resistance and second with American cultural dominance to critique their nation's evolving role in the intertwined economic and geopolitical order.

## Notes

<sup>1</sup> As mentioned in the introduction and chapter three, this reading comes primarily from Foucault's 1979 lectures, "Anglo-Foucauldians" such as Nikolas Rose, critical geographers such as Jamie Peck, political theorist Wendy Brown, and Jocelyne Guilbault's *Governing Sound* (2007).

<sup>2</sup> "...to use rights does not necessarily mean an inevitable co-optation into a normalizing liberal discourse. To argue this is to fail to recognize both the symbolic political force of rights and also that power in neoliberal regimes operates in more complex ways than conformity and non-conformity, normalization and resistance. ...political opposition, too, must be thought outside these pervasive dualisms" (McNay 2009: 74).

<sup>3</sup> Liberalism has historically represented one or more groups (e.g. women, enslaved African-Americans, people of color) as less capable of pursuing their own best interests than others, and neoliberalism radically extends that view by envisioning the subject as ideally engaged in only one kind of agentive activity, that of cost-benefit analysis in various marketized domains of life. I suggest that forcing oneself to think of agency as an inherent capacity of all individuals, and to treat all individuals as agents capable of best interpreting their own choices and the forces which structure their choices, is an anti-liberal and anti-neoliberal stance.

<sup>4</sup> This reputation was precisely what led to Benhami's recent work as a radio host on Meknes-based Medina FM, where he hosts a contemporary music program and interviews network colleagues. These examples come from Meknes and Fes, respectively; while some musickers from Casablanca fill multiple roles in this same way, the bigger network and greater infrastructure may also enable individuals there to specialize more if they wish.

<sup>5</sup> As I have shown by discussing examples from both affluent and impoverished musickers, this holds true across socio-economic locations. Poverty requires such a rationality from the poor, who must cultivate many different survival tactics, especially in an environment of shrinking subsidies and public funding. However, this rationality is also encouraged amongst the better-off.

<sup>6</sup> As Benjamin Brinner reminds me, that this is so says nothing about a musicker's feelings towards this mode of self-cultivation. In other words, one may strive to professionalize and to succeed, and one may think of this in both pragmatic and ethical dimensions, without having accepted that this situation is entirely right or good--only that it is necessary.

<sup>7</sup> I did not record this conversation, and I am acutely aware that the passage of time, and my own thinking about the import of her words, has probably reshaped Sultana's speech in my memory in ways I cannot identify. But I remember the pride, the drive, and the frustration in her voice as well as I remember the taste of bottled Coca-Cola and the stickiness of my plastic chair on a late August evening. I may have compressed her words but I believe my recollection is faithful to her sentiment.

<sup>8</sup> Here competition and risk are moral and practical investments in oneself, expressions of confidence in the future. On this point I am indebted to Ilana Gershon's eloquent observation: "Managing risk frames how neoliberal agents are oriented toward the future. And it is implicit in this orientation that neoliberal agents are responsible for their own futures—they supposedly fashion their own futures through their decisions. By the same token, regardless of their disadvantages and the unequal playing field, actors are maximally responsible for their failures (Brown 2003)" (2011: 540).

<sup>9</sup> Brinner cites the lineaments of one approach, centering on Toby Miller (2009: 323). I have found the anthropological approach represented by Ong 1996 and carried forward by e.g. Eisenberg 2012 to be useful.

<sup>10</sup> However, as we have seen, that same insistence on the unity of rights sometimes takes the form of longing for strong postcolonial socialist or social-welfare states, and does not automatically connote resistance to the contemporary neoliberalized state that may provide those rights.

<sup>11</sup> In this sense my theorization of this translocal network departs from standard ideas of globalization, in which circulation and immanence contribute to a sense of deterritorialization, or from the idea of “glocalization,” in which the local and “the global” are mutually constructed (though “the global” remains the dominant form) (cf. Condry 2006).

<sup>12</sup> For example, DJ Sekhfa stressed multiply located attachments, and implied multiple temporal attachments, during an interview. “...People are in the middle of the most confusing point of the universe, right?... [People are] in the middle of a lot of variables at once. Like, he’s watching how people in America’s living. He’s watching his grandpaw, or granddad, how he’s living. There are some, you know, lines, you know, red lines, not to cross” (Fes, March 12 2010).

<sup>13</sup> Fieldnotes and recording, Rabat, May 25 2010. I leave Bigg’s remarks untranslated to highlight his use of “Black music” in English.

<sup>14</sup> I am deriving this phrase from a combination of Paul Gilroy’s notion of a distinctive, but flexible, Black Atlantic aesthetic and Stuart Hall’s formulation of a “diaspora aesthetic” that is “defined not by essence or purity, but by the recognition of a necessary heterogeneity and diversity; by a conception of ‘identity,’ which lives with and through, not despite, difference” (Hall 1990: 235-236). In addition, I rely here on Avtar Brah’s reformulation of diaspora into “diaspora space.” For Brah, “... ‘diaspora space’ (as distinct from the concept of diaspora) is ‘inhabited’ not only by diasporic subjects but *equally* by those who are constructed and represented as ‘indigenous’” (Brah 1996: 16). Despite the use of a specific term, I am hardly making a novel point.

<sup>15</sup> Additionally, Moroccans resident within their national borders are part of a “diaspora space,” in Brah’s sense, in that they are routinely drawn into imaginaries of circulation by their relationships with friends, relatives, or colleagues who live or travel abroad. This is true for many urbanites, not merely hip hop musickers, and is also true for whole rural towns and regions from which significant numbers of migrant workers travel to Europe.

<sup>16</sup> For some postcolonial North Africans struggling with the legacies of orientalism, hip hop simultaneously reflects and subverts cultural imperialism. Journalist Reda Zine, writing in Boulevard’s magazine *L’Kounache* (the Notebook), describes the trap of well-intentioned “Western” observers documenting “Western” music in Morocco:

“Without exception, the international journalists and observers who are interested in our young musical scene, very rarely escape from their Western-centric reflexes. [This is] normal, we can argue, because the site of enunciation conditions the frames of reading and analyzing that one can bring to a subject. However, the proliferation of urban artistic creations in Morocco is represented on the outside on the basis of political and conservative religious specifications and through culturalist frameworks [grilles de lecture], vestige[s] of neocolonial approaches. ...All the signs from the exterior are vital and encouraging but a global reading is essential. The concept of [a] nation-state serves only to shed light on [n’est perspicace qu’à la lumière] the difficulties of circulation imposed on artists from the South” (2006: 23, my translation).

For Zine, a genuinely “global reading” of the rock, hip hop, metal, fusion, and electronica performed under Boulevard’s banner must transcend both national and geopolitical boundaries. Only then will readings of these practices escape ways of fetishizing Muslim and non-Western agents descended from colonial ideologies. This quotation has been a touchstone, and a warning, for me during this project.

<sup>17</sup> As well as, that is, an expression of difference, protection, and exclusivity drawing on the African-American tradition of cultural nationalism.

<sup>18</sup> My characterization here somewhat inadvertently recalls Taieb Belghazi's and Stefania Pandolfo's reflections on the *barzakh*, a term from the Qur'an discussed at length by Ibn al-'Arabi as a border that both mixes and separates two things (i.e. fresh and salt water, sunlight and shadow) (Pandolfo 1997: 1). Belghazi characterizes the *barzakh* in a Turnerian mode as a zone of liminality, writing that *barzakh*-s "keep heterogeneity in play while at the same time revealing homogenizing tendencies" (2001: 220).

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## **Appendix I**

### **Hip Hop Musicians by City**

This list includes musicians or groups mentioned in the preceding text, organized by the city in which they are currently based or claim/are claimed to represent. Where individuals' given names are used in the text, I include those. Note that I include hip hop performing artists or groups only; other musickers, including organizers, radio hosts, etc., are not listed.

This list does not comprise the entire national hip hop network of 2009-2010; many other individuals and groups, some of whom I met and interviewed, are not mentioned in this text.

#### **Agadir**

Fatman  
Style Souss

#### **Casablanca**

Amine Snoop, a.k.a. al-Kayssar  
Bizz2Risk  
Caprice  
Casa Crew  
CasaMuslim  
Casa-System  
Chaht Man  
David "Hooper" Benezra  
DJ Sim-H  
DJ Momo  
Ghost Project  
Hablo  
Khalid Douache, a.k.a. DJ Key (originally from Agadir)  
J-OK  
Magma, a.k.a. Lyriciste Ka'i  
Masta Flow  
Mafia-C  
MC Jo  
Mehdi, a.k.a. CasaFlayva  
Oudjo  
Pappy Mouskil  
Soultana  
Stef  
Taoufik Hazeb, a.k.a. Don Bigg  
Thug Gang  
Under Brother

West

**Fes**

Abdelrazzack Raiss, a.k.a. L-Tzack

DJ JP

DJ Sekhfa (a.k.a. Darksoul)

DJ Toto

Fassa

Fes City Clan

Moulay Amine Idrissi

Si Simo

Syndi-K

**Marrakesh**

DJ Van

Fnaïre

Youness B

**Meknes**

Hakmin

H-Kayne

Hatim Bensalha, a.k.a. Hatim H-Kayne

K-Libre

Mr. Hatim Raggaman

‘Othman Benhami

**Rabat**

Abdelkader Fares, a.k.a. Fares Vox

B3 Collectif

L’Moutcho (Younes Taleb, a.k.a. Mobydick)

Rap 2 Top

Tears of Mic

Would Chaab

**Salé and Sala al-Jadida**

19-Contre-Attack

Aminoffice

Ahmad, a.k.a. DJ HMD

Amiral

Double-A

Fouzia Chemaoui, a.k.a. Bloody

K-Prime

Majesticon

Nores  
Reda, a.k.a. One Fire  
RedLine  
Systeme-Girlz  
Talos

**Tangiers**

Larbé  
Kachela Records  
Mohammed Bahri, a.k.a. Barry (now based in Casablanca)  
Muslim

**the United States**

RS-Lou  
Wordwise

## Appendix II Selected Discography

This list includes hip hop singles or albums mentioned in the preceding text. I have included publisher or label information whenever it is available.

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Barry. 2007. *Sleeping System*. Casablanca.

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Casa Crew. 2006. "Men Zanqa l Zanqa [From Street to Street]." In *Stoune 4* [compilation]. Casablanca: Sigma and Hit Radio.

Chaht Man feat. Muslim. 2010. "Fin Haqna [Where Is Our Share]?" In *Ana Hor [I am Free]*. Casablanca: Royal Mousiqa.

Darksoul (a.k.a. DJ Sekhfa) and L-Tzack. 2010. "M'dina Majnouna." Fes, Morocco.

Don Bigg. 2006. *Magharba tel Mout [Moroccans Until Death]*. Casablanca: Clic Records.

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\_\_\_\_\_. 2008. "Joumhourî Hkem [Only Fans Can Judge Me]." Casablanca: DBF Productions.

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Double-A. 1996. *Double-A*. Salé, Morocco.

Fassa. 2009. "Ana Muslim [I Am a Muslim]." Fes, Morocco.

Fes City Clan. 2005. *Fes City Clan*. Fes, Morocco.

Fnaire. 2003. "Matkitsh Bladi [Don't Touch My Country]." Marrakesh, Morocco.

\_\_\_\_\_. 2007. *Yed al-Henna [Hand of Henna]*. Marrakesh, Morocco.

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- H-Kayne. 2005. *1496*. Meknes and Paris: Platinum Records.
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- Nores. 2009. “Gangster ‘Arabi.” In *Gangster Slaoui [EP]*. Salé, Morocco.
- Rwapa Crew. 2010. “Allah Ya Moulana [Allah Our Lord].” Fes, Morocco.
- Rwapa Crew feat. Babel. 2011. “Feels So Right.” Tetouan, Morocco.
- Soultana. 2010. “Sawt Nssa [Voice of a Woman].” Casablanca.
- Zanka Flow. 2001. *Tanjawa Deba [Tangerois Now]*. Tangiers, Morocco: Kachela Records.



## Appendix III Tables

### Chapter Two

**Table 1.** “Es-Siniyya,”<sup>1</sup> first five verses.

oh, wah, wah, oh	
Fin illy yejm’a ‘alīk ahl al-niya?	Where are the people of intention that gathered to me?
Oh, ya es-sinia!	Oh, [you] tea tray!
Douk illy younsouk...	They that forget you...
Fin ahl al-joud u al-rida?	Where are the generous and satisfied people?
Fin hyati...fin houmti u illy lia?	Where is my life...where is my neighborhood and mine?
Oh, ya es-sinia!	Oh, [you] tea tray!
Wa’ir blahu ma sahl ḥub al-kes	It’s difficult without [it], but the love of the glass is easy
Oh, ya għiat ma nsak al-khatr	oh, you sinners, desire never forgets you
Wa’ir blahu ma sahl ‘ashq al-ness	It’s difficult without [it], but the passions of people are easy
Oh, ya għiat ḥram ynsak al-khatr	oh, you sinners, desire denied never forgets you
Wa’ir blahu... jaini bghramuh...	It’s difficult without [it]... when the desire arises...
U al-‘anbr ila yeji qddamu...	And the amber bring in front of [the tray]...
U al-n’an’a... u ash-shiba...	And the mint... and the wormwood...
Oh, ya es-sinia!	Oh, [you] tea tray!
Aya ndamti, u ndamti!	Oh my regret, my regret!
U mal kasi ḥzin ma bin al-kisan?	And why is [only] my glass sad amongst the glasses?
Aya ndamti, u ndamti!	Oh my regret, my regret!
U mal kasi taihi tainin zad quwwa ‘alia l ḥzan?	And why has my glass amongst the rest brought strongly sadness to me?
Mal kasi baki waḥidu?	Why is my glass still alone?
Mal kasi nadb ḥthuh?	Why is my glass mourning his bad fortune?

<sup>1</sup> My translation and transliteration from Es-Sayed 2010. Muhanna translates “Wa’ir blahu” as “It’s hard to be at peace” and “It’s hard to be calm,” respectively (2003: 136).

Mal kasi ya waḥidu hetha nkdo... ghab s'aïdo...?	Why my glass are you its lonely one, its bad mood, absent from its happiness?
Oh, ya es-sinia!	Oh, [you] tea tray!

**Table 2.** “Lebṭana” (“The Sheepskin”). 7” single (w/ B-side “Taghoundja,” “Scarecrow”), 1979 (Zoulef and Dernouny 1980, p.c. Tim Fuson, Berkeley-Brooklyn, 2011).

section	musical events	lyrics
0:00-:33	Guimbri opens with a pentatonic melody	
:34-1:48	lead vocalist hums the second and third presentation of the same melody; sings the fourth presentation on a neutral vowel; hums the fifth; all accompanied by the guimbri following his melodic contour; rhythm of the melody is delineated but not fit into a strictly played meter	
1:49-2:42	vocalist recites verse while guimbri plays a drone on tonic pitch; echo added to voice in post-production	“abid ṣnk al-m’abud ya glub al-ḥajar...”
2:43-3:25	guimbri cues new tempo, plays 4 distinct melodic gestures in groups of 8 repetitions each; all land on the second degree of the mode	
3:26-3:44	the fourth gesture in this sequence descends from the major third to the tonic, ascends to the minor third, and ends on the second	
3:44-4:08	banjo enters and fills in piece of repeated melodic gesture 16x	
4:09-4:23	Tbila added to repeating pattern, emphasizing 6/8; tempo becomes more secure	
4:24-34	Taji’ra entry cues next melodic gesture played between banjo and guimbri	
4:34-5:08	Banjo cues new melodic sequence (AA’BB’) beginning with tonic-dominant-tonic gesture; banjo plays lead and guimbri maintains pattern	

5:09-5:34	banjo improvises on AA'BB'; darbukka improvises	
5:35-6:04	vocalist reenters with improvised melisma, band continues established pattern; banjo improvises ascending and descending runs	
6:05-8:07	Banjo returns to AA'BB' melody; vocalist drops out	
8:08-8:40	Banjo cues new meter in duple (8/4); guimbri plays fragments of upcoming tutti melody; banjo improvises on this	
8:40-9:13	Banjo harmonizes over guimbri melody at half usual melodic rhythm 2x, then repeats, filling in space with rearticulated notes, 2x	
9:13-32	Banjo returns to improvisation on melody; plays end of upcoming vocal melody 2x	
9:32-9:39	Chorus sings Gnawi invocation on melody previously established in the guimbri	“Ah ya marḥaba u Allah ya sisi marḥaba” 2x
9:40-10:05	Chorus continues melody with new lyrics in call-and-response; response is “marhaba”	“Al-tyour al-baida...”
10:06-10:39	Chorus continues melody with new lyrics in call-and-response; response is a question	“Fin ghadi ya dounia?”
10:40-11:39	Sequence of call-and-response from 9:40-10:39 repeats	
11:40-12:20	Chorus drops out; Banjo and guimbri call and response 4x; play call and response melody together 1x	
12:21-13:11	Chorus returns w new lyrics, tutti on melody; lyrics (6 lines) 2x	
13:12-13:24	Chorus melody slightly altered in second half, different lyrics, 2x	“Al-ḥal, al-ḥal, ya ahl al-ḥal, u Allahy ma fih al-ḥal ythbal”

13:25-14:50	Sequence from 11:40-13:24 repeats	
14:51-15:15	“Al-7al” lyric repeats after 2x until fade out	

## Chapter Four

**Table 1.** Hip hop-identified artists at Festival de Casablanca, 2005-2011.<sup>2</sup>

year	performers
2005	Best of casa (Maroc, Rap), Fnaire (Maroc, rap traditionnel), H-kayne (Maroc, Rap), Kool Shen (France, rap), Wyclef Jean (USA, hip hop)
2006	Akon (USA r'n'b, Rap), Barry (Maroc-Fusion), Casa Crew (Maroc-RAP), MC Bigg (Maroc-Rap), Disiz la Peste (France-rap), Hel Lmkane (Maroc-Rap), Psy 4 de la Rime (France-RAP), Zanka Flow [Muslim and Larbé] (Maroc-Rap)
2007	Fez City Clan (Maroc-Rap), Fnaire (Maroc-Rap traditionnel), H-Kayne (Maroc-Rap), DAM (Palestine-Rap), Joey Starr (France-RAP)
2008	Barry (Rap-Maroc), Brooklyn Funk Essentials (Jazz/Funk/hip hop- USA), H-Kayne (Rap-Maroc), Rayess Bek (Rap-France/Liban), Steph Ragga Man (Ragga-Maroc) Style Souss (Chanson amazigh-Maroc), Would Chaab (Rap-Maroc), Shabka (Hip hop-Maroc), Groupe VFF MC HAMID (RAP-Maroc), BIZZ2RISK (RAP-Maroc)
2009	DJ Key (Djing-Maroc), Nneka (Soul/Hip Hop/Reggae-Nigeria), Busta Rhymes (Rap-USA), Casa Crew (Rap-Maroc), H-Kayne (Rap-Maroc)
2010	Beat Assailant (Rap-US), Missy Elliott (Hip Hop-USA), Mix Master Mike (DJing-USA), Muslim (RAP-Maroc), Oxmo Puccino (Rap-France)
2011	Barry (Rap, Maroc), Tumi & the Volume (Rap, South Africa), Don Bigg (Rap, Maroc), Sefyu (rap, France), 50 Cent (rap, USA)

**Table 2.** EAC-L’Boulvart programming, 1999-2011.

year	event	location	description	other
1999	Le tremplin des jeunes musiciens du Casablanca	Theatre de la Fédération des Oeuvres Laiques (F.O.L.), Gautier, Casablanca	Hard rock/metal competition with 3 fusion bands (Callen 2006: 129)	Association for Artistic and Cultural Education (E.A.C.), an arm of the F.O.L. (Callen 2006: 124)
2000	Boulevard des jeunes musiciens	Theatre de la Fédération des Oeuvres Laiques (F.O.L.), Gautier, Casablanca	Competition in 3 genres, 3 days: rap/hip hop; rock/hard rock; rai/orientale/fusion (Callen 2006: 131)	

<sup>2</sup> Sources: “Festival de Casablanca: Histoire du Festival” [<http://www.festivaldecasablanca.ma/festival/historique/>], accessed 24 May 2012; press materials 2008, 2010, 2011

2001	Boulevard des jeunes musiciens	Theatre de la Fédération des Oeuvres Laiques (F.O.L.), Gautier, Casablanca	Competition in 3 genres, 3 days: rap/hip hop/electronica; rock/hard rock; rai/orientale/fusion'; music technology workshops	
2002	Boulevard des jeunes musiciens	F.O.L.	Competition in 3 genres, 3 days: hip hop, rock, fusion; music technology workshops	
2003	Boulevard des jeunes musiciens	Stadium of le Club Olympique de Casablanca (C.O.C.)	Competition in 3 genres, 3 days: hip hop, rock, fusion	
2003	Boulevard des jeunes musiciens	F.O.L.	music technology and instrumental technique workshops	
2004	Boulevard des jeunes musiciens	Stadium of le Club Olympique de Casablanca (C.O.C.)	Competition in 3 genres, 3 days: hip hop, rock, fusion	
2005	Boulevard des jeunes musiciens	C.O.C. And the stadium of the R.U.C. (Adjacent soccer club)	Additional opening night performance; Competition in 3 genres, 3 days: hip hop, rock, fusion; music workshops; booth space available for civic organizations ( <i>associations</i> )	E.A.C. Changes its name to Association Culturelle Artistique Laique (l'ACAL)
2006	L'Boulevard	C.O.C. (Invited performances) And R.U.C. (Le Tremplin)	Competition in 3 genres, 3 days: hip hop, rock, fusion; music workshops; booth space available for civic organizations ( <i>associations</i> ) and merchandise sales; musical documentaries shown at Institut Francais; photo exposition at l'Ecole des Beaux-Arts of Casablanca; roundtable titled "Derija, language of contemporary creation" (Fr); exchange program between L'Boulevard and Les Recontres Alternatives Garorock (the French Garorock festival)	L'ACAL changes its name to l'E.A.C.-L'Boulevard (Education, art and culture)
2007	L'Boulevard	C.O.C. (Invited performances) And R.U.C. (Le Tremplin)	Competition in 3 genres, 3 days: hip hop, rock, fusion; booth space available for civic organizations ( <i>associations</i> ) and merchandise sales; a residency for artists from multiple genres and countries to rehearse together and play the festival; photo exposition at the Casablanca Villa Des Arts; documentary film showings; exchange program between L'Boulevard and Garorock	
2008	Le Tremplin	Mohamed V National Theatre, Rabat	Competition in 3 genres, 3 days: hip hop, rock, fusion	

2008	L'Boulevard	C.O.C. And R.U.C.	Invited performances and the winners of the 2008 Tremplin in three genres; booth space available for civic organizations ( <i>associations</i> ) and merchandise sales; a residency for artists from multiple genres and countries to rehearse together and play the festival, this year featuring Amazigh Kateb (Gnawa Diffusion); exchange program between L'Boulevard and Garorock; documentary film showings	
2009	Le Tremplin	Fabrique Culturelle des Abbatoirs (l'Batwar)	Competition in 3 genres, 3 days: hip hop, rock, fusion; invited performances by Moroccan bands only; "associations market" and "music market"; a residency for artists from multiple genres and countries to rehearse together and play the festival; exchange program with Pirineos Sur (Spanish alternative music festival)	
2010	Le Tremplin	l'Batwar	Competition in 3 genres, 3 days: hip hop, rock, fusion; "associations market" and "music market"; exchange program with Pirineos Sur	Boultek, the recording studio and rehearsal space at the Boulevard offices, opens
2010	L'Boulevard	C.O.C.	Invited performances and the winners of the 2010 Tremplin over 4 days, in hip hop, "rock/electro," "electro-rock-fusion," and rock/metal; photo exhibition at the Villa Des Arts, Casablanca	
2010	Le cycle du documentaire musical	L'Batwar, Institut Francais, Instituto Cervantes, University Hassan II (3in Sebaa)	documentary films 8-14 February 2010	
2010	Boulevard tour	Various cities	Summer 2010	
2011	Le Tremplin	l'Batwar	Competition in 3 genres, 3 days: hip hop, rock, fusion; invited performances by Moroccan and international performers; "associations market" and "music market"; exchange program Tranzik with Pirineos Sur and Festa2H (Senegal)	
2011	La Projo [projection] du Lundi	Boultek	Music documentary series held each Monday in spring 2011	
2012	Salle 36 concert series	Boultek	Parallel concert series in rock/metal, fusion, and hip hop, january 2012-present	

**Table 3.** Some EAC-L’Boulevard sponsors, 2006-2011.<sup>3</sup>

year	Selected sponsors
2006	US Embassy, Moroccan Ministry of Culture, Nokia, French Embassy, Institut Francais, British Council (since 2002), RedBull, others
2008	Nokia, Coca-Cola, TelQuel, 2M, French Embassy, US Embassy, Institut Francais, the City of Casablanca, others; l’E.A.C.-l’Boulevard receives monetary gift from King Mohamed VI
2009	Coca-Cola, 2M, TelQuel, US Embassy, French Embassy, Institut Francais, Instituto de Cervantes, Goethe Institut, City of Casablanca, Kingdom of Morocco Consolidated Council on Human Rights, others
2010	Inwi, Coca-Cola, Red Bull, 2M, TelQuel, US Embassy, French Embassy, Institut Francais, Instituto de Cervantes, Kingdom of Morocco Consolidated Council on Human Rights, others
2011	City of Casablanca, [Moroccan] National Center for Human Rights, FNAC, Red Bull, Institut Francais, French Embassy, TelQuel, 2M, others

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<sup>3</sup> Sources: boulevard.ma, Callen 2006: 129-145, L’Kounache 2006-2010, Caubet 2008, Nechnach 2008: 26-27, L’EAC-L’Boulevard press books 2009-2011.