

***Haul* Music: Transnationalism and musical performance in the
Saharai refugee camps of Tindouf, Algeria.**

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Abstract

The thesis presents ethnographic data and musical analysis (in the form of transcriptions) of *Haul* music which is the music style performed by Bedouin¹ societies in *Trab el Bidan* region (Mauritania, Western Sahara, northern Mali, southern Algeria and northern Morocco). It is based on field research undertaken in Algeria in 2004-05 in the refugee camps of Tindouf, Algeria, where Saharawi² people (a Bedouin society) live in exile. This research is unique and original as *Haul* has not, until now, been explored in depth by any scholar.

My research on *Haul* reveals that the changes in Saharawi music in the refugee camps of Tindouf reflect changes in the musical traditions of Bedouin societies as whole; changes that can be traced to the revolution which occurred in Western Sahara in 1975, and changes that are a result of the migrations and life in exile that followed. I argue that these changes occurred due to the transnational experiences undergone by Saharawi people in their forced exile (caused by the Moroccan state) from their homeland in Western Sahara to Algeria. Further, I assert that the invocation of memory in Bedouin musical styles is evidence of past musical practices being retained in contemporary *Haul* performance, although other musical changes are similarly in progress.

¹ Bedouin is a term which refers to nomadic Muslim communities in the Sahara desert and in the Middle East. The problem is that, in many scholarly publications such as Hart (1962) , Gerteiny (1967) and Norris (1968), Saharawi people are called “Moors” and the Saharawi people claim that the term disrespectful and prefer to be called Bedouin(Ahmed Fadel interview, 2-11-2004).

² The term Saharawi is spelt in a variety of ways, such as: Saharwi, Sahrauis, Sahraouiian or Saharaoui. I have decided to use the term Saharawi because it is the closest to Hassaniya pronunciation in my personal opinion and the most common terminology for Spanish speakers.

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Declaration of originality

I, Luis Gimenez Amoros declare that this assignment is my own work written in my own words. Where I have drawn on the words or ideas of others, these have been acknowledged using complete references according to the Departmental Guidelines.

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Chapter 1 Introduction

This study aims to gain insight into how *Haul*, the traditional music of Bedouin societies in Western Sahara, reflects change since 1975 within the transnational society of Saharai refugees in the camps of Tindouf, Algeria. It also addresses how Saharai music differs from that of other Bedouin societies in the north-western region of Africa. These two societies share the same musical roots.

The opportunity to undertake this research came in 2004 when I was invited by the Spanish non-governmental organisation (NGO), *Amigos del pueblo Saharaui* (Friends of the Saharaui People), to participate as a researcher, director and editor in the production of a documentary film on Saharai music. The opportunity for me to participate in the production of this film came through my brother Jose who told the NGO that I was finishing my degree in ethnomusicology at the School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS) in London. When I learned of this possibility, I immediately was eager to be involved in the realisation of the documentary, which eventually was titled, “*Los Mares del Desierto*” trans. “The Seas of Desert” (L. Gimenez, 2006). I had long been interested in Bedouin music with its African-Arabic roots and the influence from Spanish music that developed due to the colonial encounter in Western Sahara. I was totally intrigued because this project took me to the region of Africa that Spain had colonized in the early 20th century and governed through 1975, when Morocco invaded the Western Sahara after Franco’s death. I knew that in this region people speak both Spanish and their native Hassaniya and that, until I found a native language speaker to assist with the research, I would be able to interact by speaking Spanish.

The NGO, *Amigos del pueblo Saharaui*, provided the necessary funds for me and the film crew. This initial opportunity to go to the refugee camps to make a documentary on Saharai music was the beginning of an enduring relationship with Saharai music that I developed through learning to perform it with musicians in the refugee camps during that initial stay, and then later in Spain as well where I continued the research with Saharai

musicians in Madrid and Alicante. Performing with Saharai musicians presented the chance to learn more about Saharai culture both in the camps and in its transnational context in Spain. Playing guitar with Saharai musicians at weddings for Saharai people in Spain gave me access to ‘insider knowledge’ not easily obtained through interviewing alone.

Research methodology

This thesis is based on both secondary research from published sources and field research in the Saharai refugee camps of Tindouf in Algeria (6 months in 2004); and of Saharai musicians living in Spain (2004-2011). Secondary research was conducted both before and after returning from the six months I spent producing the documentary film mentioned above and has been ongoing from 2004 to the present. This secondary research was necessary for learning about and reporting on the history of Bedouin music of the past and its relationship to contemporary Saharai music. It was also necessary in order to determine the history of Saharai refugee camps in Algeria and of the socio-political realities of the Saharai resistance to Moroccan rule.

While in the camps, I used participant-observation and in-depth one-on-one and group interviews with the assistance of Ahmed Fadel, a native Hassaniya speaker, who was responsible for the translation of interviews in Hassaniya into Spanish. It was possible to do other interviews in Spanish because many Saharais also speak Spanish as their second language, due to Spain’s presence as a colonial power from 1886 to 1975. I completed all translations of interviews quoted in this thesis into English. Interviews and music events were documented using a video camera and digital, audio mini-disc recorder.

During my field research in the Saharai refugee camps, interviewing allowed me the opportunity to integrate with the community in order to obtain as much information on their music as I possibly could. Both in the camps and in Spain I interviewed Saharai people on how they perceived *Haul* music in the refugee camps compared to how it was played in the time before they became refugees. My original data (2004-2011) includes

audio and video interviews with old and young poets and musicians. The interviews include explanations of musical modes and the various aspects of how modes are used within traditional *Haul* music, a discussion of traditional rhythms, *medhj* (religious songs), and comments on modern musical influences including new styles fused with various Western, Arabic, African and Latin grooves. Also included in this thesis are interviews with Saharai musicians in Madrid that address the dissemination and hybridity of their music in Europe. Following the classical method for ethnomusicological research, the observations of events and participation in the performance of Saharai music since 2004 have given me the distinct advantage of being able to understand and play *Haul* music. My research on Saharai music in Spain (2005-2011) involved moreover participation as a performer at Saharai weddings and Saharai social gatherings. This experience provided a solid basis from which to build this investigation not only with regard to the contexts in which this music is performed, but also in understanding the structure, compositional and instrumental techniques of the music. I reflect more on my research experience in other parts of the thesis. In line with contemporary ethnomusicological practice, this intimate contact with Saharai music and musicians, has allowed me to be in the heart of the cultural encounter necessary for ethnomusicological analysis (T. J. Cooley & G. Barz, 2008: 20). My ethnographic data has been of distinctive value because there has not been any research on Saharai music up to the present day.

Literature review

Published sources that informed me about the history of Bedouin music and culture include the following: Baroja (1990) provided anthropological knowledge on the music of the Saharai people in the past up to the revolution in 1975. The anthropologists, Hart (1962) and Hodges (1983), sociologist Gerteiny (1967), historian El Hamel (1999), and professor of Arabic and Islamic studies, Norris (1968), reinforced knowledge of Bedouin culture although not specifically in the area of the Western Sahara, as Baroja had. All the information from these scholars gave me a wide perspective of Bedouin history and culture as it pertains to the Saharai people.

I was unable to find any academic sources related specifically to *Haul* music, the subject of this thesis. Nevertheless, I found brief notes by Baroja (1990) on the social status of the musicians. Other sources relevant to *Haul* music were provided by the Spanish record label, Nube Negra, which had some unpublished documents on the use and names of *Haul* modes. In terms of historical references about the instruments used in *Haul* music, a relevant text is Sieur de la Courbe's book, "*Premier voyage du Sieur de la Courbe fait a la coste d'Afrique en 1685*" (trans. "First trip of *Sieur de la Courbe* on the coast of Africa in 1685", 1913). Additional information on the history of *Haul* was obtained from interviews with musicians who know the music because they play it.

Information regarding the social-political situation in Western Sahara that led to the emergence of the Tindouf refugee camps came from a combination of reading published sources in Spanish by the anthropologists Barbulo (2002) and Tortajada (2002). Other sources in English were later taken from articles by anthropologist Hakovirta (1993), scholar of International Relations and International Management, Zoubir (1990), and the sociologist, Jensen (2005). They provided more objective information on the Saharawi problem than the Spanish writers who supported the Saharawi revolution and touched upon the bad administration of Spain after decolonization in 1975, and the consequent exile of Saharawi people to the refugee camps in Tindouf.

This thesis is grounded in the theory of scholars primarily in ethnomusicology and anthropology such as Rasmussen (2006), Baily (2005), Goodman (2005), Tuohy (2006), Averill (2006) and Ramnarine (2007), who have published on issues relating to transnationalism and music. Subjects linked with transnationalism, such as memory, exile, aesthetics, musical performance, music and migration, nationalism, refugee studies, local and global politics and diaspora are extensively covered in these texts. These texts have an influence on my interpretation of *Haul* music.

Theoretical framework - transnationalism and memory

This thesis debates the construction of a new Saharawi musical identity through the invocation of memory of *Haul*, a musical system that is the basis of ancient Bedouin

music in northwest Africa. The new Saharai musical identity is due to the forced exile of Saharai people to Tindouf by the Moroccan state in 1975, which motivated for the development of a refugee and transnational community with a new socialist-Arab ideology that retained the ancient musical system of *Haul*. I argue that memory is invoked through *Haul* modes to construct a new type of revolutionary song which no longer adheres to ancient, stratified Bedouin norms, despite the use of the old musical system found in *Haul* music. The Saharai revolution abolished social classes after 1975, which created a new vision of music and a transforming social status for musicians in Saharai refugee camps.

Saharai music reflects changes from pre-colonial times, through the colonial period to the revolution in 1975 and the subsequent exile of the Saharai, thereby producing a transnational musical experience in the refugee camps of Algeria and Spain (R. Waldinger & D. Fitzgerald, 2004: 1177). As a case in point, I will describe how Saharai music aids “transnationalisation” as presented in the case of the Spanish record label, Nube Negra, which has commodified and promoted a new form of Saharai music; different to the *Haul* music in the refugee camps, but rooted in *Haul* and the Bedouin musical system (R. Patterson, 2006: 1891). This point coheres with Rasmussen’s observation that “Local culture and memory are recalled differently by performers, promoters and others involved in commercial music production and performance” (2006: 795).

As part of this exercise on understanding transnational Saharai music, an analysis of Bedouin societies and their traditions of the past is necessary in order to reflect on the current changes in “memory” and “musical performance” in the Saharai refugee camps where social castes have been abolished (*ibid*: 795). Underpinning my observations of musical performance is the pervasive enactment of memory and difference engaged in by the musicians: memory evident in the juxtaposition of old and new, and memory evident in difference as articulated in the refugees’ perceptions of tradition. According to Baily, “Music is bound up with identity and memory in a special way, for music is not only a ready means for the identification of different ethnic or social groups, but it has potent

emotional connotations and can be used to assert and negotiate identity in a particularly powerful manner” (2005: 216). Yet, in modern Saharai society the continuation of traditional music is characterised by the embracing of new musical elements and the abolition of social castes in localities where music has become popular and politically involved. Thus, music is available for everyone despite the retention of musical styles of the past (P. Calvin, 2005: 421). This research documents how Saharai music has been transformed by the present social realities of refugees and by new socialist-Arab ideologies within the camps (S. Hutchinson, 2006: 37).

Chapter summaries

This thesis is organized into seven chapters, with their content as follows:

Chapter 2 provides a historical and social contextualization of Saharai people. There is an explanation of the three geographical areas in northwest Africa where Saharai people have lived since the late seventh century. These areas are: *Trab el Bidan*, the area of Bedouin or Moorish culture before colonization (Western Sahara, Mauritania, northeastern Mali, southern Morocco and southern Algeria); Western Sahara after colonization as the only Spanish colony in inner Africa; and Saharai people as refugees in the desert of Hamada (Tindouf), Algeria, since 1975 up to the present day.

Chapter 3 presents a historical and social contextualisation of Saharai musicians that describes *igagwen* (musician caste) as the oldest living musical tradition known in Bedouin societies, and it describes the realities of the musician’s social status after the Saharai revolution. Within the Bedouin caste system, musicians were of the lower class and played only to nobles who could afford to pay. In order to explain the present changes in the musician’s status and in musical performance, I present the case of Ahmed Zein, a Saharai guitarist in the refugee camps of Tindouf. I describe the differences and similarities between his music and music in the old Bedouin social system.

In addition, I give a detailed account of women’s role in music in the refugee camps. This is a unique case in the Arab world, where women are allowed to play percussive and string instruments. Interestingly, in Bedouin societies, women’s voices are more in demand than those of men. This situation prevails in the Saharai refugee camps at

present. Saharai culture is unique in this regard among Muslim cultures and this study supports Doubleday's contention that "women and music in Muslim cultures offers a rich field of investigation of gender and power" (2006: 109).

In Chapter 4, I present an introduction to *Haul* music. This includes in-depth analysis of the Bedouin modes, with notated musical examples followed by a description of the instruments (including playing techniques) found in the Saharai refugee camps. Also in Chapter 4 is a section based on personal observations made through my "learning" of *Haul* modes in the camps. This learning was an extension of the participant-observation research method I employed - a critical element of ethnomusicological research (D. Wong, 2008: 78). I show how Saharai music produces varying emotions in the Saharai listener when relating to the Saharai revolution, although there is little reference to the social system and poetry of the older tradition, which had more to do with topics such as love and religion. As Norris claims, "Moorish poetry was based on the *sunnah*¹ as the only acceptable way of life among all classes of the Saharan community" (1968:113). Nevertheless, Saharais in the refugee camps retain *Haul* modes from Bedouin societies of the past and emotional similarities associated with the modes such as *fagu*², for inducing dance, and *sgaller*³, for inducing crying and nostalgia. Thus, this Chapter of the thesis not only speaks of Saharai music within the refugee camps, but also includes discussion on how it differs, yet relates to classical Bedouin music in Mauritania, southern Morocco, southeastern Algeria and northern Mali.

In Chapter 5, I provide insight into religious music in the Saharai refugee camps and the impact of Islam in Bedouin societies in relation to the Arab world. As Gerteiny explains, "The Moors (or Bedouins) have emerged from a complex environment and culture, from the spirit of Islam and the life of nomadism, and from the influence of Black Africa" (1967: 37). Religion and knowledge were transmitted in the nomadic *mahadara*⁴ in *Trab el Bidan* before the advent of Western education and the Saharai revolution. During that

¹ Sunnah denotes the teachings of the Prophet. In Arabic 'sunnah' literally means "clarity".

² *Fagu* is the third mode in *Haul* music.

³ *Sgaller* is the fourth mode in *Haul* music.

⁴ This is the nomadic institution for education and religious knowledge.

time, there was also a great expansion of Sufism parallel to the *mahadaras*. Both served as the main sources of education. From Sufism and *al-mahadaras* in Bedouin societies, *medhj*⁵ songs were born. *Medhj* is a unique style of song because it uses *Haul* modes, Koranic texts or religious oral stories from Bedouin oral history. *Medhj* uses a unique rhythm in 12/8 similar to Spanish flamenco *bulerias*⁶. At the end of Chapter 5, I include a study of how religion and technology are compatible in the Saharai refugee camps through the recitation of the Koran on radio during harsh weather conditions in the desert. In Chapter 6, I consider the new aesthetics of Saharai music within the refugee camp. Music has evolved as a more popular art form and the music is sung at national events to enhance the Saharai cause (T. Swedenburg, 2004: 178). In this Chapter, I aim to show that ethnomusicology is essential and useful for not only studying the “folk” and the traditional, but also Saharai modern music and its impact on transforming societies, as is the case with *Haul* music in the Saharai refugee camps (H. Noor Al-Deen, 2005: 600). I discuss the different styles of music ranging from Classical *Haul*, to revolutionary songs, to Saharai singers singing in Spanish and to Saharai musicians using electric guitars, keyboards and electronic rhythms. Additionally, I provide insight into the relationship between Saharai modern poetry and poets and modern music in the camps. I argue that poetry has two sources: the pluralistic poetry about oneself as part of a collective soul in the Hassaniya language, and the personal poetry and the personal emotions of the writer without taking into account the collective experience. Modern poets retain similar ways of writing lyrics for the musicians and singers in the refugee camps. However, the poets gave me a deeper explanation in the use of language in Saharai lyrics, which I found essential to include in this Chapter. In general terms, Chapter 6 attempts to provide a new insight in refugee musical studies in a post-colonial era where Saharais belong to the only African country that has not experienced independence to the present day – they are still in the process of decolonisation (H. Hakovirta, 1993: 47).

In Chapter 7, there is a discussion of how Saharai communities in Spain are experiencing a different transnationalisation to that in the refugee camps. The Saharai

⁵ Religious songs in the Saharai refugee camps.

⁶Flamenco is the most popular musical style in Spain, influenced by Arab and Bedouin playing techniques. *Buleria* is a flamenco rhythm similar to *medhj*.

transnational experience in Spain aids the commodification of their music in Europe and the west. This Chapter describes how the Spanish record label, “Nube Negra”⁷, creates Saharai transnational music stars within the Western music industry while trying to maintain the authenticity and rich heritage of Saharai music. It discusses music copyright for Saharai musicians as managed by the *Sociedad General de Autores en España* (SGAE), an organisation responsible for copyright protection of Saharai music in Spain and internationally. There is an analysis of how musical performance in the camps differs from that of the new Saharai music promoted by Nube Negra which shows how different the approaches to Saharai music are in the camps and in the Western world. There are opinions and perspectives of both Nube Negra looking at Saharai music and Saharai musicians who have collaborated with Nube Negra and now live either in the camps or in Spain.

⁷ Nube Negra is the only Spanish record label which recorded Saharai music and promoted it internationally.

Chapter Two
Historical and social contextualisation of the Western Sahara:
Saharai music and *Haul*

The Western Sahara is located on the northwest coast of Africa. Morocco is to the north, the Atlantic Ocean to the east, Algeria to the west and Mauritania to the south. The whole territory has a land area of 103 000 square kilometres. The borders within Western Sahara were defined by agreements between Spain and France in 1900, 1904 and 1912 (J. A. Rodriguez Esteban, 2011:31). Aaiun is the capital, and other major cities are Smara, Auserd, Dakhla and Aguenit. The Western Sahara is divided into 3 main regions: the northeast, from the Atlas mountain range to the hills of Zemmour, which is a rocky desert (*hamadas*) with steep mountains; the second area is formed by rivers that are a set of dry channels leading to saline depressions at “Cabo Bojador” and the Liyil. Due to high temperatures, water in these rivers evaporates quickly and never reaches the sea. The third zone, the Rio de Oro, is inland and consists of plains and sand dunes ranging south to Bir Gandus. Water collects in the ground forming numerous wells. All these areas are in the desert, but they have significant differences between them in regard to their geological structure (*ibid*, 34).



Figure 1 Western Sahara map
<http://lailab.files.wordpress.com/2010/03/crimage.jpg>.



Figure 2 *Trab el Bidan* map (map created by L. Giménez, 2006).

Trab el Bidan

The physical borders of Western Sahara were marked without attention to the social borders between communities and cultures. This problem occurs throughout Africa⁸. In Western Sahara, the frontiers were not conceived for nomadic life. The Sahara is part of the *Trab el Bidan* (see Figure 2), which is the Bedouin region of Northwest Africa and includes the Western Sahara, Mauritania, part of Morocco, Algeria and Mali. The people living in *Trab el Bidan* commonly speak the Hassaniya language, 80% of which has its roots in Arabic (J. A. Rodriguez Esteban, 2011:70). Many Saharai insist that Hassaniya is a language, and not a dialect of Arabic, as previously claimed by other Arabic speakers in North Africa (Ahmed Fadel interview, 2-11-2004). In fact, Arabic speakers find it difficult to understand a conversation in Hassaniya (A. G. Gerteiny, 1967: 82).

The first wave of Islam in the Western Sahara began in the late seventh century with the arrival of *Shanaja* (Almoravid Berbers). The arrival of Arab communities called *Beni Halal* and *Beni Hassan* in the eleventh century, deepened this change and created a

⁸In figure 2, one observes the perfect lines between Algeria, Mali and Western Sahara. *Trab el Bidan* is the highlighted zone within these countries in northwest Africa where there are Bedouin societies with a common language: Hassaniya.

revolution in the *Trab el Bidan*, thus displacing Berber Almoravid languages and introducing classical Arabic and gradually creating the Hassaniya language in the area (H. Norris, 1962: 317). The *Shanaja* left the Western Sahara to migrate north where they conquered Morocco. Some of the *Shanaja* people crossed the Mediterranean Sea and settled in Andalusia (Spain) while others stayed in Morocco and Algeria. During *Shanaja* rule there was a great cultural explosion, but the people lost contact with their country of origin and their ancient way of life (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Western_Sahara⁹). Nonetheless, Hassaniya people today exhibit much pride in attributing to *Ibn Yasin* the foundation of the Islamic schools in *Trab el Bidan*, because he created an Islamic government that started with the Almoravid state in the seventh century (C. El Hamel, 1999: 68). From the seventh to the fourteenth centuries, the Almoravid movement rapidly spread orthodox Islam in northwest Africa and by the fourteenth century Arab communities of Beni Hassan had already governed the *Shanaja* Almoravids in *Trab el Bidan* (P. Clarke 1982: 23).

Both Hassani people and Almoravids lived as nomads and looked to the clouds to find good land for pasture (D. Hart, 1962: 516). In their kind of life, no borders were perceived in the *Trab el Bidan*. Western Sahara was mostly occupied by the largest group of sub-Bedouins called Rgibat (approximately 200 000 members), who were full-scale pastoral nomads (*ibid*, 527). Their cycle of movement depended entirely upon the availability of pasturage and water. Western Sahara has been inhabited by other Hassaniya nomad communities such as Izargien, Oulad Delim, Oulad Tidrarin, Ait Lahsen and the Aroisen. One of the main characteristics of all of these Hassani communities was the ability to read and write in Arabic, thus, being highly educated (T. Hodges, 1983: 30). For further information on Hassani genealogy, Cleaveland cites that the Hassani historian Muhamad Salih wrote a genealogical history of Hassani Arabs which he entitled *Al-Haswa Al Baysaniyya fi al-Nasab al-Hassanyya*, which translates as 'The delicious sip of knowledge of the genealogy of the Hassan' (1998: 373).

⁹ *Western Sahara*. (2011, July 29). In *Wikipedia, the free encyclopaedia*. Retrieved July 15, 2011 from http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Timeline_of_Western_Sahara_history. I have introduced general information about Western Sahara provided in wikipedia in order to corroborate some of the oral information obtained during my research in the Saharai refugee camps of Tindouf.

It is known that people who inhabited the Sahara were not sedentary. For example, some of the ancestors of today's Saharawi communities came from Yemen. According to Norris, "The Arab historians have a theory that the Shanaja Berbers are themselves Yemenite in origin. Thus, the hybrid mixture of Arabs and Shanaja Berbers created the Bedouin race as it is known today" (1962: 318). From the twelfth to the fourteenth century, other Hassani communities also crossed northern Africa and eventually settled in the region of *Saguia El Samra* and gradually expanded to the south, mainly to Tiris and Adrar (C. El Hamel, 1999: 64). During this time, trans-Saharan trade reached its height in the desert and along the coast. Livestock farming also developed. The people exploited rich coastal salt mines and practised agriculture and handicrafts. In the eighteenth century Saharawi territory was invaded by the Spaniards while other parts of the *Trab el Bidan* (Mauritania, Algeria, Morocco and Mali) were taken by the French (T. Cleaveland, 1998: 373).

Due to the low and erratic rainfall, the region was inhabited only by nomadic social groups and the only known religion was Islam. Its law was based on nomadic and Arabic laws (A. G. Gerteiny, 1967: 29). The Bedouins were different from the populations around them. They moved with their herds through the desert on a more or less regular route established by stations, wells and fountains (*ibid*, 377). Societies in the *Trab el Bidan* were tribal in nature but with some specific characteristics. The Western Sahara was ruled by an assembly of forty emirates, called *Ait arba-ain*. In this region there was never any political unity but rather a number of emirates, confederations and what Hodges describes as "tribes" (1983: 30). In addition, each tribe was divided into sub-tribes so that the identity of each community was fairly clear. This social and political system was inherited from the *Shanajas* back in the seventh century. One of the implications of this political institution was that it established respect for Arabic and Bedouin values such as following strict Islamic rules. According to Gerteiny, "The mixing of Arab and Shanaja Berber societies began to form the Bedouin personality as we know it today and the hierarchy of Bedouin society began to take shape towards the end of the 15th century" (1967: 33).

Until the mid-nineteenth century the relationship of the Western Sahara with Spain was limited to questions about fishing. However, during the distribution of land treaties between the French and Spanish in 1880 there were clashes with the Saharais. For these reasons, in the late nineteenth century, the Saharai political-religious leader, Cheikh Ma El Ainin, founded Smara and built the holy city, a spiritual and political Saharai center (H. Norris, 1968: 114). The Saharais during this period of colonisation were fighting for their neighbours in Morocco, Algeria and Mauritania, against French colonisation. However, when the Saharais asked for help against Spanish colonisation, there was no response from their neighbours. In 1958, Morocco gained independence from France and warned Spain about entering Morocco's occupied territory. Spain decided to cede the present day Tarfaya province to Morocco, south of the Moroccan border, which was an area once inhabited by the Saharais. Thus, under the French and Spanish colonisers, the *Trab el Bidan* was divided into different countries in northwest Africa (see Figure 2, page 11). Yet, the physical boundary of the Hassaniya language still exists in the territories of the *Trab el Bidan* (Ahmed Fadel interview, 2-11-2004)¹⁰.

The exile

Approximately 250 000 Saharai people, originally from Western Sahara, have been living for more than 36 years (since 1975) in refugee camps in the inhospitable Hamada desert of Tindouf (H. Hakovirta, 1993: 41). In 1963, the UN Special Committee on Decolonisation included Western Sahara – then a Spanish colony – within its sphere of influence. From 1963-75 Spain was invited to facilitate the process of decolonisation, in accordance with the UN principle of self-determination (Y. Zoubir, 1990: 225). The eventual recognition of the Saharai people's independence and right to self-determination occurred on 12 May 1975, when the UN noted that the "Polisario Front" (the Saharai political party) was the only dominant political force in the territory and that the vast majority of Saharai people desired independence (T. Hodges, 1983: 40).

¹⁰ The information given in this paragraph is based on oral history and collective memory, most of which has not been written down, yet it is known and accepted by the Saharai population.

In the same year, as the Spanish state began its transition to democracy (after Franco's death), the territory of Western Sahara was ceded by Spain to Mauritania and Morocco (J. Mercer, 1976: 100). The "Green March" (the Moroccan occupation in Western Sahara) took place on 6 November 1975 and marked the beginning of the exile of the Saharai people in the Hamada desert of the Tindouf (T. Smith de Cherif, 1993: 99). In 1991, after 16 years of war, the UN peacekeepers in the Sahara formed a committee to create a referendum to allow a vote for the self-determination of Western Sahara. This committee, called MINURSO, has been monitoring the ceasefire from 1991 until the present day (E. Jensen, 2005: 17). This is the political environment that caused the refugees who are the subject of this thesis to remain in the refugee camps of Tindouf in Algeria to the present day. My study addresses how being a refugee community for nearly four decades has influenced *Haul*, the dominant popular style performed by musicians living in the refugee camp.

Refugee camps, Hamada Desert, Tindouf region (Algeria): context of research

The Saharai refugee camps are divided into six different *wilayas* (camp provinces): Auserd, Rabuni, Smara, Dakhla, Febrary 27 and Aiuun. Each *wilaya* has from two to four different *dairas* (towns). The refugee camps extend for approximately 180 kilometers along the Hamada desert. The *wilaya* of *Rabuni* is the main diplomatic *wilaya* in the camps and is only 20 kilometres from Tindouf, a large Algerian town of 58 193 inhabitants, most of whom work in the military sector (<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tindouf>)¹¹. The Saharai refugee camps have been sustained for more than 36 years by international organisations such as the United Nations, the European Community and NGOs mostly from Spain. The Spanish government still has not recognised the referendum for Saharai self-determination. However, Spanish NGOs bring more than 9 000 Saharai children to Spain due to the high infant mortality in the months of July and August in the camps. In these camps the

¹¹ *Tindouf*. (2011, July 28). In *Wikipedia, the free encyclopaedia*. Retrieved July 15, 2011, from http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tindouf_Province.

I have introduced general information about Tindouf provided in wikipedia in order to corroborate some of the oral information obtained during my research in the Saharai refugee camps of Tindouf.

temperature reaches 50 degrees Celsius in the shade during summer (Ahmed Fadel interview, 2-11-2004).



Figure 3 This map indicates where the Saharai refugee camps are placed, near Tindouf (Algeria).
www.riadzany.blogspot.com.¹²

The generations who were born in the camps (from 1975 onwards) are often highly educated in every kind of discipline related to the Sciences, Technology and Humanities. Young Saharais are funded mostly by Algeria, Cuba and Libya to study abroad. Nevertheless, when they are back in the camps, they find it difficult to find jobs based in their fields and thus continue to depend on international aid. Within the camps, health care and food are provided. Therefore, despite the dramatic situation of being in exile there is a sense of security (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Western_Sahara¹³). As a result of access to the internet and satellite television, Saharais in exile are also well acquainted with the outside world. Within the camps, everyone moves in old 4x4 vehicles as a means of transport (Ahmed Fadel interview, 2-11-2004).

¹² This blog is licensed under a Creative Commons License 2005-2011.

¹³ *Western Sahara*. (2011, July 29). In *Wikipedia, the free encyclopaedia*. Retrieved July 15, 2011, from http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Timeline_of_Western_Sahara_history.

I have introduced general information about Western Sahara provided in wikipedia in order to corroborate some of the oral information obtained during my research in the Saharai refugee camps of Tindouf.

Music is highly appreciated among exiled Saharai people. There are local radio stations that promote Saharai artists. There is an international film festival in the refugee camps during the month of May. Popular artists in the international film industry such as Pedro Almodovar and Javier Bardem have appeared at the Sahara film festival in order to support Saharai culture. However, there is still a lack of technology and equipment in the camps. Regarding music, there are not enough instruments for every musician and they have to borrow from local institutions as they cannot afford to buy instruments for themselves. Nonetheless, music is performed in the camps throughout the year, especially at national events and weddings.

***Haul* music in the camps: Old and new**

Haul music is the oldest musical system in *Trab el Bidan*. *Haul* is based on eight modes (*entamas*, *seinicar*, *fagu*, *sgaier*, *lyen*, *leboer*, *lebteit* and *chawada*), each of which provides different ways of playing and writing poetry. Classical *Haul* is played with three local traditional Bedouin instruments¹⁴:

- *Tidinit*: String instrument made of acacia wood and four nylon strings. It is used to play *Haul* modes as the main solo instrument.
- *Ardin*: A stringed harp instrument made out of a calabash resonating body and twelve nylon strings. It is a drone instrument used for accompaniment and only played by women.
- *T'bal*: A drum made from camel skin and wood of the acacia tree. It is more commonly played in modern Saharai music than in classical *Haul*. Nonetheless, it is a traditional *Haul* instrument.

Haul music is played by *igagwen* (musician castes) in Bedouin societies in *Trab el Bidan*. This study aims to investigate how *Haul* reflects transnational change within Saharai society as found in the refugee camps of Tindouf since 1975. It also addresses how Saharai music differs from that of other Bedouin societies with the same musical roots and thus documents how the forced migration of Saharai people by Morocco in 1975

¹⁴ See Appendix I for details on Bedouin musical instruments.

created a new form of transnational *Haul* in the refugee camps. This study of music transpires in the context of a transnational process as this refugee community is forced to leave their country of origin, thereby forming a transnational community in the country of exile (Zolderg, Suhrke & Aguayo, 1986: 153).



Figure 4 *Wilaya of Auserd* in the Saharai refugee camps (L. Gimenez, 2006).

Conclusion

Physical, geographic boundaries have been transformed in the course of history in Bedouin societies. In music we see these changes reflected in the entire *Trab el Bidan* region, especially after the revolution and the subsequent exile of Saharai people. For this reason, this thesis not only speaks of Saharai music but must also include Mauritania, northern Morocco, southeast Algeria and parts of Mali in the social and historical context of *Haul* music. With the introduction not only of electric instruments but also changes in aesthetics and the inclusion of political messages dealing with the exile of Saharai people, the sound has changed over the last 400 years. In Mauritania, the *igagwen* (musician caste) still exists and is the oldest social form of musical tradition known in *Trab el Bidan*, while in the Saharai refugee camps there has been a continuation of traditional *Haul* but with new musical elements and the abolition of the caste system and social classes. Thus, this thesis is based on *Haul* music from three different historical eras in the following order: classical Bedouin music (Chapters 3, 4, 5), Saharai modern music (Chapter 6) and Saharai music in the Western world (Chapter 7).

Chapter Three

Social contextualisation of the music: *Igagwen* (musician caste) and Saharai musicians today

In this chapter I provide insight into the different conceptions of music and social castes in the refugee camps, from ancient times in *Trab el Biban* to the present. I discuss the concept of *griot* in northwest Africa where it is believed that music is 'in the genes' and therefore, music is the primary activity of a social caste of musicians. In what follows I show that the concept of *griot* differs in many ways in the two largest ancient empires in northwest Africa: *Mande* (Mali, Senegal, Gambia, Guinea, Burkina Faso and Guinea-Bissau) and *Trab el Bidan* (Mauritania, Western Sahara, southern Morocco, southern Algeria and northeast Mali).

This chapter also considers the role of musicians in *Trab el Bidan* over time in relation to women's studies, the purposes of music in Bedouin society and the abolition of musician castes after the Saharai revolution in 1975. Thus, I present the social perception of music and musicians in modern times in the Saharai refugee camps in comparison with the stratified Bedouin communities in *Trab el Bidan* of old. Moreover, I document how, in the refugee camps, there has been – as a result of the Saharai revolution of 1975 – a shift from performing for only the highest Bedouin castes to performing for the entire population of the country (Ahmed Fadel interview, 2-11-2004).

Stratified society in *Trab el Bidan*



Figure 5 Bedouin levels in the stratified society of *Trab el Bidan*¹⁵ (illus. modified by L. Gimenez, 2006).

Level 1: *Chorfa* (direct descendants of the Prophet) at the top of the pyramid.

Level 2: *Arab* (warriors) and *Zuaia* (Almoravid *Shanaja*, who were educated people dedicated to religious studies and meditation).

Level 3: Pastoralists, farmers, fishermen and Berber descendants. They had to pay taxes to higher classes.

Level 4: Black slaves, musicians, blacksmiths and Jewish descendants.

Trab el Bidan societies had a stratified social order where the *Chorfa* (direct descendants of the Prophet Muhammad) were at the top of the pyramid (J. Mercer, 1976: 121). The *Chorfa* were those who preached the word of the prophet. They also provided the ethical and religious values in *Trab el Bidan*. The second level was composed of two main groups: *Arab* (warriors) and *Zuaia* (Berber *Shanaja* people dedicated to religious studies).

¹⁵ This picture does not intend to stereotype people but to give an approximation of the social strata of Bedouin societies.

All these people were usually found in Tiris, a town south of Western Sahara. Western Sahara is a region of *Trab el Bidan* where many musicians and poets have found spiritual inspiration, even in present times (P. B. Clarke, 1982: 28). The Spanish anthropologist, Baroja, includes pastoralists, farmers and fishermen in the second level of the hierarchy. They had to pay taxes to the higher classes, while the *Arab* and *Zuaia* did not. Baroja also mentions slaves and musicians whose ancestors came from sub-Saharan Africa (Mali, Mauritania and Senegal in particular). They were at the bottom of the social hierarchy. Therefore, slaves were mostly from the black population (J. Baroja, 1990: 50-51).

These social classes existed in the *Trab el Bidan* from the 14th century to the colonial era in Western Sahara (*ibid*, 50-1). Before that, there is no certainty as to whether or not the musicians were a caste or rather of a lower class. Musicianship was probably neither a class occupation nor a trade. And because there is no existing written record or indication from oral history accounts, one can only make assumptions as to what the music sounded like during that time. The Saharawi revolution in 1975 had the effect of breaking down the divisions of social classes.

The concept of *griot* in northwest Africa: *Jelis* and *igagwen*

The *griot* culture extends throughout northwest Africa. It is understood as a musical caste in the regions of the Mande Empire and in *Trab el Bidan*. The main indigenous theory about *griots* is that music is genetically inherited within family castes. Thus, the musician has a certain surname dating back to the time of the local kingdoms. Members of the Diabate caste have been musicians since the rule of Sunjata Keita, leader of the Mande Empire in the 13th century (E. Charry, 2000: 41). In the past, for non-musical castes, it was a disgrace when a member of the family became a musician. Such is the case with Salif Keita, an internationally famous Malian musician who is not of the *griot* caste, but of noble descent. In the Mande Empire, musicians were not only musicians but historians and journalists who reported on what was happening in the surrounding areas (*ibid*: 91)¹⁶.

Igagwen, on the other hand, were musicians and singers, not historians, and had nothing to do with the art of the word; thus, *igagwen* were in the lowest caste of *Trab el Bidan*.

¹⁶ The Mande Empire was founded by Sunjata Keita in the thirteenth century.

Igagwen were dependent on the poet, who was always of a higher social class. In present times, nobles in Mauritania (where Bedouin society is still stratified) would first call on a poet to arrange a recital. Then the poet would call a family of *igagwen* to accompany him while performing his poems (J. Baroja 1990: 50-51).

Regarding musical castes in northwest Africa, in general, the main similarity between the *jelis*¹⁷ in the Mande Empire and *igagwen* in *Trab el Bidan* is that musicians' families were classified by surnames. Three surnames of musicians from Western Sahara surfaced during my field research: Ahel Meidah, Ahel and Ahel Eida La Abba. People do not discard their name and most of the musicians I met in the camps were from families who in the past had also been engaged with music as *igagwen*. One example is the musician, Nayim Alal, a Saharawi musician, who is famous in the refugee camps and internationally (Ahmed Fadel interview, 2-11- 2004).

Poets in *Trab el Bidan* were seen as historians who revered noble families, reminding them, through the sung word, of the greatness of their ancestors since the time of the Prophet Mohammed. *Igagwen* merely interpreted through music what the poet wanted to express. If an event had gone well and the emirs were entertained, they would approach the singer and give money as a sign of kindness (Ahmed Fadel interview, 2-11- 2004). In their families, the *igiw*¹⁸ learned to play *Haul* music, to sing the genealogy of each family and they had to serve the noble castes of *Trab el Bidan*. Another common exchange between a noble and *igagwen* was a recital for a certain number of camels. The *igagwen* had a direct social relationship with every social caste, from the lowest rung of society to the most powerful emirs (J. Mercer, 1976: 158).

Poets in *Trab el Bidan* and their relationships with *igagwen*

The poets were aligned with the *Arabs* as both were part of the second highest social class (see Figure 5, page 20). Although they were not part of the same social class as the *igagwen*, poets performed at private concerts for noble Bedouins (T. Cleaveland, 1998:

¹⁷ *Jelis* are the name given to griots in Mande culture.

¹⁸ *Igiw* is a singular/solo musician and *Igagwen* is the general term for the caste of musicians.

367). The spoken word in a Muslim society is greatly appreciated (C. Hirschkind, 2004: 138). A good poet is respected and known throughout the *Trab el Bidan*. When I was in the camps, Ahmed Fadel, my research assistant, told me of a radio programme in Mauritania featuring poetry. This point emphasises the importance of poetry in the region (interview, 2-11-2004).

Salem, a poet I met in the camps, gave me detailed information about classical *Haul* in poetic rather than musical terms. Salem's father was Ahmed Mahmud, a respected poet throughout the Sahara (Salem interview, 12-11-2004). Salem informed me about the use of poetry in music, which is discussed at length in the following Chapter. The poets were dedicated to literature and religious mysticism (A. G. Gerteiny, 1967: 29). In a classical recital, it was the poet who controlled the word and the music. The poet composed the lyrics and decided which *bhor* (mode) was going to be played. The poet sat next to the *igiw* and the musician was restricted to what the poet wanted. The singer sings and plays the *ardin* in a certain *bhor*. The poet can provide old verses at any time or even write new verses during the recital. If the audience likes a certain verse, the poet will continue with repeating it for a long time, as has happened with famous poems that remained in the memory of people in *Trab el Bidan* for centuries (J. Mercer, 1976:159).

Ahmed Zein and the concept of musician in the refugee camps of Tindouf

When I arrived at the protocol – the residence where international visitors stay – of *Auserd* refugee camp on 2 November 2004, everything looked overwhelming, wonderful and miserable at the same time. I knew it was going to be an intense few months full of interviews and recordings with musicians and poets in the refugee camps. That evening I was going to meet with Ahmed Zein, a guitarist of the *wilaya* (province in the camps) of *Auserd*. He arrived at about 5pm after I had just awakened from a two hours long nap. For a moment I thought that he could have been an *igiw* in another life and that his existence could have been just as hard as it is at present times. At least now he was paid as a musician in the *wilaya* of *Auserd* and received money from the concerts at national events and weddings. When I arrived it was Ramadan and there were no musical events taking place. I imagined the same situation a few centuries earlier – the lack of resources (including food) that musicians experienced when they fasted and how the *igagwen*

would be eager for the end of Ramadan in order to once again play in events for the higher classes.

A few centuries ago, a musician such as Ahmed Zein would be in the lowest ranks of Bedouin society, along with the artisans and descendants of Jews and slaves. However, Ahmed Zein comes from a family of Arabs, a reality which would have made it almost impossible for him to be an *igiw* in the past. Ahmed Zein was born and spent his childhood in Dakhla, one of the towns in the refugee camps. Being interested in music, he would occasionally pick up a guitar from a musician in town, but the musician always told him to leave the guitar alone because Ahmed could not play it. Ahmed was very angry with the musician taking the guitar and decided to make a guitar by himself. He collected a small wooden stake and built his instrument with two strings. When listening to music on the radio he tried to imitate the sound of any song that was playing. Every time there was a wedding in the *daira* (literally, 'town'), he did not dance, but always carefully watched the guitarist and his fingers as they moved up and down along the guitar neck. Later, he would return home and try to imitate everything he had seen at the wedding. When his family or friends heard him playing the stake with two chords, they were impressed, and asked how Ahmed could play such beautiful melodies. Ahmed answered that they were from a certain song he had heard at a wedding the night before. The family and friends laughed and did not believe him but recognised that Ahmed could be a good musician.

Years later, the first electric guitar he began to play was one owned by his cousin who brought it from the Soviet Union where the cousin had been a student. Ahmed played his cousin's guitar from 8 am to 11 pm. He did not care much for school and stayed indoors practicing, because he finally had his chance to learn to play guitar. His desire to play the guitar was very likely connected to his being in the harsh world of the camps where he lived, and the need to express himself musically. There is a Saharawi saying that goes, "Do not cry with your eyes, but with your heart". Ahmed told me he feels lucky to have known clearly from a young age that with his guitar in hand he could truly mourn with the heart (Ahmed Zein interview, 2-11- 2004). Whenever he sees a guitar he is as fascinated as that day when he first played his self-fashioned guitar made from the stake

with two strings. At the time of my research, Ahmed had to sell his guitar because he had not played at any weddings for two months and needed money to survive. He has a wife and son. Ahmed still does not have his own guitar; the guitar he plays is a gift offered by the Saharai state. However, there is only one guitar for the entire *wilaya* of Auserd, a refugee camp that has more than 30 000 inhabitants (Ahmed Zein interview, 2-11-2004). The state pays a salary to national artists, but Ahmed told me that it is never enough to survive on. At the same time, Auserd is a refugee camp and daily life depends on external humanitarian help more than personal income (H. Hakovirta, 1993: 38).

What my research with Ahmed Zein in Auserd reveals is that the transnational encounter in the Saharai refugee camps of Tindouf has brought about a new, favourable, social status for musicians as they are now equal to any other Saharai person regardless of their family's previous position in society. This experience of transnationalism evokes a sense of what Waldinger and Fitzgerald describes as bilocalism, an experience they see as a product of the migration experience, moreover representing a break with the experience of those who stay at home. This bilocalism they see furthermore as a stage in the development of a broader set of identities (2004:1182). Besides that, any Saharai citizen can be a musician in the camps nowadays, regardless of his or her surname or ancestor's designation.

The divas of the desert: Women's role in old and new Saharai music

Across the vast desert of the *Trab el Bidan* women have always been the preferred singers. Historically, throughout *Trab el Bidan*, women were also *igagwen*. Normally, the voice of women was more sought after than that of men, as is the case today. This is the case of Dimi Mint, a female singer in Mauritania. Elite members of Mauritanian society have paid fortunes to hear Dimi sing (Ahmed Fadel interview, 2-11-2004). This happens regularly in Mauritania, and according to my research consultants, music performance events in Mauritania most resemble events in the old *Trab el Bidan* (Bara interview, 6-11-2004).

Bedouin societies in *Trab el Bidan* are among the few societies in the Muslim world where women can play string instruments and percussion; it is a taboo, especially with

string instruments in other Arab countries such as Morocco, Algeria, Egypt, and Turkey, (J. Baroja 1990: 413). In *Trab el Bidan*, it was acceptable for a woman to play string instruments and sing at the same time. The instrument typically played by women is the *ardin*, which has from ten to thirteen strings. The *ardin* comes from the harp family and has a dried gourd as a resonator (see Figure 7, page 27).

Saharai women are also responsible for keeping the rhythm with the traditional Bedouin percussion instrument called *t'bal* (see Figure 6, page 27). Types of frame drums are also played by women in other Arabic countries. Even during the times of the Prophet frame drums were considered a female instrument. According to historical research, "Women, girls and slaves used the frame drum when singing improvised blessings to honour an eminent person's arrival. When the Prophet migrated to Medina in 622, he was greeted in the streets by some girls singing with the duff (frame drum)" (V. Doubleday 2006: 114).

Nevertheless, *t'bal* is a unique percussive instrument and differs from the others played by women in the Arabic world. Firstly, *t'bal* is played sitting on the ground and women usually play frame drums standing in other Arabic traditions. Secondly, unlike any other Arabic instrument played by women, it has a low range of sounds. Saharai women also have a creative role in the performance history of the *t'bal*. Even when rhythms have certain structures (see page 34), women improvise over them. Saharai women also improvise with their clapping, doubling the tempo and therefore the number of notes (from crotchet to quaver) throughout the performance. This research suggests that some of the new elements of Saharai music, such as the elaborations in its rhythm, were introduced by women. Nevertheless, the role of Saharai women in music has continued with the same characteristics unique to their past, that is, singing, clapping, and playing *t'bal* and *ardin*. However, the acceptance of women's improvisation in the rhythmic parts is also prevalent among surviving Bedouin societies (Ahmed Fadel interview, 2-11-2004).



Figure 6 Sweta playing *t'bal* (L. Gimenez, 2006).



Figure 7 Salma playing *ardin* (L. Gimenez, 2006).

Changes in Bedouin music since 1975

The overall population of Saharauis are pleased with the social changes engendered by the revolution. However, music has lost its appeal as a career option with the result that not many people are dedicated solely to music in the refugee camps. Yet, the transnational change of the Saharawi people from life in their homeland in Western Sahara to that in the refugee camps in Tindouf has brought radical changes both musically and socially, as musicians have shifted from being in the lowest rank of a stratified society to living in a society with a socialist ideology in which all Saharauis have the same rights. Hutchinson observes that in this experience, “Transnational Saharawi identities are essential to the production of this music, and are often expressed as a tension between ‘modern’ and ‘traditional’ styles” (2006: 38). Saharauis accept the roots of *Haul* music as coming from stratified Bedouin societies of the past. A new form of *Haul* music has adapted to the social environment created by the socialist political government, in which social castes have been abolished. The change in rhythms in Saharawi music was essential for dancing and has contributed to the development of a populist aesthetic advancing the ideology of the socialist revolution.

In Chapter 4, I analyse the *Haul* musical system of modes and rhythms I learned from Saharawi musicians in the refugee camps of Tindouf. Saharawi music only integrates new musical textures such as rhythm and revolutionary lyrics into classical *Haul*. Therefore, Saharawi music in the camps incorporates additional musical elements beyond those found in “classical” *Haul*.

Chapter Four

***Haul*: Musical analysis of modes, instruments and observations regarding Saharai music**

In the last three centuries, *Haul* music has been the most popular music style in *Trab el Bidan*. Nobody knows exactly when *Haul* music was first observed in the desert. As mentioned earlier, the first document regarding music in *Trab el Bidan* was written by the French adventurer, Sieur de la Courbe, in 1685¹⁹. In Courbe's document, there is evidence that *Haul* had been in existence for more than 300 years. However, *Haul* is an oral tradition and as such bears no physical evidence of how long it has been in existence. *Haul* has a sound unlike any other Arabic music. Except for the *tidinit*, a lute brought by the Shanaja Almoravids from Egypt in the 7th century (Ahmed Fadel interview, 2-11-2004), none of the instruments of *Haul* comes from Arabic-speaking countries (see Appendix I). Eric Charry's research also claims that lutes were brought from ancient Egypt to northwest Africa (1996:3). The only evidence of influence on *Haul* from Arabic music is the quarter-tone pitches. Instruments in *Haul* music are related to the Mande region in sub-Saharan Africa such as *ardin* and *kora*, *t'bal* and *djembe* or *tidinit* and *ngoni*.

A sensational cross between Arab and sub-Saharan culture is reflected in the music of *Trab el Bidan*. One of the main features that proves its hybridity is the two different sections of *Haul* songs, called the *lebiadh* (white) and the *lekhal* (black). In the *lebiadh* there is free tempo and a more melismatic way of singing, whereas in *lekhal* the rhythm is defined, as the singing and guitar share the same melody either in unison or an octave lower or higher. Therefore, *lebiadh* can be linked to the Arabic influences in Bedouin culture, whereas *lekhal* is related to sub-Saharan African music, as evidenced by its use of regular rhythms for dancing (Ahmed Zein interview, 2-11-2004).

¹⁹ De la Courbe, Sieur. 1913. *Premier voyage du Sieur de la Courbe fait a la coste d'Afrique en 1685*. Paris: Palais Culturel.

Whether it is *lebiadh* or *lekhal*, Saharai modern *Haul* is easier to identify than the classical *Haul* being performed in Mauritania where the introduction of a song is always *lebiadh*, and always in the mode in which the poet wants to sing. In *lebiadh* there is no drum section and the singer has a free way of singing. Usually the singer lengthens the words in the song or sings praises to the Prophet. This part of *lebiadh* is also called *howd dal* (music of the shadow). On the other hand, it is the rhythmical section of a *Haul* song that is defined as *lekhal* and it is always played on *t'bal* by the female singer. Also, the rhythm of the *t'bal* is more common in modern Saharai music than in Mauritania (Ahmed Fadel interview, 2-11-2004). This is also reflected in the more upbeat personality of Saharais, when compared to the mostly relaxed outlook of Mauritians (Sweta interview, 3-11-2004).

Haul literally means “the art of the word”. It is the way in which an *igiw* sings and expresses him/herself within the sound. *Haul* modes are still used in the present, but the style and purpose of music in Mauritania is different to that in the Western Sahara, where music serves political purposes. Nonetheless, *Haul* is the root of Hassaniya music and in *Trab el Bidan*. Next, I intend discussing how *Haul* music has changed in aesthetics and lyrics in the refugee camps after the revolution in 1975 and their consequent exile. Saharais have adapted harmonies not strictly rooted in traditional *Haul*, as the basis of Saharai music because it uses its modes and some of its traditional rhythms. *Haul* is a sophisticated style of music that requires careful study. In order to give a clear understanding of *Haul*, I present extensive musical analysis of the modes and rhythms that are found in both classical and modern *Haul* in the Saharai refugee camps of Tindouf. This analysis argues for *Haul* modes as a unique musical system in a Bedouin culture of the *Trab el Bidan* that has existed over time for at least three centuries.

In Figures 11 to 48 I present a wide range of music transcriptions in which I simplified melodic phrases in all 8 *Haul* modes as found in the songs on the CDs accompanying this thesis. They are transcribed into Western notation in order to show the melodic phrases, sound variation and intervals in each mode. All the musical examples provided are available to listen to on the two CD's found in the back cover of the thesis. The audio

tracks seek to provide an accurate idea of how *Haul* modes work in practice and give readers a chance to hear how the modes sound different from each other.

Haul modes cover all styles of music in the old Hassaniya world. The modes are called *bhors*, which literally means “seas”. Each *bhor* (singular) is considered a sea of expression and they will be described in more detail in the course of this Chapter. When I went to a music event in the Aiuun (one of the Saharai refugee camps in Tindouf), one of the provinces in the refugee camps, in 2004, I asked why *Haul* modes were identified as ‘seas’ in a place this distant from the sea. Why not call them desert? An elderly local man replied:

Bhors are seas because each mode has its immensity. Besides that, the Saharai were living near the sea before this exile. Sooner or later, one of the lucky generations of the desert will understand what a *bhor* means in its depth. Meanwhile we have to keep looking back to understand the changes that happened in the recent history of Saharai people.

Bhors are performed in a specific order when being played in public. The traditional order is: *entamas*, *seinicar*, *fagu*, *sgaller*, *leboer*, *lyen*, *lebteit* and *chawada* as an additional mode. The knowledge of *igagwen* rests on the eight *bhors* and in the way performers improvise and become masters of certain techniques.

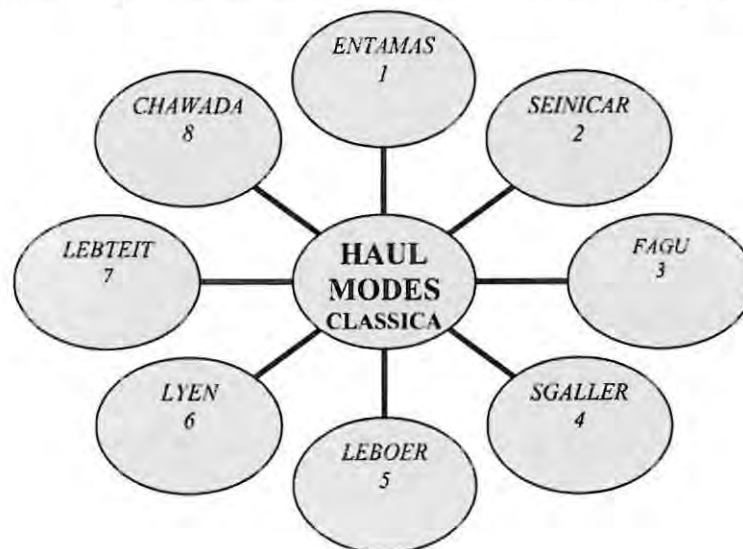


Figure 8 *Haul* modes diagram.

Entamas



Seinica.



Fagu



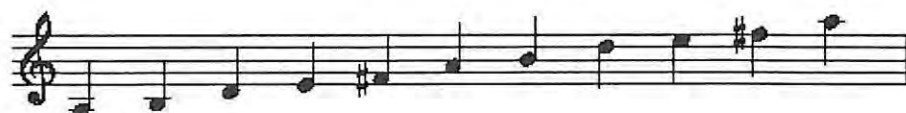
Sgaller



Leboer



Lyen



Lebteit



Chawada

Figure 9 *Haul* modes in Western musical notation (L. Gimenez, 2006).

Medha rhythm



Lebleida



Charha



Serbet



Chawada



Figure 11 Traditional rhythms in *Haul* music (L.Gimenez,2006).

Observations on Haul modes in the Saharai refugee camps of Tindouf

1. *Entamas*

Entamas is the first mode played in a traditional recital of *Haul*. It is a pentatonic scale (5 notes) and like all modes of the *Haul*, it is also improvised. The first time I played the *Haul* on my guitar, there was a sense of familiarity with the style. It reminded me of flamenco tanguillos in 6/8 rhythm²⁰. However, the *Haul* technique on guitar differs in certain ways from the flamenco style, not only because *Haul* guitar styles only use the index finger of the right hand, but also because the left hand does not play chords. However, the way to follow the singer's melody on guitar draws parallels with "cante flamenco"²¹. The way to start a song in *Haul* style is usually with a fast melismatic improvisation on the guitar, with the index and middle finger, which is reminiscent of the ripping speed of the flamenco guitarist, Sabicas, at the beginning of the 20th century²². It is obvious that flamenco descends from Arabic and Bedouin techniques of playing the oud (Ahmed Fadel interview, 2-11-2004). *Haul* is certainly not an exception in its influence on the Iberian Peninsula²³. In fact, most of the instruments that come from northwest Africa, such as the tidinit, ngoni and guimbri, make use of "golpe" (tapping of the wood), commonly used in flamenco guitar.

Firstly, to play *entamas bhor*, one has to change the tuning on the guitar to D-A-D-D-A-D. It is an open tuning in D although it is not a chord by itself. *Entamas* tuning reminded me of the sympathetic strings on the Indian sitar and is similar to the harmonic sound of drone instruments such as the *tanpura*²⁴. Except for the *seinicar* the other modes in *Haul* differ in that they require a different tuning for the third string²⁵. When I first asked Ahmed Zein to play *entamas*, he performed a solo while I was trying to discern the notes. In addition to that, there were plenty of additional notes or passing notes that confused my attempt at defining *entamas*. For this reason, the only way to differentiate *Haul* modes is by listening to the melodic lines rather than conceptualising a mode in note-by-

²⁰ Tanguillos are one of the few flamenco styles in 6/8 and bear a resemblance with Saharai music.

²¹ *Cante flamenco* is a general term to name "flamenco singing".

²² Sabicas is a flamenco guitarist from the 1930s.

²³ The Iberian Peninsula is Spain and Portugal.

²⁴ The *tanpura* is used as a drone instrument in classical Indian music.

²⁵ *Seinicar* is the second mode in *Haul*.

note terms. Regarding *entamas*, the hardest thing for me was to perceive the quarter-tones. As a Spaniard, I wondered why the quarter-tones failed to reach Spain. In Spain, the quarter-tones should have existed when the Arabs and Jews lived in the Iberian peninsula. But after 500 years (when Arabs and Jews were expelled from Spain), the quarter-tones remained on the other side of the straight of Gibraltar²⁶. As Wong cites, “The problems of learning another type of music include the false binary of insider/outsider, colonial baggage, and the empiricism still lurking behind a solidly humanistic anthropology and ethnomusicology” (2008: 77).

My perception of *entamas* was a little lost while Ahmed tried to explain the *bhors* through varied melodic lines. I continued performing when Ahmed told me that I played *entamas* well, although I was aware that I did not. I was just beginning to experience the notes but was far from playing *entamas* well. I felt it was like playing a blues of Ali Farka Toure, mixed with Arabic oud and flamenco guitar. Familiar music was all I remembered and tried to link it to this learning process. *Entamas* seems a perfect blend and fully adapted to Arabic and sub-Saharan Africa. But at the same time it was unique among all the music I had heard before. In “MeziemWadna” (How beautiful is our river) by Sweta, one quickly realises that this mode is unique in its sound. My research assistant, Ahmed Fadel, calls Sweta “Aretha Franklin from the desert”. This song was the best example I could find to prove my proposition that *entamas* is a perfect blend of pentatonic blues and Arabic music. This song was combined with Western chords – Dm and C – which made it even more a demonstration of cross-cultural experience. In this case we can see how the transnational encounter embraces memory and innovation, and allows for the development of new harmonic and tonal languages.



Figure 12 *Meziem Wadna* (2-11-2004) by Sweta, Salma and Ahmed Zein / CD 1, Track 1.

²⁶ The Strait of Gibraltar is only 12 kilometres away from Morocco, the closest point between Spain and Africa.

Entamas is also closely linked to *medhj*²⁷. Since the time of the prophet Mohammed *medhj* has been a way of connecting with God. All that is needed for *medhj* is percussion and voice (see Chapter 5 for more discussion on *medhj*). *Entamas* is not only limited to religious themes. In the refugee camps, *entamas* is also used in many songs which focus on the revolution. *Entamas* songs in the camps have no rules regarding the subject and can be either revolutionary or religious. However, in my musical analysis of a song, it was always easier to recognise the *bhor* in the musical melodies than trying to find a *bhor* in the lyrics. This is partly because I am not a fluent Hasaniya speaker.

“Salam Beina” (Thanks to God) is the first *Haul* song where I heard an accordion. Here the musical references to *entamas* are evident in two fundamental characteristics. In the upper registers of the voice, Ahmed was using notes of a pentatonic scale, sounding closer to the blues than Sweta’s “Meziem Wadna”. When Ahmed commences with singing; it is more melismatic, a main characteristic of Arabic music. These two observations are useful in recognising *entamas*.



Figure 13 *Salam Beina* (13-11-2004) by Ali Seibda, Mahfri, Abdalai Sinima / CD 1, Track 2

I came to know individual musicians’ personal ways of playing and describing each mode, yet they all agreed with my description of the general characteristics of *entamas*. In the refugee camps, the musicians are self-taught. They have their own means of adapting to what is being played. These features are especially visible in modern *entamas* or what Saharawi commonly call *El Fen el Asri* (modern *Haul*), where the melody of the voice is mostly imitated by the guitar. This is the main characteristic of Saharawi *entamas*²⁸.

²⁷ *Medhj* is the religious music in which the singing makes use of different *Haul* modes.

²⁸ By comparison, in Mauritania, *igagwen* learn from their families how to play the *tidinit* and the guitar. This discursive manner of recalling and transmission of musical knowledge gives a distinctive musical characteristic to the countries of Mauritania and Western Sahara.

A good example of modern *entamas* is, “There with her skirt” (CD 1, track 3). It is a song that became popular and the young women love it. It is a theme that is played often at weddings and national events. I was fortunate to hear Sidi Ahmed Mufid sing this song. Mufid is well known in the Sahara because he has been singing at weddings from a very young age. “There with her skirt” is a song that is noticeably influenced by Algerian *rai* and the vocal line no longer sounds as pentatonic as does Sweta’s in “Meziem Wadna”. It is accompanied by the keyboard, which takes the role of rhythm guitar on many occasions. The basic chords for *entamas* are C minor and B flat major (I-II chord modal structure). Chords change as the voice modulates but without any fixed chord structure. Throughout the whole song the keyboard and guitar have space to improvise. However, when the voice takes the lead role, the instruments accompany the singer. The connection between *bhor* and voice is defined. It resembles the connection between singer and guitarist in flamenco singing. It is a musical language that many jazz musicians understand and other scholars simply call it “improvisation”. In my point of view, improvisation in the interaction between singer and musician takes the form of symbols and facial signs that can change during the course of the song. In conclusion, *entamas* is used for various purposes and topics with *medhj* being used to connect with God; and for revolutionary and sentimental love songs. As for the musical scale, it would be best to listen to different types of *entamas* and become acquainted with the different melodic lin



Figure 14 There with her skirt (6-11-2004) by Sidahmed Buyema, Ergueibi, Mufid and Ahmed Zein CD1, Track 3

2. *Seinicar*

In my experience *seinicar bhor* was one of the most difficult modes to understand. The problem often is the tendency to relate the *Haul* style to other music with which one is familiar. It is necessary to follow what one is taught by the local musician. *Seinicar* was an entirely new sound to me. At times I felt as if I was learning to differentiate between

Haul modes in music scores rather than in playing them. It surprised me how different *Haul* modes were when one can ascend and descend a melody with other passing notes.

With *seinicar*, I realised that to understand the *Haul* music, I first had to try to understand the Bedouin perception of music, and not primarily be focussed on musical analysis. My first intention was to try and approach the people as musicians and their musical expression through a study of their musical heritage. As Racy says, “To play most of the Arab music, musicians are expected to play the Arab intervals correctly and “feel” the musical effect. Feeling also refers to an intuitive ability to affect the listener, avoiding renditions that are too static and too repetitive to be emotionally engaging” (1998: 99). Therefore, each track and *bhor* was a piece in a puzzle of experiencing the real feeling of *Haul* music. For example, it took me almost a week of playing with Ahmed Zein to realise that *seinicar* could be in 2 types of tuning on the guitar. It could be performed in D-A-D-D-A-D or D-A-E-D-A-D. As mentioned above, the guitar is tuned differently in most of the *bhors*: depending on the mode, the third string is tuned differently.

Seinicar has a very full melodic richness audible in ascending and descending melodic motifs which can have up to 11 different notes during the *lebiadh* (introduction of a song). In addition, the quarter-tones provide a special musical texture that usually denotes small changes in the mode, heard mostly in bended notes. However, all the songs I documented in *seinicar* were *lekhal* (black mode); therefore, songs with rhythm. To explain this exclusive use of *lekhal*, the poet, Salem, told me that normally a *gaaf* (way of writing poetry, in ABAB rhymes) in *seinicar* is always better suited to *lekhal*. Poetry in *seinicar* is supposed to be less “refined” than other modes in which the poet tends to write in *lebiadh* (Salem interview, 12-11-2004). For example, Abdulai sang a traditional song in *seinicar* called, “The bracelet of that girl”. It was a love song with a very slow tempo. Most songs one hears in this mode are in a slow tempo and the vocal melodies are strongly related to the melodic structure in *entamas*. The melodies are characterised by singing in low register with a lot of stretching melismas in the last syllable of a verse. Guitar style in *seinicar* often seems like a second melodic voice in the background; full of nuances and ornamentations imitating the singer’s melody.

Below is my transcription of the traditional song in *seinicar* called, “The bracelet of that girl”, which I recorded when it was performed for me.



Figure 15 “The bracelet of that girl” (13-11-2004) by Abdulai, Ali Seibda and Mahfri / CD 1, Track 4

Another good example is “Independence”, a song in *seinicar* by Ali Seibda. The “call” of the singer and the “response” of the other members of the group is very common. Backing vocals reinforce the message of the song. Call and response songs are commonly used in Bedouin and Tuareg music, as is the case for example in internationally known Tuareg bands, Tinariwen and Tartit.



Figure 16 Independence (13-11-2004) by Abdulai, Ali Seibda and Mahfri / CD 1, Track 5

Seinicar is a contemplative *bhor*. Even modern songs in *seinicar*, such as “Identification”, invite one to listen more than to dance. I experienced the meditative groove of *seinicar* at one of the Saharai weddings I attended. The guests did not stand up until it went into *fagu*, which is the mode played after *seinicar*.



Figure 17 Identification (6-11-2004) by Sidahmed Buyema, Ergueibi, Mufid and Ahmed Zein / CD 1, Track 6

3. *Fagu*

Fagu is the primary mode for expressing epic stories in the *Trab el Bidan*. It is said that during war times, *igagwen* sang *fagu* to encourage *Arab* (warriors) to fight. This mode recalls the battles that were lost or gained. It uses songs to speak of courage and the pride

of a certain tribe in *Trab el Bidan*. For example, *fagu* for Saharauis is always used to speak of the martyrs who died in the battle against Morocco (1975-1991). Baroja comments on this mode in *Saharan Studies*: “When I heard *fagu*, not even the horses could stand still. Everyone felt their blood burning”(1990: 414). In *Trab el Bidan*, the mere sound of this mode provoked a ‘blood boiling’ reaction in the warriors. *Igagwen* sang *fagu* mainly to the warriors who automatically reacted to the anger expressed in their singing (Ahmed Fadel interview, 2-11-2004). I have also seen a very energetic reaction to *fagu* during weddings. The reaction of women to this mode is one of constant ululations (trills provoked by the contact of the tongue and upper lip). Saharai women do not stop dancing at weddings, as this mode encourages excitement and joy.

Fagu is the only *bhor* which has three traditional dances. They are very well defined in the respective order of *lebleida*, *charha* and *serbet*²⁹. They have in common an increase of speed for the three dancing parts, which range from a slow speed to a progressive acceleration of the rhythm. Therefore, *fagu* not only venerates battles but also invites dancing at weddings and at national events in the refugee camps. The course of its three parts is hypnotic. *Lebleida* is the first dance out of three. It has a slow tempo and the movement of the hands is gentle and fast. The dancers move the fingers and wrists in a soft and majestic way, which reminds one of the camel’s step on the sand³⁰. In other words, *lebleida* is an introduction to the *fagu* dance with very slow but sudden movements and even silences in which the body remains still. *Lebleida* music consists of four or five melodic phrases that are repeated constantly. These songs always end in a lot of passing notes which are not officially part of the mode, but nevertheless fill gaps in different melodic phrases. *Lebleida* may have some Arab influences not only in dance but also in the movements of the hands while dancing. *Serbet* and *charha* are rhythms closer to sub-Saharan Africa, especially because *lebleida* is in 4/4 and does not have the 6/8

²⁹ See Figure 11 on page 35 of this dissertation for traditional rhythms in *fagu*.

³⁰ “The symbol of the camel in dance and Bedouin poetry is a prominent symbol from the past” (Salem interview 12-11-2004).

rhythm of *serbet* and *charha* (see page 34).



Figure 18 *Lebleida* traditional melody (2-11-2004) by Sweta, Salma and Ahmed Zein / CD 1, Track 7

Charha is the second dance of *fagu*. The guitar has a traditionally fixed pattern to play with this dance. However, the melody line is very similar to *serbet* (third dance of *fagu*) because they use the same mode. The difference with *charha* is that the rhythm and clapping are mostly in 6/8. Beats are in double clapping in *charha*, while the *serbet* clapping has only one beat marking the triplet of the song. The speed becomes increasingly more frantic until the musicians decide to have “meeting notes” (repeated notes played by all melodic instruments with the same rhythm and intensity) to put special emphasis at the end of the three different dances. It caught my attention that even Spanish and Italian NGO workers who do not know Saharai music theory of the *Haul*, always spoke of *serbet* as a unique and original dance (see figure 20).



Figure 19 *Charha* traditional melody (2-11-2004) by Sweta, Salma and Ahmed Zein / CD 1, Track 7



Figure 20 *Serbet* traditional melody (2-11-2004) by Sweta, Salma and Ahmed Zein / CD 1, Track 7

But, to the poets, *fagu* is a special devotion. Not only because they remember the history of Saharai people but because it is the mode most likely to use *gaaf* or *taala* (ways of writing rhymes). There are 11 different ways to write *fagu*: *treseri*, *betikdeik mubiadh*,

teruakhdik mubiadh, betoch, teidun, bet lekhir, sita bet, natasha, sdit, bet achra (also used for lullabies) and *Sruzi*.

These styles of poetry are still used in Mauritania today. They are all accompanied by *tidinit*. Bedouin society has been perfecting the styles of poetry in *fagu* for more than three hundred years. As a general feature, *fagu* poetry is mostly based on epic stories and one of my research consultants described it as eleven ways to praise the battles of his people (Salem interview, 12-11-2004). However, describing these styles of poetry would require another book on the poetry of *fagu* itself. Salem told me that this way of performing classical *Haul* recitals disappeared after the revolution. In Saharai society, *fagu* is now played only at national events and weddings. As mentioned earlier, *fagu* performances in the camps are more a dimension of dance rather than the rich poetic heritage of Bedouin societies. Lualy Lekhsan, a poet of the new generation, told me that the political atmosphere of *fagu* in Saharai music has created a very impersonal version of *fagu* that is not found in classical *Haul* (Lualy Lehsan interview, 19-11-2004).

This points to Trillo and Muddyman's observation that ways of performance and modes are perhaps less rigid in Western Sahara than in Mauritania (1999: 565). However, when I met with Saharai people in their homes, many locals would listen to *Haul* music from Mauritania. I had the impression that when listening to music on the street Saharais have another experience of *Haul* music than at home. Outdoor events to celebrate the revolution are celebrated with dancing and ululations. However, when they listen to *Haul* at home, there were many who stopped doing domestic duties in order to listen to their classical Bedouin music on the radio. This music formed part of the collective memory in the Saharai transnational community in the camps. *Haul* reaches the depth of the hearts of the people of *Trab el Bidan*, and *fagu* is regarded as a continuation of Bedouin musical traditions (T. J. Cooly and G. Barz, 2008: 4).

As mentioned earlier, in Mauritania some radio stations are exclusively dedicated to poetry. In refugee camps there are similar programmes, though not as common due to the lack of technological resources in the camps. For example, the singer Salma is engaged to

provide a culture programme on *Haul* music every two weeks in the *wilaya* of *Auserd*.

She says:

The love we have for Sahraui music can be considered just as close to the Mauritanian society's love for classical *fagu*. It is a special love for preserving a musical tradition and poetry through our collective memory. *Fagu* adapts to the present times in its political lyrics and it is sung to the martyrs of the war against Morocco. Besides that, *fagu* recalls the fact that Saharai people have been in refugee camps for more than 35 years, while awaiting dignity and recognition" (Salma interview, 4-11-2004).

Due to the personality in its notes, and particularly in its structure of three dances, *fagu* is one of the easiest modes to recognise by ear. However, the tuning of the guitar is different. As mentioned before, the only pitch that changes is on the third string. Therefore, it would be D-A-E-D-A-D rather than D-A-D-D-A-D from previous modes. *Haul* modes are not defined as scales, due to the flexibility of any *bhor* regarding passing notes. But for the *fagu* dances, this mode has fixed melodic lines which aid its recognition.

4. *Sgaller*

Sgaller is a mode that connects the epic stories of *fagu* to inner sentimental feelings in the classical *Haul* repertoire. Baroja described this mode as not being a well-recognised *bhor* in the Saharan Sahel (J. Baroja, 1990: 413). However, when I went to refugee camps, *sgaller* was recognised and played like any other mode. *Sgaller* is similar to the D major scale. *Sgaller* is also easily recognised by its notes. Moreover, within Hassaniya music, *sgaller* is a mode that sounds more cheerful than any other. While *fagu* recalls the battles and induces dance, *sgaller* suggests a feeling of intimacy. This brings me to a thought on a reason for the order of the modes. Somehow it has a logical progress in that it moves from the minimalist and hypnotic effect of *fagu* to the intimate song of *sgaller*. My research assistant, Ahmed Fadel told me "when the blood has boiled with *fagu*, then, it is sweetened with *sgaller*. Undoubtedly, this mode has reached another micro-world in lyrics and emotions" (Ahmed Fadel interview, 2-11-2004).

The lyrics in *sgaller* are of a sentimental character. For example, Ali Seibda performs a song about the growth of his daughter in a paternal and sentimental way. I remember him playing it on his accordion while his little girl was coming to listen to her father singing

her special song. Ali's daughter has heard this track hundreds of times. It was one of the tender moments of my research when Ali's daughter sang the song composed by her father. I think that this song of Ali's is a clear illustration of how emotional *sgaller* is. The experience with this song recalls Cooly and Barz, who say that in "Taking part in a society's music-cultural practices, the ethnomusicologist has the potential for uniquely and truly participatory participation-observation" (2008: 4).



Figure 21 To my daughter (12-11-2004) by Ali Seibda, Abdulai and Mahfri / CD 1, Track 8

"My freedom is crying" was another of Abdulai's emotional songs written in *sgaller* mode. I saw tears coming out of his eyes while his hands brushed them off quickly. For Abdulai, this song symbolises the desire for the well-being of his people. The word 'freedom' is used in music, politics, and in many fields but is little more than a mere idea to be studied. In the case of Abdulai's song, he has shown me that his feeling of freedom is greater than any political speech or intellectual book on the subject. *Sgaller* speaks in a transparent way of things that one loves and desires such as one's child, freedom or homeland (see Appendix II and III for translation of the songs).



Figure 22 My freedom is crying (13-11-2004) by Abdulai, Ali Seibda and Mahfri / CD 1, Track 9

In musical terms, *sgaller* has the same tuning as *Fagu*: D-A-F-D-A-D. A typical cadence in *sgaller* is A-B-C#-D. However, when the mode descends and uses passing-notes and quarter-tones out of the scale, one could say that it is a major mode, with the exception of some quarter-tones. *Haul* music uses a major mode such as *sgaller* to express the most sentimental and saddest songs. In the Western world, this type of major mode generally means joy and happiness. In sub-Saharan African music such as *jit* music (Zimbabwe),

soukous (Congo), and many other styles in major keys express joy. For this reason, *sgaller* gives special insight into the *Haul* with special significance of a major scale expressing sad emotions. The intimate sorrow and tears of the heart are represented in *sgaller* as a major mode with quarter-tones (A. J. Racy, 1998: 103).

5. *Leboer*

After the intimate and emotional *sgaller*, *leboer* returns to the mystery of the half tones. The melodic nuances are very familiar to flamenco and Arabic music. *Leboer* represents very traditional and contemplative songs. Saharai musicians do not compose too many new songs within this mode. It seems that the Saharai revolution has brought about a preference for the other modes, because they depict the experiences of modern life. *Leboer* lyrics are more traditional and the rhythm in *t'bal* is rather slow in comparison to other modes (except *lebteit*) (Salem interview, 12-11-2004). The revolution introduced rhythm to *leboer* but I was told by many musicians that unlike the others this *bhor* has not been modified (Ahmed Zein interview, 2-11-2004). *Leboer* has two ways of writing poetry: *tigadrit* and *tatra*. As in the *fagu*, poetry in *Haul* deserves its own thesis. For that reason, the poets explained *Haul* poetry to me in general terms. Even so, I decided to review Hassaniya poetry to introduce the reader to the literary world of Bedouin societies. I hope this is useful to people interested in this field. In this regard, I am following Cooley and Barz's belief that ethnomusicology is an inherently interdisciplinary discipline, which allows one the opportunity to question established methods and goals, and to explore new perspectives (2008: 3).

Leboer is pentatonic but with semitonal characteristics and quarter-tones, which differ from *lyen* (the next mode) by only one note, F sharp (see page 33). The bass guitar introduces B as a root note – not only D, as is the case with the other modes. The third string of the guitar is tuned a half tone higher than in *fagu* and *sgaier*. In addition, *leboer* has a more pentatonic style than the modes I have described above. In fact, except for the first two notes which are semitones, it has some similarities with the pentatonic scale of the *shonghai*³¹ (northwest of Mali). As many musicians know, the pentatonic scales are generally characterised by the absence of semitones but this is not the case in the *leboer*.

³¹ See pentatonic scales on the following page.

It also has some “meeting notes” which questions *leboer*’s pentatonic character. These meeting notes can remind one of *entamas* and distract the listener at times because of certain similarities in both scales when playing passing notes.

The *bhor* is identifiable through constant listening to the melodic characteristics of each mode. One of the best ways to recognise *leboer* is in the difference in the base note (root cadence) as compared to other previous modes: the note being D in *entamas* and B in *leboer*. One needs to be familiar with the *Haul* to identify *leboer*. This *bhor* also has some typical melodic phrases as the first two notes are often semitones. Perhaps other modes have been more adaptive to changes in history. However, *leboer* has prevailed in the traditional roots of the *Haul*, in nearly the same way it persists in Mauritania despite the introduction of rhythms to *leboer* in the refugee camps” (J. Baily, 2005: 217).



Figure 23 Instrumental *leboer* (4-11-2004) by Bepa, Mohamed Salec and Ahmed Zein / CD 1, Track 10



Figure 24 My dear Prohpet (3-11-2004) by Sweta, Salma and Ahmed Zein / CD 1, Track 11

6. *Lyen*

Lyen is a scale unknown in many parts of the Arab world and commonly used in the northwest of sub-Saharan Africa. Possibly, the roots of this pentatonic mode were brought with the black slaves from the southern part of *Trab el Bidan*. Within the pentatonic scales of this vast part of the world, there can be discerned three main scales:



Figure 25 Major pentatonic (*Lyen*, *Shongay*)



Figure 26 Minor Pentatonic (*Bambara* and used in Delta Blues and Rock)



Figure 27 Dorian Pentatonic (*Tuareg, Wassoulou*)

Each of these pentatonic scales is found in most of the musical styles in northwest sub-Saharan Africa. Therefore, *lyen* relates to music in the non-Arabic Islamic world. However, in *Trab el Bidan*, this pentatonic³² mode has been used to write poems in classical Arabic. This practice is excluded from other modes in *Haul* sung in Hassaniya. Paradoxically, the closest mode to sub-Saharan African modes has many ancient poems written in classical Arabic. It is striking that this formula of making songs combines *lyen* with lyrics which speak of *Al wacar* (homesick for love). For traditional poets, *lyen* is often an expression for the yearning of love (Salem interview, 12-11-2004).

In the Saharai refugee camps, *lyen* has become one of the most used modes. In fact, many of the revolutionary songs of the past were in *lyen*. A social musical event usually starts with a “cocktail repertoire³³” of revolutionary songs in *lyen*. Many musicians and singers agreed that when they start a concert they feel more comfortable and safe in *lyen*. On 2 November 2004, Sweta sang up to 5 different songs in two different *lyen* melodic progressions (see Figures 28-29).

³²,Although Saharai musicians do not refer to pentatonic scale theories in their musical system *Lyen* may be considered a major, pentatonic scale. This is a unique part of my musical analysis in this thesis.

³³ This is a combination of four or five songs played without breaks, and sometimes with similar chords and melodic progressions in the different songs.



Figure 28 Revolutionary sing, In the armed struggle, Come revolutionaries (2-11-2004) by Sweta, Salma and Ahmed Zein / CD 1, Track 12



Figure 29 Our question is African, The country called us. (2-11-2004) by Sweta, Salma and Ahmed Zein / CD 1, Track 13

They are songs that have a very cheerful sound. *Lyen* is also the only mode that uses the pentatonic major (see figure 25, page 47). The cadence in these songs is I-II. I had the honour of playing with these musicians and it was the best way to understand *lyen*. Young singers such as Mufid Ahmed Sidi Larbi and Ahmed Erguebi always began their performances in *lyen*. The popularity of *lyen* among young people is immense. *Lyen* introduces modern love songs with lyrics such as “Cowboys get crazy” or “She is there with her skirt”. I think they write in *lyen* mode with a certain lyricism and sense of humour at the same time but not to such an extent as to satirise a longing for romance or love. Nonetheless, the lyrics are perhaps based on a more youthful and carnal love than *lyen* poems in classical *Haul*. Ali Seibda also has a song in this *bhor* called, “Love song”. Clearly, this mode has connotations of total surrender and is a positive step in Saharai culture in which the musician writes his own lyrics to express more common feelings in *lyen*. This mode was attributed to homesickness and love songs in the past. There are also songs such as “Praying to our Prophet” (figure 32) or “My Prophet” in *lyen*. Therefore, the Saharai have adapted *lyen* to religious *medhj* despite its romantic connotations.



Figure 30 Cowboys get crazy (6-11-2004) by Sidahmed Buyema, Ergueibi Mufid and Ahmed Zein / CD 1, Track 14



Figure 31 Love song (13-11-2004) by Abdulai, Ali Seibda and Mahfri / CD 1, Track 1



Figure 32 Praying to our Prophet (6-11-2004) by Sidahmed Buyema, ErgueibiMufid and Ahmed Zein / CD 1, Track 16

7. *Lebteit*

Lebteit represents the slowest mode in *Haul*. *Lebteit* has more traditional connotations than other *bhors*. In a traditional recital there are several ways of writing in *lebteit*. The two groups are *tar* and *lower* (lullaby songs). In the poetry of the lullaby there are three main groups: *Hadu Sdrat*, *Hah Weius* and *Nemsekel*.

According to Salem (interview, 12-11-2004), *lebteit* is the easiest way to write poetry because *tam* (translated as “complete”) means that the rhymes can be in *gaaf* (ABAB) and also in *talaa* (AAAB). It also depends on which part of the songs is played, *lehrar* (black) or *lebiadh* (white). As mentioned earlier, *lekhal* is the song with rhythm and closer to sub-Saharan Africa styles, while *lebiadh* tempo is free. Nevertheless, in the refugee camps there is not a particular order when playing to the public at national events and weddings. Despite the exile of Saharai people, they have preserved the most traditional modes such as *lebteit*. This mode has not become a popular *bhor* in the new Saharai society; it persists and is of special value among the musicians and singers who still play the traditional *Haul*. *Lebteit* is a contemplative mode which many musicians have told me is the most difficult *bhor* to play because it is full of passing notes. Some typical melodic phrases in *lebteit* are:



Figure 33 Instrumental *lebteit* (4-11-2004) by Bepa and Mohamed Salec / CD 1, Track 17



Figure 34 *Wind of Sahara* (2-11-2004) by Sweta, Salma and Ahmed Zein / CD 1, Track 18

In *Haul* music of *Trab el Bidan*, the personality of each mode comes through in the music. *Lebteit* is popular in the new generations of musicians who express a nostalgic sentiment towards the former musical system. In the context of their memory and symbolic recall one may see how nostalgia produces mindless, pacifying, and politically conservative commodifications of the national past (J.Olick & J.Robbins, 1998:125)

8. *Chawada*

Chawada literally means exorcism, probably because of its connotations with religious beliefs of sub-Saharan African . It seems that this mode is a reminder of Sudan (the word ‘*chawada*’ literally means black population in Bedouin societies) or sub-Saharan Africans in the refugee camps. All kinds of symbols reminiscent of the African continent have an enormous appeal for Saharauis. Many songs in *chawada* speak of Africa as a great continent. Like Algeria, Saharauis are among the Arab people who have a broad and favourable perception of Africa, and not only the Islamic nations (Ahmed Fadel interview, 2-11-2004).

Chawada is not included in the classical repertoire of *Haul*. No one knows how old this mode is. This mode is always in *lekhal*³⁴. *Chawada* is a mode with its own dance, also called *chawada*. This dance is based more on the movement of the hips than the gentle movements of the hands, as in *fagu* for instance. The arms seem freer with more extended movements than the subtleties of the hand movements in *fagu*. In modern music,

³⁴ *Lekhal* means ‘black’ and is designated the part of a song which has regular rhythm.

because they provide a more precise idea of the modes. Extensive study of *Haul* modes during the last seven years has allowed me to present and structure this Chapter on the *Haul* musical system with more clarity. By taking into account the multiple points of contact, I have endorsed Taylor's observation concerning the binary of East and West, in combination with others, old and new, traditional and modern, Saharai and Spanish, acoustic and electronic, among others (2007: 156). For this reason, this thesis is not only based on musical analysis. This Chapter was intended to build a solid foundation for understanding how Saharai music continues as a musical system from pre-colonial times up to the present and demonstrates how Saharai music rests upon the same musical system as remembered by early Bedouin societies. Their musical memory and ability to recall the past continue despite the innovations in Saharai music after the revolution.

This Chapter was also based on musical analysis and observations from my research, which constitutes a performative ethnography in that I learned from and performed with the musicians in the refugee camps (D. Wong, 2008: 77). I have engaged in the classic 'bi-musical' process advocated in Ethnomusicology since its inception as a discipline. I adhere to the opinion expressed by Ivey, who believes that bi-musicality offers the same benefits as being bilingual, and that by learning music of difference we can generate positive social and political change. Adopting this approach provides ethnomusicology with something that every discipline must possess, a moral center (2009: 22). Further to my goal of presenting a performative ethnography, which draws on bi-musicality, is to reveal how *Haul* music provides explanations for changes in the Saharai refugee camps of the Hamada desert in Tindouf, and how *Haul* music shows that transnational change among the Saharai in exile integrates new musical forms into *Haul* music. In Chapter 5, I present insight gained on the religious and spiritual purposes of music in *Trab el Bidan* and in the transnational Saharai community in the refugee camps of Tindouf.



Figure 37 Luis Gimenez recording Ahmed Zein (L. Gimenez, 2006)

Chapter Five

Music and Islam in Saharai music – the practice of *medhj*

Since Beni Hassan's occupation of *Trab el Bidan* in the twelfth century, Islam there has been studied and practiced differently to other parts of the Islamic world. Islam has been interpreted in many different ways due to different political and social factors in each country (C. El Hamel, 1999: 63). For this reason, it would be impossible to classify Islamic music as a single musical entity. The vast size of the Islamic world means that Islam incorporates a great deal of music in many countries, stretching from Senegal to Indonesia; not to mention the large numbers of Muslim followers co-existing with other faiths in other parts of the world.

In Bedouin societies, initiation into Islam differed to that of the rest of the Arab world due to the nomadic nature of Bedouin society. The Bedouin institution similar to what we know as a university is called *mahadara*.

“The institution of learning *al-mahadara* in a nomadic society was in many respects different than the madrasa established in other sedentary Islamic societies. The *mahadara* was not a fixed institution and kept moving in the nomadic routes in *Trab el Bidan*. This meant that any cleric could open a *mahadara*; the main requirement was an *ijaza* which was written or oral license which he received from his teachers permitting him to teach different subjects” (C. El Hamel, 1999: 66).

The only condition for admission as a student to the *mahadara* is to memorise the Koran and have some basic Islamic knowledge acquired either in elementary school or through family contact. The *mahadara* offers subjects such as the Koran Hadith (tradition of the Prophet), Sufism, *fiqh* (Islamic jurisprudence), history, ethics, language, literature, grammar, algebra, theology and the occult sciences. This type of religious-based education was prominent in Bedouin societies until the beginning of the twentieth century when Western education made its appearance (C. El Hamel, 1999: 62). From the *mahadaras* and the religious beliefs of Bedouin people, Saharai religious songs known collectively as *medhj* was born. In *Trab el Bidan*, Islam is the basis of Bedouin communities and has its own style of religious songs called *medhj* (Ahmed Fadel interview, 2-11-2004). The Koran says nothing explicit about the use of music (V. Doubleday, 2006: 115). Not one of its verses endorses or opposes any particular sound.

From the Koran and the Hadith there are multiple interpretations: none of them more certain than the other. This entire Chapter will focus on *medhj*. It describes the force of its inspiration and all that surrounds it in this community.

Interpretations of religious songs in the camps by new and old generations

Saharai religious music has been revived among the young people in the camps. This is assisted by accompanying religious songs with electric guitars and keyboards, an outcome of the Saharai transnational encounter in Algeria. As Taylor says “People in different historical situations have ways of constructing their Others (due to the transnational encounter) in different ways, which they do in part with music within new generations” (2007: 6). Many older people do not approve of this transformation of *medhj*. Salma told me that such a personal mode of singing to God has become secular to the extent that it is now played at weddings. She claims that it should not be called *medhj* (interview, 4-11-2004). Nevertheless, young musicians are highly respected by their peers when they play modern *medhj*. Young Saharais claim this transformation of *medhj* as “a new way of connecting with the Prophet” through what may be regarded their “collective memory” (Ahmed Zein interview, 2-11-2004). This situation indicates a shift from memory to history making and offers a critique of their history rather than being simply “anti-historical, relativistic, or a stimulant for cultural and artistic creativity” (J. Olick & J. Robbin, 1998: 120).

Earlier religious musical styles have been adapted by a new generation that wants to follow the words of its ancestors, particularly of those who were once martyrs in the war against Morocco (1975-1991). In this regard their behaviour is not strange as people banished from their homeland and forced into exile often retain much of their traditional religious culture as a tool of resistance (S.Hutchinson, 2006: 41). Islam is still part of the new generation of Saharais, even though many of those who went to study in Cuba became detached from their religious duties.

Many of them have told me that they have nothing to do with Islam. One of these musicians told me:

Imagine seeing the girls wearing skirts up to their thighs, and coming back here to the camps and seeing them well covered up to their faces. The truth is that it is a big change in many senses for the young Saharai population who left to study for many years in Cuba. Not only because of the subject of attraction but also how it affects a Muslim country averse to the openness of Cuba regarding the acceptance of the body (Moraksi interview, 16-11-2004).

One of the main features in classical Bedouin music is that the *igagwen* have no role in determining the lyrics of a poem and are not responsible for influencing people's beliefs. Therefore, an *igiw* only cares about the sound rather than religion, history, sorcery or politics. In the case of singers in classical *Haul*, this is often not the case, because they sing the poems of poets who are nourished with the knowledge and veneration of the culture and religion of the *Trab el Bidan*. This approach to their music has a cultural precedence since Bedouin poetry has always been based on the *Sunna*, a book based on Muslim values and deemed as offering the only acceptable prescription for everyday life among all classes of the Saharan community (H. Norris, 1968: 113).

Religious music (*Medhj*) and recitation of Koran as different concepts

In Islam and Judaism there was always a dilemma as to whether or not to recognize religious chanting of the holy book as music. The debate as to whether religious cantillation or chanting may be considered music was of concern to many ethnomusicologists in the past (M. Scott, 2001: 153). The Koran exists as both a written and oral tradition. In many Arab countries like Egypt, there is an office called *shahad* – the reciter of the Koran. *Shahada* are taught to recite the words of the Koran in a fixed way. There is even a musical system called *Tajweed*, which is based on the accents of words and duration of syllables. However, for an Egyptian Muslim this is still considered recitation and not music. In fact, for many years, African Muslims have gone to Al-Hazhe University in Cairo to receive professional training in the recitation of the Koran (M. Scott, 2001: 156-58). In the refugee camps the five daily prayers were broadcast as “recited” on the radio. This is a case of fusion between religion and technology, of which there is more discussion later in this Chapter.

In *Trab el Bidan*, every sound that is related to the Koran and daily prayers, is not considered music but rather recitation of the holy book (P. Bohlman, 1994: 6). The daily duties of Islam are considered more elevated than music. Salma explained, “We can understand that music cannot be mixed with the direct connection between the individual and the Creator” (Interview, 4-11-2004). However, in Bedouin societies, the wisdom of secular *Haul* is separate from the spirituality and intimacy of being with God through *medhj*. Whenever I asked local people in the refugee camps about *medhj*, they always took me to the older generations who still practise it and remember the wisdom of this ancestral style of singing. It seems that young people no longer value the meaning of *medhj* as a sign of intimate contact with God, and have taken it into another dimension where *medhj* has a popular and festive atmosphere. Youth in Algeria also took their *medhj* to create *rai*³⁵ music (H. Noor Al-Deen, 2005: 600), thereby preserving *medhj* in a new and modern form of music.

Memory practices transpire not only in the dialogue between old and new, and between the past and the present, but are also invoked as the means to establishing social order since new, younger generations of Saharai musicians talked of “songs of the elders” when they referred to *medhj*. For them, *medhj* is related to the respect for older people who transmit the values of Islam and life. For this reason, *medhj* still prevails in older generations in a different way, which gives much depth and importance to the religious songs as a connection with God.

***Medhj*: Prologue**

Medhj are the religious songs that Bedouin families sing during Thursday night and Friday morning (the day of the week to go to the mosque for Saharai people). There is a difference between *medhj* songs and secular *Haul*. In *Haul*, poetry expresses devotion and the highest emotions of a human being in *Trab el Bidan*. However, Koran recitations and *medhj* remain a personal way of talking to God and cannot be compared with secular *Haul*. My research assistant Ahmed Fadel told me that a woman could not show me

³⁵ *Rai* music is a world music phenomenon today and it is rooted directly in religious *medhj* songs in Algeria.

examples of *medhj* if not inspired. For example, a *medhj* singer could not sing a religious song without creating an atmosphere where she feels comfortable to worship the Prophet.

***Medhj* history**

Medhj began with the arrival of the Prophet Muhammad. Saharauis celebrate it as a praise song to the Prophet and God. There is a common Bedouin saying: “where there is *medhj*, evil spirits are gone”. Therefore, for some people there are spiritualist connotations in *medhj*. In contrast, other people commented that the purpose of *medhj* is personal contact with the creator, and there is no type of healing involved. Salma affirms that pagan connotations have nothing to do with the principles of *medhj* (interview, 4-11-2004). This does not mean that *medhj* does not aid any kind of plea to the Creator. For example, it is possible for a woman to want to sing *medhj* in order to ask God for help. Salma says, jokingly, “Well, after 35 years in the camps, *medhj* is prayed by all Saharauis desiring independence” (interview, 4-11-2004).

Traditionally, *medhj* is sung on Thursday evening. It is said that the only reason for this is that Friday is the holy day. It prepares for the day when one stops working and does something devotional. One stays at home with one’s family singing *medhj*. Previously, *Medhj* was practised with the drum (usually *t’bal*), *zoizaya* (shepherds flute) and hand claps. Salma told me that there are no longer this many *medhj* instruments being played in the camps; nowadays, *medhj* is only accompanied by percussion, handclapping and vocals. However, the flute called *zoizaya* – the only wind instrument that I have heard of in the refugee camps – has a special role in *medhj*.

The *zoizaya* has a legend, which Bara explained to me, is the story of a boy who got lost in the desert, but was found because a shepherd was playing the *zoizaya*. In legends the *zoizaya* seems to be an instrument attributed with supernatural power; however, *medhj* is appreciated as a repertoire of ancestral praise songs and is not related to animist beliefs. Bara says that *medhj* used to assist with exorcism will lose its original sense of being the ancestral connection with God, since *medhj* has always been sung only to the Prophet.

According to the oral history of the Saharawi people, *medhj* has been sung as an intimate devotional praise since the time of the Prophet (Bara interview, 6-11-2004).

It is said by Saharawis that *medhj* originates from after the Prophet's death (Salma interview, 4-11-2004) and that four of his disciples spread the spirit of *medhj* during the Islamicisation process. They were: Abubacar Ebnu Sadik, Ebnu Khattab Omar, Osman and Ali Ebnu Afan Ebnu Ebi Talib (married to the daughter of Muhammad) (Salma and Bara interviews, 6-11-2004). When they started talking about the disciples of *medhj*, Bara began to clap, and her daughter Salma joined her and together they sang this *medhj*:

I love my Prophet (2-11-2004) by Salma, Bara, Sweta and Ahmed Zein / CD 2, Track 1³⁶

*I love my prophet
I love my prophet
When Ali (son of Muhammad) raises your sword to the enemy
Your stroke will be faster than the flight of a hawk.
On reaching the battlefield,
To the infidels destroyed or removed.
I love my prophet with my best intentions.
In the most difficult moments he opens the doors.*

Salma made it clear that inspiration is different in the camps:

If we were in the Western Sahara, we would have sung *medhj* with more inspiration. Imagine the feeling of not knowing if you have to have the bags packed to leave for the Promised Land. One day *medhj* will be reunited with the land of origin. In the past, there were many people who only knew *medhj* as the only musical form. In addition to that, *medhj* allowed for a sensitive way of listening to the person who was singing. Today, at weddings and national events people scream and do not listen as much to the singers. The ancestral *medhj* precept is to listen to the sage elders. Children and adults are mesmerised when *medhj* is heard. Furthermore, drumming and singing is the most simple and ancient way of singing to God. The whole situation in the camps is sad, but also powerful. This is one of the reasons why this musical tradition still exists in some tents in the refugee camps (interview, 4-11-2004).

Medhj is always played in 12/8 time and in different modes. The guitar does a *medra* (see Appendix I on guitar technique) accompaniment without solos throughout the whole song. *Medhj* songs also have *lebiadh* and *lehrar* sections, which mean that in terms of structure and use of modes this type of devotional singing has its roots in *Hawl* modes. The most distinctive characteristic of *medhj* songs is their 12/8 rhythm. Rhythmical

³⁶ The song on the recording is the same as that which I describe here, but recorded on another occasion with guitar and *t'bal*.

variations in 12/8 are found in old *medhj* songs such as “Sid el Basar”, “Medhaha”, “Eleaila al-yamuha”, “Ya hawih” and “Rah alik eleil”, as shown in Figures 38 – 42 below. All these songs are considered part of classical *medhj* although instrumental backing is on *tidinit*, bass and *t’bal*, and does not include the flute known as the *zoizaya*³⁷. All these songs are sung by Saharai women because *medhj* has gendered practices and women’s voices are preferred in *Haul* music.



Figure 38 *Rah alik eleil* rhythm by Sweta from *medhj* album by Nube Negra 2004. Leboer/CD 2, Track 2



Figure 39 *Sid el Basar* rhythm by Fakhnash from *medhj* album by Nube Negra 2004. Chawada/CD 2, Track 3



Figure 40 *Ya hawih* rhythm by Jeirana from *Medhj* album by Nube Negra 2004. Chawada/CD 2, Track 4



Figure 41 *Eleaila al-yamuha* rhythm by Sweta from *Medhj* album by Nube Negra 2004. Lyen / CD 2, Track 5

³⁷ Traditional Bedouin flute.

In addition, there are many examples of how technology or the integration of the electric guitar can transform traditional styles. *Medhj* has become a powerful singing style with electronic instruments (guitar, keyboards and bass guitar) replacing the traditional Saharai instruments such as *t'bal*. Today, it is no longer strange to have *Haul* or *medhj* played with electric guitars instead of being performed with *tidinit*. *Medhj* roots are still alive, albeit with drum machines, keyboards and electric guitars. In this context, it can be asserted that their memory, in the form of history and tradition, is central to their society and to all social interaction (R. Eyerman, 2004: 161). Thus, *medhj* is the nexus of memory and religious, social interactions, which endures modifications through technology, structure and populist ideas after the Saharai revolution. This situation is in contrast to the acoustic and intimate *medhj* performed before 1975.

Schizophonia in religious practices: The end of Ramadan in the refugee camps of Auserd

The phenomenon of technology in religion provides the practitioners their own space without having to visit the mosque. Before the existence of having prayers broadcast on radio, there was the inconvenience of having to leave work to go to the mosque. The situation in the Tindouf significantly relates to Steven Feld's discussion of *schizophonia* (1996: 1). *Schizophonia* describes the situation of anyone who listens to music on a stereo or listens to the radio, thus losing engagement with most of the physical-human communication around him/her. With regard to religion, Feld adds that whoever performs his prayers through the radio or a medium in which solitude is mixed with an abstract feeling of community, can be said to be experiencing *schizophonia*. Nonetheless, *schizophonia* does not imply any negative effect on religion. Broadcasting prayers on the radio is another way of communicating the words of the Prophet (*ibid*: 34).

As we saw previously with *medhj*, technology has been used to enhance music for religious purposes. I refer not only to devotional songs but also the recitations of the Koran and prayers. The radio has brought together all the cultural and religious areas of Saharai culture. The following description bears out this growing relationship between technology and spirituality.

14 November 2004 was the end of Ramadan³⁸ in the Muslim world. A few days earlier, I asked Ahmed Fadel in which mosque the end of Ramadan was going to be celebrated. He pointed out a square made out of stones. I asked again, 'where?', and he pointed out the same square, an invented mosque in the desert (see figure 44). At nine o'clock in the morning, the cars began arriving at the imaginary holy site. In the course of 30 minutes, I could not see the imaginary mosque anymore because of the number of vehicles. Despite its precarious situation, religion was practiced with devotion in the imagined mosque. Women and men were separated from one other. Women were closer to the entrance and men were at the front and closer to the direction of Mecca. Inside the imagined mosque, there was no one to recite the Koran. They replaced it with the radio and recitations were played through the speakers.



Figure 44 Imagined mosque in the refugee camp of Auserd (L. Gimenez, 2006)

The message of the Koran is not influenced by *Haul* and is recited in Arabic, with lots of ornaments and melismas typical of Arab music. The manner of reciting the Koran is fixed and there is no improvisation. In the refugee camps, the end of Ramadan is recited on Algerian radio stations. Saharais also listen to the radio for daily prayers and for all the religious events during the year. This creates another type of community within an imagined mosque. For this reason, the technology at the time of prayer is perhaps a more effective way of praise in a place such as the Saharai refugee camps where it can reach 50 degrees Celsius in the shade during the month of August. Radio undoubtedly resolves

³⁸ Ramadan is a fasting period of forty days for Muslims.

a devotional problem in such a place. Technology in any kind of religious event is always an advantage and a necessity in the desert where climatic conditions are harsh.

Chapter Six

Modern Saharai Music - *El Fen el Asri*

Young people now dominate the musical scene in the refugee camps. The eclectic style of *Haul* that the youth developed with the revolution of 1975 is called “*El fen el Asri*”. *El fen el Asri* is *Haul* mixed with other African and international musical influences such as jazz, reggae, and Afro-pop. It is a new space in their traditional music which creates access to other types of expressions for new generations. However, modern Saharai music has kept its musical roots in *Haul*. Turino sums up the situation more clearly by stating that new musical elements and the abolition of social castes are characteristic of traditional music in modern Saharai society (2003: 62). Music has become popular and politically involved. It is available for everyone despite the retention of elements of musical styles of the past. Regarding the latter, much of this thesis has brought to attention the practices of musical memory in diasporic and transforming lives in a transnational context. Previous chapters were grounded on the analysis of *Haul* traditions in order to reflect on the present changes in “memory” and “musical performance in Saharai music” (J. Baily, 2005: 216).

Calvin believes, “Transnational communities are not just about how relationships are created, but how they are sustained and changed” (2005: 434). This holds true for Saharais in the refugee camps of Tindouf who are separated from their homeland by a Moroccan wall of more than 2000 kilometres that divides the occupied Western Sahara from Algeria and Mauritania (T. Hodges, 1983: 50). The length of residence in the camps for Saharais in exile remains unknown, as the UN referendum for self-determination scheduled for 1976 is now long overdue (E. Jensen, 2005: 13). One of the advantages of being in the refugee camps for Saharais is that they are in Algeria where Saharais share cultural and religious similarities with Algerians. Also, since the beginning of the Saharai conflict Algerians and Lybians have supported the Saharai cause. Thus, Saharai culture in exile is respected and protected by Algeria. One of the main reasons for this transnational change is that Saharai youths go abroad to study at university and

discover new forms of expression. As mentioned earlier, the countries in which most young Saharai people tend to study are Algeria, Libya and Cuba. In addition, there are many Saharai students in Spain (Ahmed Fadel interview, 2-11-2004).

It is also important to discuss the views of modern poets, although since the abolishment of castes many singers write their own lyrics. Modern poets conversed with me about *Haul* and modern music and unlike the views of the classical poets engaged in more traditional music, they gave me an open and different view on the new *Haul*. This is because many young poets, upon returning to the desert after 15 years abroad, bring another perspective to the Saharai problem and life in general. I had the opportunity to interview two young popular poets: Lualy Lehsan, from the *February 27* camp and Abdalai Hamdi Sinima from the Dakhla camp. It was a pleasure to have spent that time with them talking about music, poetry and life in general. I analysed two different examples of poetry in modern music: the ones which describe personal views and the ones that speak from a pluralistic view of the Saharai people. The analysis on Saharai modern poetry gives a deeper understanding of the use of language and the invocation of memory in Saharai lyrics than the analysis on modern Saharai songs. Abdalai and Lualy's interviews are a significant contribution to this Chapter in that they provide clarity on how lyrics and poems are written in the refugee camps. In addition, appendix I and II provide translations of all the lyrics of the songs in this thesis.

Inteview with Abdalai Sinima Hamdi, 15-11-2004: Modern poetry in plural

Abdalai's poetry is a response to Saharai people's dreams of independence. He always mentions that his lyrics are the result of this cause, since his father was a martyr of the war against Morocco (A. Zolderg, A. Suhrke & S. Aguayo, 1986: 152). His poems are not primarily for musicians and he thinks that composers and singers need the opportunity to write their own songs rather than depending on the poets. Abdalai has spent 15 years of his life in Cuba, in exile he was very committed to the cause of his country and has never abandoned his ideal of self-determination. For him, his poetry is a reaction to the news on radio Al Jazeera, Radio Nacional³⁹ and local news in the camps.

³⁹ Radio Nacional is a radio station in Spain.

He is fascinated and saddened by how the world media offers a point of view hidden by an apparently neutral and objective opinion. First of all, he began to speak of Cuba as a country where he felt free. Suddenly, one of the men at the protocol (international residence), asked “Even when Cuba is a dictatorship?” In Abdalai’s view, the time he spent in Cuba felt good and he replied by saying:

The hospitality of the Cubans and how well one is received is amazing. There is equality between different races that inhabit Cuba. Medicine in Cuba is free, and even operations that are worth lots of money in other countries are free in Cuba. In addition to that, Cuba has helped to lots of South American students, as well as Angolans and people from other African countries (Abdalai Sinima interview, 15-11-2004).

I liked his expression of empathy with the Cuban people, while another member of the protocol said, “But Fidel will fall one day”. “Well, Napoleon also fell, Hitler, Franco, Russia, even Muhammad”, Abdalai replied. Then, someone said “The next empire to fall is the United States”. The man from the protocol said that Cuba is a dictatorship and more limited than a democratic state. Abdalai replied to this man with his epic poem called *Democracy*⁴⁰:

The truth is that there is not democracy in Western countries and such a state does not exist. Why does the Spanish government sent troops to Iraq if the Spanish population and all the political parties except the dominant party did not agree to go to war? Spanish people elected the political party who had the last choice to go to war. Where is democracy? Since Franco⁴¹ died, Spanish democracy and the UN keep making promises and nobody has solved the problem of Western Sahara. Besides that, why does Spanish democracy not recognise the SADR⁴² and open a Saharai embassy in Spain? But the decision of the Spanish government is not the same as the decision of the Spanish people who love Saharai people. There are only speculations on the word democracy (15-11-2004).

Abdalai’s theory on dictatorship is almost similar: “Dictatorship to me is the poor sleeping on the street, people starving, sick children, women raped and people killing”. He concludes by stating: “The world was a paradise, but there are those who cashed in on a dollar, a pound or an island; or power or whatever, forcing us to abandon our principles”. Then, the man in the protocol asks, “Do you think the world is worse than

⁴⁰ Abdalai’s poems are not published, therefore there is no date of publication.

⁴¹ Franco was the Spanish dictator in power from 1939-1975.

⁴² Saharai Arabic Democratic Republic.

ever?” The '50s generation in Spain has not experienced any war and this phenomenon has never happened in human history. The only danger for the human being is that wars can be atomic while places like Iran, Pakistan or North Korea are testing nuclear bombs. Abdalai says that there are more immediate problems in society such as unemployment. It is clear that the Western economy is not maintained only by tourism, but that the immigrants are the backbone of the economy of any developed country. They get very low wages in exchange for developing large estates and businesses. For example, the Saharai doctors who are in Canada have to spend their first two years studying medicine in English. Even many of those who passed this exam are removing ice on the streets and not working as doctors (Abdalai Sinima interview, 15-11-2004).

In the end, I had a very interesting conversation with Abdalai and the man from the protocol. He told me that as a poet, he feels like he is a messenger of his people. Primarily, this is because his father was a martyr in the war against the Moroccan invasion in Western Sahara. Therefore, his poetry is the answer to his present as seen from the perspective of the Saharai people in exile. Abdalai's poetry closely resembles modern *Haul* in the camps, which is based on lyrics about the Saharai revolution. He writes his poetry in Arabic and Hassaniya while other Saharai poets in the camps write in Spanish. These are the poets, such as Lualy Lehsan, who have a more personal way of writing poetry and they provide new approaches to Saharai poetry in music.

Interview with Lualy Lehsan 19-11-2004: Personal poetry as a new way of expression in the camps

On 19 March 2004, I went to the house of the SADR⁴³ president, Mohamed Abdelaziz, in the *daira*⁴⁴ called *February 27*. I also had the chance to meet a famous poet of the new generation who was working at the hospital. “Lualy Lehsan is very good”, one of the girls who accompanied us to visit the *daira February 27* told me. When I was introduced to him Lualy was watching TV in a tiny room filled with books.

⁴³ Saharai Arabic Democratic Republic.

⁴⁴ *Daira* literally means “town” in the refugee camps.

He speaks perfect Spanish and writes his poems in my native language. I had a good opportunity for making contact when I pointed out to him a book of modern Saharai poetry called *Bubisher* (named after a Saharai black and white bird that is believed to always bring good news) and published by Fuentepalo (Canary islands, Spain) in 2003. Every time you see a bubisher, Saharai people say: "Thank you for bringing good news". He shows me another book in Spanish called *Memory*⁴⁵, a book of poems by young Saharais who have had experiences abroad, similar to Lualy's. Most of the modern Saharai poets published in these books met in Cuba before they returned to the desert. Lualy confirms that his experience in Cuba was a break from the Saharai collective soul (Lualy Lehsan interview, 19-11-2004). In the years of the war up to the early 1990s, all the cultural and social sectors had only one sentiment: the process of independence and to die for this ideal (S. Tuhoy, 2006: 230). People sang and wrote lyrics on political topics, and everyone moved towards the same ideology. But, when his father was fighting in the war, most young people were studying in other countries. Despite the difficulties of being the son of a father in this situation, he experienced a diverse and peaceful social environment in Cuba with students from all around Africa and South America. He also experienced many types of dance, poetry and music. Therefore, on his way back to the refugee camps, he was aware that society can be plural in ideals and politics. In addition to that, Lualy returned to Western Sahara in 1999, and the ceasefire between Western Sahara and Morocco was agreed upon in 1991. Thus, there was a time of peace during which poetry could be different. Lualy comments that when there is peace in the camps, one tends to think more about oneself among the collective soul.

Modern poetry is more personal, because the circumstances are totally different. At the time of war, there is a collective soul singing to all of us and the poet is included with similar problems for everyone. The poet in these people put into verse the feelings of the people's pain. Perhaps, when you individualise, the feelings are better explained. A few people could understand that you can not explain the pain of a whole society, because not everyone has exactly the same experience. Therefore, poetry that came after the war is more personal and intimate than it was at the beginning of the revolution. (Lualy Lehsan interview, 19-11-2004)

⁴⁵ *Memory* remains unpublished therefore no reference is available.

Lualy's poetry is a reflection of himself as an individual; his emotional wounds are the main subject. As mentioned before, Abdalal still feels a commitment to poetry as a collective expression that answers to the problems of Saharawi people. Nevertheless, Lualy states that new personal elements appear in his writing. At the time of war and exodus, values such as social revolution and change were more important because people died for a cause (R. Moore, 2003: 3). For both sentiments, love and personal feelings did not fall into this category of the collective expression. At the beginning of this century, the new generation of poets began to write more about intimate and abstract feelings without political connotations (Lualy Lehsan interview, 19-11-2004).

Lualy keeps saying that the Saharan conflict is very complex. He states that no one is starving and that health is partially covered for everyone. It is important to mention that this has been possible because these services have been well organised (H. Hakovirta, 1993: 35). To Lualy, the worst problem in the camps is that there are no prospects for the future and this is felt by many people who write or create music, despite there being no deaths or epidemics (A. Zolderg, A. Suhrke & S. Aguayo, 1986: 153). He insists that the problem is that there is always the possibility that today is the last day in the camps, and tomorrow they will return home (H. Hakovirta, 1993: 38). One cannot live contently thinking that the walls that protect one from the wind will probably not remain for future generations. They do not have a fixed home where they can enjoy the type of sedentary life that many Saharawis adopted during the colonial period.

In the camps, it is said that the republic will disappear when big rainfall comes. This is because the houses are made out of mud and a torrential rain would destroy everything in less than an hour. Thus, this revolution is fragile. For Lualy, it is more important to discover what thoughts are inside each Saharawi because each is different to the next (Lualy Lehsan interview, 19-11-2004). Lualy informed me of a Cuban poet who told him that the country is not the ground you walk or mountain you climb. The sense of country is rather a place that is often in the unconscious mind. The vindication of a way of life and self-determination has brought war and exile to Saharawis. Lualy says that the solution will always have to be through dialogue; without having to go to war. Any war is a mistake; the stupidity of war would be the same mistake again. Lualy comments that

the problem of the Sahara never had prominence in the global media and has been given little attention worldwide. It seems that in order for conflict to attract attention there must be many famines, deaths and exodus (H. Hakovirta, 1993: 35).

Lualy realised that we talked more about the Saharai problem than his poetry, despite his attempt at writing poetry that is more personal. He says that everything is related to it and it is very difficult to get out of these social parameters where he lives. Now, Lualy says one of his poems is about a man in the hospital who lost a hand in the war. In daily conversation, the old man tells stories of war, but always in a collective manner. Even in the language he never stops saying, “we were”, in plural and past tense. But when the old man talks of the specific time when he lost his hand, the old man starts saying that his hand was well gone for the cause. According to Lualy, the old man confuses everything between personal experience and the collective expression. This situation brings to mind Rasmussen’s claim that memory is not only collective but that memory has traditionally also been identified with the local and the individual (2006: 796). Lualy says that the Saharai is reluctant to show personal feelings and by nature, would cover the pain. Lualy concludes his poem by saying that perhaps the circumstances of the old man are so dramatic that he prefers to talk in plural. In this way, the old man becomes immune to the pain.

Lualy observes that in former times there were no borders in *Trab el Bidan*. Borders came with the advent of colonialism and with the commercial exploitation of phosphates in Western Sahara from 1975 onwards. Saharais only depended on the herds and rain during *Trab el Bidan* times. Their life depended on the clouds and there were no borders in the desert. Thus, they had the ability to walk with dignity in the desert (Lualy Lehsan interview, 19-11-2004). The Western Sahara began to develop urban centres in the 1950s. Many of the Saharai communities were still living nomadically, and with pride and in peace. Now, it is a struggle since the Sahara is bordered with flags. Lualy is a lover of peace, and also makes the Saharai think as individuals and not only collectively.

The basis of Lualy's poetry is free verse. Lualy no longer uses *Gaaf* (ABAB) or *Talaa* (AAAB) rhymes as in classical *Haul* in *Hassaniya*. Besides that, his poetry is written in Spanish. He tries to write with a free flow and as spontaneously as possible. His poetry is based on philosophical questions of where he is and who he is. This is poignant because he does not have a direct relation to where his family is from, and the fact that he lived most of his life abroad and in the refugee camps. Lualy's parents come from a place in the province of Tiris called Ergueibat, which literally means, "The place of dreams". He has never moved back because it is behind the 2000 km wall Morocco erected during the late 1970s. However, he once had the opportunity to make a visit to Tiris. "My verses" (L. Lehsan, 2003: 30) is one of the poems emerging from this trip to Tiris. According to Lualy, this poem is a statement of principles and love for the homeland. In his case, the ability to recall nostalgically demonstrates that his memory is the central medium through which his current identity is constituted (J. Olick & J. Robbin, 1998: 133).

My verses

*My verse talks to shut booms
that pierce the eardrums of silence.
Cherish your name,
sits in your eyes
which wounded an eagle immersed in the immensity.
A line searches your history,
my memory and your memory,
to retrace the other possibility of love.*

Among the new generation of poets are Liman Boicha, Mohamed Salem, Abdallahi and Chejdan Saleh Muhammad. This new generation of poets has a new style of poetry and lyrics in the refugee camps. Music and lyrics are becoming more personal as a result of Moraksi's⁴⁶ influence, who in turn is influenced by this new movement of Saharawi poetry being written in Spanish. The musical importance of Lualy's poems is the awakening of a new Saharawi trend of writing in Spanish; a link between the Saharawi musicians and poets who have studied in Cuba and a new song structure based on

⁴⁶ Singer in modern Saharawi music.

Spanish and Cuban songs. The direct contribution of Lualy's poems to new Saharawi songs is related to the style of writing and not directly with any of his poems. Nevertheless, it is important to mention Lualy and his generation of Saharawi poets in order to understand certain changes in music and the structure of the poetry, differing from the past and even from the new revolutionary songs in Hassaniya since 1975. Lualy's poems evoke personal memory rather than collective memory. He keeps asking himself about his identity through the vague memories he has about his past and through his present situation as a refugee (J. Olick & J. Robbins, 1998: 133).

Moraksi: Spanish-Hassaniya songs

On 21 November 2004, I went to Ali's house to meet with Ali and Moraksi. Ali is a young Saharawi musician who sings modern *Haul* with the accompaniment of his accordion. Ali's songs represent the modern *Haul* of the refugee camps. On the other hand, Moraksi sings songs in Spanish and Hassaniya, which are not related to classical *Haul* in musical terms (R. Waldinger & D. Fitzgerald, 2004: 1182). Both of them sing together for young Saharawis, either separately or together as a duo. Moraksi told me that he is still singing about what was going through his mind during his stay of fifteen years in Cuba. This music was a mix of Latin songs with modern *Haul*. When he returned to the Sahara, he decided to continue with this fusion of parallel music worlds in which he had lived. Even so, he always speaks with humility, and comments: "I'm not a musician in the sense of the word as great *Haul* players are. I can never compare myself with people like Ahmed Zein, or singers such as Sweta. They are masters of Saharawi music". Moraksi is aware that what he does is different and is not as elaborate as *Haul* music. However, there are many young Saharawis who support his music and admire his respect for traditional *Haul* music.

His songs are based on basic chord progressions such as C-F-G. He kept feeling ashamed of his own music. I told him: "Look, the Blues is also based on those three chords you keep playing, and there are thousands of good songs with such progressions". Furthermore, I gave him more advice as he was feeling a bit insecure with his own music: "Do not try to compare yourself with others; follow your own musical path." Moreover, although he plays songs with major chords and is not able to play classical *Haul* well

enough, he is introducing a new musical form into the variety of music in the Saharai refugee camps (S. Hutchinson, 2006: 38). There are others who are making these Western chord progressions a consistent basis of modern music within the *Haul*. Such is the case with famous Saharai singers like Mufid, Nayim Alal and Mariem Hassan. However, these musicians are much more knowledgeable in classical *Haul* and merely use western chord progressions to add a new texture to modern *Haul*. Moraksi's and Ali's lyrics also speak of the revolution and the hopes of the SADR⁴⁷ as do the lyrics of most Saharai singers. In the end, the message remains the same despite the change of musical style. The cause of the Saharai people is very clear and inspiring for young locals. Even when Moraksi sings in Spanish, it is directly related to the cause, as in "Let's all fight for a cause that is very fair".

Although Moraksi sings in Spanish, it impressed me that in some of the songs he refers to Catalonia⁴⁸ (CD 2, Track 8).

*I sing to Catalonia, to their land and sea.
To its people singing,
to the Catalanian land.
I want to share my fate.
Catalonia bring up my happy tears,
Land, hearts of many people and lots of love.*

It was these lyrics that impressed me for their political and sentimental meaning, as it is clear that his song is dedicated specifically to Catalonia and not to Spain.

Undoubtedly, his lyrics are the strongest part of his songs and the guitar is a mere accompaniment to his voice. He has also written vibrant verses in honour of the revolution such as:

*How much sadness, I forget the pain,
Dark years that we pass,
Let's march as a giant that no one can bend.*

⁴⁷ SADR is the Saharai Arabic Democratic Republic.

⁴⁸ A province in Spain in which certain native people want independence.

Moraksi is a musician who makes new music related to Western popular music but within modern *Haul*. As with Lualy Lehsan's poems, the content in his lyrics is based on the revolution but from a more personal point of view I was also surprised when Moraksi sang a song by Silvio Rodriguez, the most popular Cuban songwriter, an indication that he also has knowledge of songwriters on the Caribbean island.

Ali Seibda, Mahfri and Abdalai: The new *Haul*

Ali Seibda was a musical revelation that I found by chance in *Auserd*. Abdalai, another singer, came to me and told me that he had a group whose songs I would be able to record. It was the day before the end of Ramadan. I decided to visit Ali's house for half an hour, and those thirty minutes turned into a couple of hours. It was the first time I heard the accordion in *Haul* music, although I had been told that Bepa in *Smara* also plays the accordion in *Haul* music. Accordions were mostly brought from the Soviet Union when they still had close contact with the Saharawi republic before 1989 (Mohamed Salec and Bepa interview, 5-11-2004).

At first, they played an entire repertoire of traditional *Haul* then later played modern songs. My Spanish colleagues told me that this was the most original music they had heard in the camps. The sound of the accordion within *Haul* had a special texture in Saharawi music. In addition, Abdalai and Ali sang at the same time with different melodic lines. This practice is unique in modern *Haul*, and according to Hutchinson, "Saharawi music over the past four centuries reflects and negotiates these changes in transnational Saharawi communities, creating new identities for young Saharawis" (2006: 38). I was also pleased to hear the first acoustic guitar in a song by Mahfri. The *t'bal* was replaced by a red empty plastic barrel played by Abdalai. The instrumentation was unique but also impressive, since musical sounds were drawn from half-broken instruments. The meeting with Ali is a clear example of how new *Haul* develops within the camps. It differs from the Saharawi stars in Europe, a subject I deal with in the next Chapter.

A day in Smara with Bepa and Mohamed Salec: *Haul* on the keyboards and *tidinit* in modern Saharaui music

I remember the morning I left for *Smara*⁴⁹. Anyone who has been to the refugee camps of Tindouf has mentioned the experience of travelling in the middle of a desert in an old Rover with 15 people inside. Ahmed told me that the driver who brought us to *Smara* was his close friend during the war. Our meeting with Bepa was a masterclass in modern *Haul*. It was the first time I heard *Haul* music with a keyboard and a drum machine (S. Hutchinson, 2006: 41). Bepa had all kinds of technological music equipment. He and Ahmed Zein played all the *Haul* modes with modern influences such as reggae and Algerian Rai (J. Baily, 2005: 229). A few hours later, a *tidinit*⁵⁰ player called Mohamed Salec joined the band to play modern *Haul*.

The only one among them devoted exclusively to music is Ahmed Zein. Bepa is a teacher and physical educator at primary school. He used to sing *Haul* with the accordion at school. When I met him he had been playing the keyboard for five years. Bepa explained to me the problems of not finding the quarter-tone in the accordion and keyboard. However, the keyboard has a sound modulator and he learnt to reach the quarter-tones. He has a prodigious way of playing the keyboard; playing chord progressions and imitating the solos on the guitar at the same time. He was self-taught on keyboard and developed this unique style of playing. He even imitated the women's ululations on the keyboard. His music is a demonstration of transnational hybridity which is expressed musically by the blending of old and new repertoire and instruments, and the incorporation of influences from other musical genres like rai, hip-hop, jazz, reggae (S. Hutchinson, 2006: 56).

Mohamed Salec was not only a musician but the Director of Culture in *Smara*. He does not come from a musical family but in 1987 he started playing *tidinit* with his cousin, Mariam Salec. Mohamed Salec went to Nouakchot, the capital city of Mauritania, in 2001 to learn the *tidinit* and *ardin* with a family of *igagwen*, and was taught by the master musician, Cheikh Ould Djeich Badu. By playing *tidinit* Hamada is one of the few

⁴⁹ Smara is a province in the refugee camps.

⁵⁰ *Tidinit* is a classical Bedouin instrument.

musicians to preserve classical *Haul* tradition. Nonetheless, *tidinit* has been incorporated by other musicians into modern Saharai music (CD 1, Track 17).

Saharai singers in modern *Haul* in the refugee camps

Nowadays in modern *Haul*, the singers usually write and sing their own lyrics. They are mostly accompanied by keyboards, electric guitars and drum machines. I had the opportunity to hear and meet popular singers such as Erguebi Larbi Ahmed, Sidi Ahmed and Mohammed Mufid Nouf. They all have special features in their way of singing about the Saharai cause. One feature is the inclusion of modern *medhj* using traditional texts from Bedouin history and the Koran. All these singers are constantly moving around to sing at weddings and earn more money than their accompanists. There is a habit in *Trab el Bidan* of the audience giving money to the singers in a moment of exaltation. It usually happens when the singer moves the emotional side of his/her audience. Popular songs create unity and make the audience dance. A good example is a song composed by Erguebi and Mufid called “My feet are broken if you do not love me” (CD 2, Track 17). The song became very famous in 2003. This song is especially popular among female audiences because of its romantic lyrics (see appendix III). During the celebration of marriage, the enjoyment of music is primary and the aim is not to idolise the author of a song. Other singers are able to play the same song without creating a problem for the original author. This situation differs from the Western musical world where copyright is often more important than the popularity of the song.

Saharai singers want to keep writing new materials. All are in the same situation and write for the same purpose, such as independence and the self-determination of the Saharai people, so that the strength of their songs is powerful although repetitive, in my view. Sweta told me they used to sing the same songs during the war with the same desire of independence expressed in them. Despite having recently undergone surgery for throat cancer, Sweta continues singing with her characteristic voice (Ahmed Fadel interview, 2-11-2004).

Unlike older musicians, younger generations of musicians do not have the experience of musical performance during the war. However, the way of singing is very similar to traditional *Haul*. A significant change in modern Saharai music is the incorporation of rhythm in the classical *Haul* (J. Baily, 2005: 229). Another characteristic of modern *Haul* is the call and response technique between melodic lines and backing vocals, and sometimes in monophonic responses. All these changes in Bedouin classical music can be called *El fen el Asri* or modern Saharai music. As mentioned before, due to their revolutionary content rather than being about universal feelings such as love for another being, the lyrics in modern Saharai music also differ from those found in classical *Haul*.

Nonetheless, for Saharais, the voice remains much more important than the music that accompanies it. Many Saharais do not recognise the different modes in *Haul*. In fact, many Saharai residents in my hometown in Spain told me that through my research they have become more aware of their own music culture. It is not surprising that Saharai modern music differs from that of Mauritania and yet this is difficult for the Saharais to conceive. Ultimately, it is important that this music has transformed and has not perished (P. Calvin, 2005: 427). I would add that the *Haul* is more alive than ever in the camps. Rather than being destructive, this situation is creating a new sense of pride in the sound of the classical *Haul*. The only negative aspect is the lack of music production and exposure in the camps. But I will discuss this in more detail in the following Chapter.

Chapter Seven

Commodification of Saharai music in the Western world: Transnational encounter with Nube Negra in Madrid (1998-2010): New musical aesthetics

Very recently, a friend in San Francisco bought an album by the Saharai musician, Nayim Alal. It is astounding that Saharai music is available in such a far-off place. It is to be expected, however, since the Spanish record company, Nube Negra, is responsible for distributing Saharai music in the global market. Nevertheless, in most of its recordings of Saharai music, Nube Negra has created a new style of *Haul* with new aesthetics in order to sell the music in the Western world (Manuel Dominguez⁵¹ interview, 3-06-2011). There is another transnational musical encounter between Nube Negra and Saharai music in Madrid, such that this music differs from classical *Haul* and Saharai modern music in the camps. These processes in the music of the Saharais reflect what Hutchinson observes is a traditional music framed as timeless and unchanging but equally transformed by new economic and social situations (2006: 37).

Modern Saharai music in the camps is mostly played with electric guitars, keyboards and programmed rhythms. The songs usually last from five to ten minutes, although they do not have a fixed structure or time. In between the songs, the musicians have a margin of time to tune the guitars or to decide what song they are going to play next. Concerts can take from one to three hours and the idea of a concert always means dancing and excitement. Modern Saharai music performances in the camps always have a cheerful atmosphere. *El fen el Asri* is frequently played on local radio and the popularity of the singers is decided not by what songs they have composed but by the way they sing and express thoughts in their singing. Therefore, musical aesthetics draw on the performer's ability to conjure up a means of communication rather than new compositions. New popular singers and musicians are constantly on the rise and their popularity does not only depend on whether they have become popular in the Western global market. There are local musicians such as Ahmed Zein, Ergueibi, Ali Seibda, and a large number of artists who are widely popular only in the refugee camps. Music culture in the refugee

⁵¹ Manuel Dominguez is Nube Negra's director, and producer of most of the Saharai albums in the Western world.

camps differs from Saharai music recorded by Nube Negra in musical aesthetics and by the impossibility of Nube Negra records embracing such a musical movement as a whole (T. Taylor, 2007: 8). The Spanish record label introduced to Saharai music innovations such as wind instruments, drum kits, new digital rhythms and sounds generally produced in the Western world. These new musical elements in Saharai music are highly appreciated in the refugee camps. However, this musical phenomenon outside the camps has not changed or led musicians to abandon the young musical movement of *El fen el Asri* inside the camps.

During October 1997, the Spanish record label went to the camps with mobile recording studios, and recorded a large amount of Saharai music. Nube Negra's first release of Saharai music was in 1998. This was a historical album by the first Saharai band formed in the camps, and named *El Lualy: Polisario Vencera* (first edition in 1982 with the Spanish label Guimbarda⁵², Madrid). El Lualy was the first Saharai group to emerge after the revolution. This album was produced by the Saharai Minister of Culture, Mohamed Tarni, during the 1970s and 1980s (Ahmed Fadel interview, 2-11-2004). It was a successful album among the many non-governmental organisations (NGOs) especially in Spain and Italy, who are concerned with the Saharai cause (Manuel Dominguez interview, 13-6-2011).

This album also had a big impact on transnational Saharai communities in Spain. This group of immigrants of the same nationality in Spain builds social fields that link together in familiar, economical, organisational, religious, musical and political issues. Saharai music made in Spain through Nube Negra developed social networks that connect Saharais to two or more societies simultaneously: Saharais in the refugee camps in Algeria, Saharais in Spain and Saharais in the occupied territory in Western Sahara (S. Hutchinson, 2006: 38). The music has adapted to becoming a transnational commodity but the Saharai musicians are equally complicit in the making of a transnational community of musicians. They and the music are transnational because their music made in Spain is experienced in different contexts to that of its country of origin and it moves between various societies and audiences: Saharai refugee camps in Algeria, Spain and

⁵² Guimbarda was also owned by Manuel Dominguez, Nube Negra's director.

Western Sahara. In this case there is evidence of how transnationalism produces changes within original musical traditions that existed before the cross-cultural encounter (S. Rasmussen, 2006: 822).

This cross-cultural encounter experienced by Saharai communities in Spain motivated me to conduct part of my fieldwork research on Saharai music made in Madrid. The transnational experience of Saharais in Spain has provided me the opportunity of building bridges between myself as a Spanish citizen and two transnational Saharai communities, that is, Saharais in the refugee camps in Algeria and Saharais in Spain. Saharai transnational communities in Spain are highly integrated into their host society. Saharai musicians in Spain not only work in the music industry but also in a range of different areas; from agricultural labour to healthcare and as biologists who were trained in Cuba (Manuel Dominguez interview, 13-6-2011).

However, Saharai music made by Nube Negra did not receive as much attention in the World music media as the music of other neighbouring countries such as Senegal, Mali and Algeria. Nonetheless, Nube Negra decided to keep on releasing albums of various Saharai artists and styles. They released an album called *A pesar de las heridas*, in 1998, which was recorded in a mobile studio during the company's time in the camps. After that, they started to record albums with independent artists such as Nayim Alal and Mariem Hassan, who are the most popular Saharai singers in the Western world. For these new records, Saharai musicians were required for the first time to record in a professional studio in Madrid. Many of them came from the camps to record and decided to stay in Spain in search of a better life in various jobs not related to music. These albums were successful among the Saharai community in Spain and among the NGOs serving the Saharai cause. They were also successful in the world music market (S. Rasmussen, 2006: 796). In the transnational encounter of Saharai music with Nube Negra seems that the original music made in the camps by Saharai musicians is arranged to serve new commercial goals in a capitalist society, in contrast to how it works when Saharai music is located in the socialist Saharai refugee camps, where the awareness of Saharai political goals are the main purposes of music. Thus, one of the main features of Saharai music produced by Nube Negra is that it can only fit into the world music

market as a new and unique product but different from the original arrangements of the songs produced by Saharai musicians in the camps (T. Turino, 2003: 73).

The fact that the Saharai music recorded by Nube Negra was not as popular among Western countries as other music from the Sahara desert (Tinariwen, Tartit or Agadez) can be due to two main factors. Firstly, Nube Negra had the same producers for all the albums related to Saharai music: Fernando Delgado or Alberto Gambino and always mastered by Hugo Westerdahl. This created a repetitive sound in all the albums and the records did not achieve the expectations in the quality of sound usually required in the world music market. Thus, Western audiences are hardly conscious of Saharai music. Secondly, the Minister of Culture in the refugee camps signed an exclusive agreement with Nube Negra on the export of Saharai music to the Western world. Therefore, no other record label and, thus, no different sound, could be produced for Saharai music in the global market. This limited the exploration of musical production with regard to new technologies and other labels which could have distributed Saharai music throughout the world. In this context their world has now transformed, revealing how “a set of music and migration factors concerns the audience for cultural performances in exile, and points out a contrast between inward-directed (Saharai transnational identities) and outward-directed (Western audiences) performances” (J. Baily 2005: 217).

The issue of musical production is highly relevant to Saharai musicians. They experience the constant change of music scenes between the camps, the Western world and the different cross-cultural encounters they experience in different settings, such as Spain and the refugee camps. Rasmussen states that “different versions of culture and memory are powerfully asserted depending upon whose opinion is being articulated” (2006: 796). For this reason, the next topic in this Chapter is the opinion of Saharai musicians and their values and opinions on the impact of their music in the Western world through the Spanish record label, and their personal opinion about modern Saharai music as a potentially globalised product.

Views on Nube Negra by Saharai musicians in the camps

Saharai musicians' opinions of Nube Negra were in many instances not positive. These negative opinions varied from problems experienced in the process of production, to Nube Negra's management of Saharai music and the company's treatment of the musicians (T. Taylor, 2007: 154). Local musicians such as Mohamed Salec complained about not being valued in the process of production. The musicians commented that the Spanish producers exercised their dominance in the treatment of the sound as the recordings were intended to appeal to certain Western audiences whose musical taste is highly orientated towards the world music industry. Therefore, their music lost its meaning because they could not participate in the final result of their own artistic product. Eurocentricity dominated the whole process of production when Saharai musicians recorded with Nube Negra in Madrid. Nevertheless, they were able to perform the music on these albums across Europe, America and Japan, although it never gave them enough income to live on after their return to Spain or to the camps. For this reason, musicians in the camps who participated in any of the recordings by Nube Negra were extremely critical of the Spanish record label. Bepa, a Saharai musician, commented that Saharai producers have the right to merge with Western record companies and present new ideas in new recordings which will give a more distinctive identity to Saharai music.

The encounter between Western engineers and musicians playing non-Western music is sometimes confrontational in terms of the approach towards the sound. For instance, when I recorded with the mbira player Linos Wengara in Spain in 2003, the Spanish sound engineer who was testing the sound of the mbira underestimated the buzzing sound of the instrument and also made a statement about the mbira being an instrument out of tune. Linos became offended and told the Spanish sound engineer to respect his music because he knows the sound and the value of what he is about to record.

As in the case of Saharai music recorded by Nube Negra, the misunderstanding and different perceptions on the process of recording is a common experience among traditional musicians in the non-Western world and among Western music producers. However, some of these comments were not accurate according to the director of Nube

Negra, Manuel Dominguez. He claims that Nube Negra has given space to the musicians to produce and to participate in most of the processes of recording Saharai music in Madrid. For instance, Baba Salama was the producer of Mariam Hassan's album, *Deseos* (2004). Besides, Manuel agreed with the Saharai Ministry of Culture that every Saharai musician participating with Nube Negra should receive a salary. In the Saharai refugee camps, the government is centralised and decides upon musicians' salaries and the way of distributing the money to musicians in the camps. Saharai musicians commented that Nube Negra did not take any band formed originally in the *wilayas* and picked up several individual musicians who they believed were the best for their recordings and, thus, created a new transnational band called Leyoad in 2002. The local musicians that Nube Negra recruited were responsible for travelling the world, playing and representing Saharai music but not representing the musical reality of the bands in the camps. Another issue is that the benefits of concerts and CD sales are shared by the Spanish record label and the Saharai Ministry of Culture, but there is no income for the musicians who participate in the tours or the recordings. Thus the Ministry of Culture distributes the benefits for various cultural activities inside and outside the camps. With a certain degree of indignation, Mohamed Salec told me that Nube Negra took advantage of the Saharai musicians who did not know the specific conditions of the contract with Nube Negra or how the music industry functions (Mohamed Salec and Bepa interview, 5-11-2004).

Mohamed Salec thinks that if he had known what the contract was about, he would have considered it very carefully. Moreover, the royalties of songs are also shared by the Spanish record label and the Saharai Ministry of Culture, although they have the courtesy to acknowledge the composers' names on the CDs. However, Saharai music recorded by Nube Negra is in fact owned by the Saharai composer through the Spanish copyright society, SGAE (Sociedad General de Autores Españoles), proving Mohamed Salec's belief about copyright protection incorrect⁵³. The fact that Mohamed Salec does not know that Saharai musicians have copyright over the songs remains a serious

⁵³ "Intellectual property rights consist of economic rights (or copyrights) and moral rights" (U.Volgsten and Y. Akeberg (2006: 336).

problem and an illustration of the lack of communication surrounding the whole process between Saharai musicians, the Ministry of Culture in the camps and Nube Negra.

Nombre	CAE/IPI
MOHAMED NADJEM ALLAL DAF	273.344.958

Título Original	Código de Obra SGAE	Código ISWC
SAHARA TIERRA MIA	3.724.376	T-041.483.316-1

Figure 44 Copyright for Sahara tierra mia by Nayim Alal⁵⁴

The situation for Saharai musicians in the music industry is difficult in most cases. Bepa advised having a musicians' union to acquire certain rights so that the Ministry of Culture or Western record labels would not take advantage of their music. Bepa, among other local musicians, feels betrayed by the misuse of his music as he has not benefited enough, to buy new musical equipment, for instance. Saharai musicians are not dedicated to music on a full-time basis, and only a few are privileged in this regard. Ahmed Fadel told me that when the Spanish record label came to the camps they agreed with the Saharai Ministry of Culture that they would attempt to capture the voice of a country rather than idolise a few individual musicians. As Moore states, "The Ministry of Culture constantly uses the arts as a means of inspiring nationalist sentiment, unity, and greater dedication to political goals. Government promotes songs with overtly political lyrics and creates musical festivals commemorating events of the socialist revolution such as February 27 (the national day)" (2003: 3).

⁵⁴ Copyright for "Sahara tierra mia" by Nayim Alal (2011). *Sgae*. Retrieved August 15, 2011, from <https://socios.sgae.es/RepertorioOnline/DetalleObra.aspx>

The record company understood the agreement and released *Polisario Vencera* (1998) and *A pesar de las heridas* (1998), which are two historical compilations of Saharai music related to modern *Haul* and religious songs. However, in the last decade, Nube Negra created two transnational Saharai stars: Nayim Alal and Mariem Hassan. Ahmed Fadel commented that Nube Negra broke the initial agreement with the Saharai Minister of Culture and created a new *Haul* style that was not born in the camps but in Madrid. (R. Waldinger & D. Fitzgerald, 2004: 1177).

Sweta has lived in the camps since 1975 despite touring internationally with the Spanish record label for the album *A pesar de las heridas*, in 1998. She did not want to talk about Nube Negra. She only said that she was very proud to have been able to perform the music of her country internationally. As Taylor cites, “In this era of unparalleled transnationalism and globalisation it is perhaps important to remember that it is not just commodities, money, sounds, images and people that move but also, ideologies” (2007: 160). Sweta never wanted to live in Spain and lives in the camps with her loved ones. However, the younger generation of musicians desires to live in Spain. For example, Ahmed Zein expressed to me his desire to live in Spain and make his income from music. But the chances of a Saharai musician surviving in the Western world are poor. Ahmed does not play any musical styles other than modern and classical *Haul*. Therefore, as is the case with Ahmed, Saharai musicians find it difficult to incorporate their music or to learn Western music styles in order to live on the proceeds of musical performance in Europe.

The musical world in the camps is very specific to *Haul* and the musical knowledge is different to Western theories of harmony and music structures. Besides, politics and identity have a different role in the camps to that in Western countries. Therefore, musicians would have to adapt to a new social environment where there is no external help as there would be in the refugee camps. In addition to this, every artist in the camps receives a subsidy for sharing his/her art for the benefit of the revolution. This state of affairs, of musicians serving state ideology, shows how the “need to do the right thing is basic in socialist centralised governments where the state makes greater use of moralist or nationalist appeals in their attempts to foster cohesion” (R. Moore 2003: 3). The policy

adopted by the Saharai musical culture was also influenced by the Cuban government which offers the same benefits to national artists there. Nonetheless, the amount that Saharai artists receive from their government is not enough to survive in the camps and artists depend on external help as do the majority of the population in the camps.

Nayim Alal: New musical influences in his music produced by Nube Negra in Madrid

Nayim Alal comes from an extended family of musicians. His biggest hit was “Viva el polisario” in the 1990s, while he was fighting in the frontline against Morocco. In 1998, he included this song in his first album with Nube Negra, *Sahara, tierra mia*. “Viva el Polisario” (CD 2, Track 10) gives a new dimension to *fagu*, the third *Haul* mode. It begins with an introduction that sounds more like the second mode, *seinicar*, in its melismatic way of singing (in classical repertoire, *fagu* does not have the *lebiadh* section). Then, it goes directly to *serbet* – the traditional frenetic dance in *fagu* – and he continues singing his lyrics in praise of the revolution. The entire song is in 6/8 time.

Most of the Saharai music recorded by Nayim Alal for Nube Negra has been a cross-cultural experience with songs which introduce elements completely alien to Saharai culture in the camps. In his album, *Nar* (2003), Nayim Alal’s production is extremely Westernised, to the extent that not a single song on the album reminds one of modern *Haul* music. For example, “Mulana Ya Tawab” is a reggae song by Nayim Alal in which he incorporates rap in Hassaniya. “Tfarah” is one of his songs with rhythms and chord progressions based on Congolese rumba. “Ya Mariam” is a hybrid of reggae and lots of guitar effects such as wah-wah and chorus. According to Nube Negra, *Nar* was the album in which Nayim felt free to experiment (B. Ivey, 2009: 18). In previous albums, Nayim Alal played with Mariem Hassan and Leyoad (the band formed with Saharai musicians in Spain who recorded with Nube Negra) who always had a presence in *Haul* music. “Mother don’t cry for me” is a song with a G-Am-Em chord progression, and with singing and clapping. It has a *lyen* mode melody, the most commonly used mode in *Haul*, yet the chord progression makes it sound completely different to *lyen*.

New chord progressions in *Haul* modes have been one of the main innovations in the Saharai music produced by Nube Negra. This practice created new harmonic structures which will produce many possibilities for Saharai music in the future (Ahmed Zein interview, 2-11-2004). “Who does care about sadness?” and “Sahara tierra mia”, songs from the first Nube Negra album by Nayim Alal, in 1998, have the influence of syncopated guitar accompaniment taken from other Arabic music, mainly from Andalusi music in Algeria, Tunisia and Morocco (Ahmed Fadel interview, 2-11-2004). Nayim Alal is not appreciated by everyone in the camps and Saharais reflect negatively on his character. In my opinion, he is a misunderstood artist in the refugee camps because of his character. He is a good musical example of modernity and some Saharais are not in favour of the new elements that Nube Negra add to his music because, according to the Saharais, the Spanish record label is not in agreement with the music that is being created in the refugee camps (Manuel Dominguez interview, 3-6-2011).



Figure 46 *Mulana ya Tawab* from the album *Nar* by Nayim Alal (Nube Negra, 2004) / CD 2, Track 11



Figure 47 *Tfarrah* from the album *Nar* by Nayim Alal (Nube Negra, 2004) / CD 2, Track 12



Figure 48 *Don't cry for me* from the album *Sahara tierra mia* by Nayim Alal (Nube Negra, 1998) / CD 2, Track 13

Mariem Hassan has been residing in Sabadell (Barcelona) in the last eight years. However, she pays regular visits to the refugee camps of Tindouf. Mariem has an ongoing relationship with the three main Saharai communities: in the refugee camps of Tindouf, in Western Sahara, and in Spain. It is interesting to note how the international media writes about Hassan's music. Firstly, they compare Mariem Hassan with other African stars from the Sahara desert, even if the comparison does not have much to do with Saharai music as such⁵⁶:

“...supportive handclaps and ululations and the campfire celebratory feel of that other desert blues troupe, Tartti (Touareg band), is also invoked at times (Murphy, fRoots, March 2010).

This is far more stark fare, the songs more like shortened, hypnotic versions of the elemental sheikhat Berber music of neighbouring Morocco“ (Murphy, fRoots, March 2010).

Regarding which, Akenataa Hammagaadji replies to this article with a strong criticism of Murphy:

“The musical traditions are distinctly different, if you have an ear to discern them. Murphy was obviously over his head with this one.

To him, all these mixed black and brown desert peoples are the same and therefore fungible. If I had been the editor, I would have rejected the review. Again, this is yet another in a long list of examples where hiring [or at least consulting with] a native of the culture under review would have been wise. At the very least, Murphy should have done his homework” (Akenataa Hammagaadji, First World Music, March 2010).

Secondly, Mariem Hassan's point of view about Saharai music in Western societies is always positive because it makes people aware of the rich musical heritage embodied in

⁵⁶ All these comments on Saharai music are found at www.nubenegra.com. Comments on Saharai music (2011). Nube Negra. Retrieved August 15, 2011, from <http://www.nubenegra.com/>

her culture (Ahmed Fadel interview, 2-11-2004). Her last album, *Shouka*, has been the most popular album in the history of Saharai music. Due to Mariem's efforts people are becoming aware of the Saharai problem and their right to self-determination.

Nonetheless, it has been 12 years since Mariem first recorded her first album, *A pesar de las heridas*, with Nube Negra. After that, she also released *Mariem Hassan and Leyoad* (2002), *Deseos* (2005), and *Shouka* (2010). International recognition arrived only after a long time since other bands from the desert had received international acclaim as well. These are bands such as Tinariwen, Ali Farka Toure and Tartit. All of these bands are from Mali. The similarity between blues music and Saharai *Haul* also adds to the appeal of Saharai music for Western audiences.

Mariem Hassan is a reflection of my entire thesis on how Saharai music in the camps entails *Haul* music from the past in *Trab el Bidan*, and in modern times, within the refugee camps of Tindouf and in Spain with Nube Negra. She is the only internationally active Saharai singer coming from the first Saharai band after the exile "El Lualy: Polisario vencera", formed in 1982. She is a model of the new Saharai music and she is active in its continuity, as evidenced in her most recent album *Shouka*, in 2010. The song "Shouka" is revolutionary, musically speaking, because it lasts 12 minutes (a feature that is not common in Western music) and moves through all the *Haul* modes while she replies to Felipe's speech (see lyrics in Appendix III). The modes in the song "Shouka" are played with different rhythms and extra notes which are only audible to people who understand *Haul* music.

SAHARAUI MUSIC DISCOGRAPHY WITH NUBE NEGRA



MARIEM HASSAN

INN 1136-2 (2010)



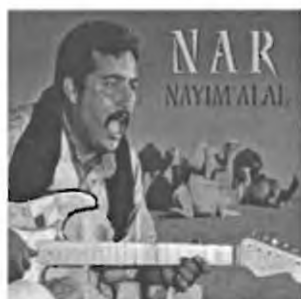
INN 1134-2 (2007)



INN 1128-2 (2005)



INN 1123-2 (2004)



INN 1117-2 (2003)



INN 1114-2 (2002)



INN 1.034 (1998)



INN 1.033 (1998)



INN 8.001 (1998)



INN 1.031 (1998)

Figure 51 Saharai music discography courtesy of Nube negra, 2011

Chapter Eight

Conclusions

This Chapter summarizes the overall study of my research on Saharai music in the refugee camps of Tindouf. It draws conclusions on complex contemporary topics such as transnationalism, social memory and musical performance, with respect to Saharai music. It also raises a new discussion on Bedouin music and particularly new ideas for the possible continuity of this particular area of research for other scholars.

Theoretical conclusions

This thesis on Saharai music is a qualitative analysis that draws on multidisciplinary areas of study such as ethnomusicology, anthropology, Bedouin history and cultural studies. In it, I use music as the tool for understanding Saharai culture in exile. This study involves a transnational community of refugees in Algeria through the invocation of social memory of earlier Bedouin societies and the contemporary changes brought by the Saharai socialist revolution. After providing a historical and social contextualization of the Saharai in Chapter 2, I investigated three different periods in Saharai musical history: 1) Classical *Haul* – 1690/1975, in Chapters 3 and 4; 2) its continuation through *Haul* and religious music in the Saharai refugee camps after 1975, in Chapter 5; and 3) musical changes after the Saharai revolution in 1975, in Chapters 6 and 7.

An analysis of the music was proposed through musical samples, music scores and the support of academic literature together with my in-depth participative research in the field both in the Saharai refugee camps in Algeria (Chapter 6) and in the transnational Saharai communities in Spain (Chapter 7). Musical performance has changed from that of Bedouin societies of the past, yet the Bedouin musical system based in the eight modes of *Haul* music has remained strong. These discursive manifestations of their musical memory, despite a radical change in political and social life within the Saharai community since the revolution in 1975, are significant and unique in *Trab el Bidan*.

The concept of refugee in Saharai music is only a desire for going back to the homeland and is framed within the socialist-Arab ideology of "El Polisario Front", the only political party in the camps. But 36 years as refugees is a long time to have the suitcase ready to return home, and there are now a few generations that only know their lives as refugees and the refugee camps as home. Saharais still do not know when they are going to be back in their homeland, as enactment of the self-determination resolution is constantly being postponed by international institutions such as the United Nations. This is a particularly interesting social phenomenon for ethnomusicological analysis as there are not many transnational refugee communities in the world with a period of such a long temporary residence. In addition, they are waiting indefinitely for the self-determination resolution to come into effect.

The Saharai government in exile has always been concerned with the creation of a new concept of music based on old Bedouin traditions combined with the influence of Arab-socialism from neighbouring countries such as Algeria, Libya, Egypt and Tunisia. Saharai people succeeded in the search for new musical elements and messages during 36 years as refugees. The first Saharai band created in 1978 within the refugee camps was El Lualy. After that, in 1998, the record label Nube Negra recorded and released four albums of Mariem Hassan, Nayim Alal and other general compilations of Saharai music. This means that from 1978 to 1998 there was no sign of international interest in Saharai music, except for El Lualy.

In 2004, when I first went to the refugee camps, the number of bands and the various musical scenes were vibrant and diverse and this made me aware of the large gap in research on musical activity from 1978 through 1998. Saharais told me that musical instruments were not commonly found during those twenty years and music was not common in the camps. Therefore, the only music that they heard was from El Lualy in national events and on Arabic radio broadcasts with strong enough signals to reach the camps. Thus, because of this gap in opportunities for development of musical knowledge and performance opportunities from 1975 through 1998, this thesis is based on the Saharai revolutionary period in exile from 1998-2011. The musical analysis of *Haul* in

Saharai music has been the easiest part of my research; even to the point of understanding the potential meaning of their lyrics and elements of their musical forms. Nevertheless, understanding the social situation of Saharais as refugees, and being in a transnational community experiencing constant change is a complex matter from which one cannot draw conclusions but rather make assumptions. Due to the complexity of Saharai people as both transnational migrants and refugees, their experience provides new ways of looking at music performed in social contexts of this nature.

My contact with Saharai music has been firstly through the population in Spain and Spanish NGOs in favour of the Saharai right for self-determination. The reasons for the Spanish people to support the Saharai cause are multiple. First, Spain left the Saharais in the hands of other Arabic countries (Morocco and Mauritania) without any support from the colonisers. Secondly, the Western Sahara is the only country in the process of decolonisation in Africa and the Spaniards feel responsible for the bad administration of its ex-colony after 1975 (Ahmed Fadel interview, 2-11-2004). Thus as a Spaniard and a student of Ethnomusicology, the Saharai cause for independence and their music are of great personal interest.

Saharai music: Suggestions for further research

This study opens up a new area of research within a vast area of North Africa where there is a rich musical heritage. Bedouin concepts of music offer a rich potential which has as yet not been fully researched. In 2004 I conducted research on Saharai music to produce the documentary film *Los mares del desierto* (L. Gimenez, 2006). This experience resulted in my being able to play with the Saharai music star, Mariem Hassan, and to perform at numerous Saharai weddings in Spain.

Due to the requirements of a Masters degree thesis, there are many topics that were not thoroughly analysed. Further research is proposed on the following: 1) musical systems related to *Haul* music, such as the Arabic *maqam* concept, Tuareg music, Bedouin music in other regions in the Sahara, and Malian music; 2) in-depth research on women and music in Saharai musical culture as an unique case in the Arab world; 3) Saharai music and media exposure on radio, television, internet and how music is presented nationally

through the Saharai refugee TV channel, transnationally in Algeria and Spain, and globally through the internet and Nube Negra; 4) politics as the main theme of Saharai music lyrics, the beliefs of Saharai people and how they are represented through music and how they differ from other Socialist-Arabic countries; 5) documentation of my international tour with Mariem Hassan in 2012, taking into account the experience of playing with Mariem in the global arena and the type of hybrid music that is created from this project relating to *Haul* and Saharai music in particular; and 6) field research in Mauritania, to conduct a study of the *igagwen* musician families in relation to Saharai musicians in the camps.

It is important to keep Saharai music alive as it is endangered and dependent on international aid. I would like to conclude with a quote from one of my interviews with the Saharai poet, Lualy Lehsan:

My ancestors only depended on the rain and the pastures. They did not know about frontiers. The moral codes in the desert were of peace and hospitality. Saharais are in denial of power and frontiers; that is the main problem and why we are paying for it as refugees. But our music and poetry will show to the world that there is a human population in the desert who lives with dignity and who does not have any criminal record in their long history (interview, 19-11-2004).

Appendix I

Instruments in *Haul* music in the Saharai refugee camps of Tindouf

Tidinit: A string instrument made out of an acacia tree for resonance, goat skin and four nylon strings. It is the main solo instrument for playing *Haul* modes. It has two sympathetic strings on both sides and they are called *tichibtin*. The two strings in the middle are the solo strings and they are called *lamhar*. The tuning of the *tidinit* is usually D-A-D-A. The right hand accompaniment part on the *tidinit* is played only with the index finger, and the left hand uses four fingers but not the thumb.



Figure 52 Mohamed Salec playing tidinit (L. Gimenez, 2006)

Ardin: A harp made out of a calabash for resonance, a goat-skin and twelve nylon strings. It is a drone instrument used for accompaniment and only played by women. The strings are tuned in a constant repetition of fifths: D-A-D-A-G-D-A-D-A-G-D-A. Sometimes they tune some of the strings to a note related to the mode they are playing.



Figure 53 Salma playing *ardin* (L. Gimenez, 2006)

T'bal: A percussion instrument made out of camel's skin and acacia tree. It is more commonly played in modern Saharawi music than in classical *Haul*. Nonetheless, it is a traditional Bedouin instrument from *Trab el Bidan*. *T'bal* is tied with camel's tendons. It is a rounded instrument of no more than 50 cm in length. It is played by women who sit on the ground. The hand technique on *t'bal* consists of two sounds: bass and treble. Depending on the mode, the rhythm can be binary or ternary (see page 34).



Figure 54 Sweta playing *t'bal* (L. Gimenez, 2006)

Electric guitar: The guitar has been the bridge between the old *Haul* and modern *Haul* music. It is tuned D-A-D-D-A-D (*entamas* and *seinicar*). Although, depending on the mode, the third string can generally be tuned to F (*leboer*, *lyen*, *lebteit* and *chawada*) or E (*fagu*, *sgaller*). The Saharawi electric guitar has two extra frets between the second and fourth fret in order to play quarter-tones. The guitar technique is based on the *tidinit* traditional way of playing. The main elements in playing Saharawi guitar are based on

tidinit techniques in the right hand. Nevertheless, the guitar brings up new elements as chords. These are the guitar and *tidinit* techniques in *Haul* music:

Barm: This is a rapid tremolo played with thumb and index.

Barmasaba: Same tremolo as *barm* but with only the index finger.

Lefguea: Same tremolo as *barm* but with index and middle finger.

Elmenfaga: This is a way to strum backwards with the index finger and concluding with the thumb.

Jeri: This is a ternary rhythm played on the guitar with thumb and index fingers.

Medra: This is the basic guitar accompaniment when a poem is recited.



Figure 55 Ahmed Zein playing electric guitar (L. Gimenez, 2006)

Keyboard: This is used in modern Saharawi music and has become part of *Haul* since the end of the 1990s. The keyboard also incorporates programmed rhythms and new electric sounds very much influenced by *rai* music from Algeria,



Figure 56 Bepa playing keyboard (L. Gimenez, 2006)

Poets: They are essential for the classical *haul* repertoire. However, in modern Saharai society they are absent on stage as the musicians and singers write their own lyrics for the songs. In Mauritania, poets are still included in the concerts.



Figure 57 Salem reciting poetry (L. Gimenez, 2006)

Singers: The voice is the most acclaimed instrument in the refugee camps and singers are very popular among the Saharais. Both, modern or classical *Haul* music is without vocals.



Figure 58 Salma singing (L. Gimenez, 2006)

Appendix II

Translations of the songs on CD 1⁵⁷

Track 1: Meziem Wadna

*Look, how beautiful is our river,
It smiles to everyone who looks at our river,
When we go, it makes us to be back,
We are scared of this river to be away of our eyes,
How beautiful is our river*

*The river and its shore
And the things that make us love it
They are for the people living next to it
The people that never forget us*

Track 2: Salam Beina

*Oh! The Prohpet of God!
He is always with us; I always thank God for bringing Mohamed close to us.*

Track 3: There with her skirt

*How painful it is to desire this woman,
This woman of thin hips and beautiful hands
I cannot have her and I cannot leave her
I fear her and desire her at the same time
My love came and the people were happy for that,
Her beautiful presence and her sensuality make my soul go crazy.*

Track 4: The bracelet of that girl

*I was not able to give her this bracelet,
Her mother used to wake up when I was about to give her this bracelet in the night
But one day, a handsome man was sleeping with her when I was about to give her my
bracelet.
I thank God that I did not put any bad spirits into this bracelet.
I have a great pain and feel lost with her love. One day she told me "go away" but I
cannot avoid going back to her; I told her I would leave her and still keep going back to
her house.*

Track 5: Independence

*Independence is all we want
Independence is all we have been asking for for a long time*

⁵⁷ All the translations for CD 1 were provided by Ahmed Larbi and Ibrahim Alibaiba, from Hassaniya into Spanish. I then translated the songs from Spanish into English.

Track 6: Identification

*I swear to God that I won't release myself from you and from your luck
I swear to God to welcome your arrival always in my life
I swear to God that I wish to be with you
I swear to God that she never came to me*

Track 7: Fagu (Instrumental)**Track 8: To my daughter**

*From days and days crawling, one day she got up and started walking.
My daughter please, never die.
My daughter was given by God to me.
My daughter is the most loved child of all the children in the world.*

Track 9: My freedom is crying

*My tears are dropping all around.
What else do I have? Just the blood of the martyrs and my resistance.
Who can be in silence in the presence of God?
The only victory comes from God; I pray for my mother and for all my people.
My freedom is crying and keeps crying in the camps.*

Track 10: Instrumental leboer**Track 11: My dear Prophet⁵⁸****Track 12: Revolutionary sing sing, "In the armed struggle" and "Come revolutionaries"⁵⁹**

*Viva the revolutionaries; with their fight they defeat Imperialism; the Saharawi army is free of enemies.
In times of war the Saharawi army has built up this Republic and has been recognised by many countries in the world.*

Track 13: Our question is African and "The country called us"

*Our question is African and we are inside the African union and beliefs of unity.
The youngsters of this revolution are called by the duties of this Republic.*

Track 14: Cowboys get crazy

*God greets the Prophet; God who releases the pain of men,
God who brings health and frees the human being.
Cowboys get crazy*

⁵⁸ This song is a good example of *leboer* in musical terms. However, the singer frequently makes use of melismas which makes it difficult to understand what she is singing about. The same often happens for Spanish speakers in the case of flamenco songs.

⁵⁹ Tracks 12-13 are many short songs together with brief and very politicised messages.

Track 15: Love song to the Prophet

Men are like stones while the Prophet is like a pearl shining among the stones.

Oh My Prophet, why is it like this?

Life is only pain for me,

It is like I did not want a good life.

Why is it like this?

Track 16: Praying to our Prophet

We all say hello to the Prophet; he deserves everything; he deserves the greetings from all humanity.

He is the one who will save the human being and for that reason I tell that to my father, mother and brothers. My soul does not think at all; everything is in God's will and God is the one who gives everything to you. Greetings to the Prophet Mohamed; he is the chosen of God; there is no one better than him.

Track 17: Instrumental lebteit

Track 18: Wind of Sahara⁶⁰

Track 19: Traditional chawada (instrumental)

Track 20: Chawada in Smara (instrumental)

⁶⁰ I do not have a translation of "Wind of Sahara" but I have included it because it is a clear example of *lebteit* which is a mode not commonly in use, therefore making it extremely difficult to record musicians playing in this mode.

APPENDIX III

Translation of the songs on CD 2 ⁶¹

Track 1: I love my Prophet (translated in page 60)

Track 2: Rah alik eleil

Asa and Smara are two towns that when you attack them they never return; Viva El Aiuun!

The night, just the night!

You got here at night time, thanks to God.

Thanks to his behaviour God avoids his bad advents and will always attract the good spirits.

Track 3: Sid el Basar

The Lord of the humans dress as whatever is around him; in front of the jaima⁶² is red, and when he walks on his knees the goats eat around the floor; the goats get full of eating around him and have a nap. The cows also come to eat and get full of his pasture around him.

Honor to the Lord of the humans, my God. When Azrael⁶³ comes he will find me full of good in my life; honor to the Lord of the humans.

Track 4: Ya Hawih

Oh the great night! How careful the night made you; how quick the night made you.

In this country the war is flowing wildly, it is urgent to heal these wounds and to dress the night with this destiny, Oh great night!

Track 5: Eleaila al-yamuha

Tonight is Friday; he resists the enemy until the last day, even the whole town is fighting on Friday night.

The army is fighting and insists on its promises, never getting back just to release the Sahara,

Our strength will liberate us, I ask Allah not to betray us and to help our independent Sahara.

Track 6: Medhaha

Oh my Prophet, there is no one who sings Medhj like you, in your mouth are the dates, the pomegranate and the apples.

They said that your voice was the most beautiful and that we just repeat your voice with broken throats; you changed the Haul for Medhj, and myself for the Prophet I made Medhaha⁶⁴

⁶¹ All the translations in CD 2 were donated by Nube Negra, except tracks 1, 7, 8, and 9 which were translated into Spanish by Ibrahim Alibaiba and Ahmed Larbi, and by myself into English.

⁶² Tent.

⁶³ The angel of death.

Track 7: My God

God is the one who gives to you. Greetings to the Prophet Mohamed, he is the chosen one of God, there is no one better than him: there is no one else but God.

Track 8: Catalonia (translated in page 75)**Track 9: My feet are broken if you do not love me**

*My feet are broken if you do not love me,
You keep resisting yourself to my faithful desire of having you,
Everyone knows that I am crazy for you,
All my body keeps breaking if you do not love me.*

Track 10: Viva el Polisario

*I see the dust of the explosions rising, in the last hour of the night, as the stars can still be seen in the sky.
I can see the aftermath of the artillery fire, the spoils of the war, the weapons, the front-lines that are ours now.
The tracer path of the missiles marks the path of the brave.
When you attack never forgive your enemy or you will end up dead or in prison.
The enemy will burn your house; if you forgive him, you will have nothing.
In the places where the enemy occupies our lands, one can smell the fire.
The population is asking for our victory; Mohamed tie up the enemy, kill all those tanks.*

Track 11: Mulana ya tawab

*God forgive me and let me to come into paradise
You have to be a good man because at the end we all end up buried,
Ask God to forgive you always.
We forget the meaning of life and we keep working in little lands, we forget that we all end up in the grave.*

Track 12: Tfarrak

*If any of you meet Tfarrak,
You know that she brings up good times
Just wait until she opens her mouth, words full of hope.
But if Tfarrak rejects me and waves her hand to me, I feel lonely.
But if you knew Tfarrak is ill, you would not do anything to her,
I just supplicate to God for health to my lover Tfarrak, please God, give it to her.*

Track 13: Don't cry for me

Mother don't cry for me; I shall die a martyr; my death is a deed of love; I am saturated with life. One always remembers the birthday of a martyr. It is February and we are celebrating the declaration of the Republic. You are present in our hearts, martyr, we will never forget you; you will remain with us.

⁶⁴ Also translated as *medhj*.

Track 14: Who does care about sadness?

From the depths of my soul and with a loud voice I declare there is a bleeding wound in my heart that is mirrored in my face. Whatever does sorrow mean to me? My enemies laugh at my lament. My life is reduced to a tear. A flame in my eyes revives again the pain. Yesterday I crept about, today I stand erect. I have broken the chains; I want a life with dignity. I sense the freedom ahead, my wishes will become reality.

Track 15: Shouka⁶⁵

FG: We came here today on November 14th of 1976 to show our rejection and condemnation of the Madrid Accords⁶⁶ of 1975.

MH: Gonzalez, We listen to you with respect and great affection, and we readily grant you entry in our tents.

FG: Saharai people will win their fight. They will win, not just because the law is on their side, but also because they have the will to fight for their freedom.

MH: You are a lawyer, you have a silver pen, and you are the leader of a great party. You are refined, but your words sometimes cause great damage.

FG: I want you to know, that the majority of the Spanish people, the best and the most noble of the Spanish people, stand in solidarity with you.

MH: There are people, my people, who give their lives for freedom. I drank the blood of my three brothers who fought against the deadly weapons.

FG: For us it is not only about the right to self-determination, but it is also about supporting you in your fight until the final victory.

MH: You seem to have forgotten all about the promises you made to my people, and you seem to have forgotten the reason for your speech. Before you were elected president, you were leading the fight of a whole generation. Now you have closed the door to my people and your promises are not fulfilled.

FG: We are ashamed that our government not only has colonised you, but it also has done a very bad job of decolonising you and it has handed you over to reactionist states such as Morocco and Mauritania.

MH: The respect that my people had for you has gone since you chose to become a servant to coward invaders.

FG: But you must know that we too fight against the same regime that has delivered the Saharai people into the hands of reactionist governments.

MH: Do not try to confuse with your ideas to the noble Spanish people and try to distinguish between justice and opportunism, between good and bad.

FG: Because our people are on their way to freedom themselves, they will be able to support your fight even stronger and more effectively.

MH: You have gained power with eloquent speeches, but you did not hesitate to sell weapons to Morocco against us. You prefer rather not to remember.

FG: My party firmly believes that the Saharais will be independent and democratic and consequently you will return back home.

⁶⁵ "Shouka" is a dialogue between a pre-recorded political speech by the former Spanish president Felipe Gonzalez (1982-1996) given in the camps in 1976 and the response of Mariem Hassan in Hassaniya. This song covers all the modes in classical *Haul*.

⁶⁶ The Madrid Accords are based on the agreement that occupied territories will be ceded to Morocco and Mauritania.

MH: The wind has blown away your words but the Saharai people will not give up their rights, and they will pay the price in their blood. They are brave people that will continue fighting.

FG: We know that you have vast experience with promises that were not kept. So I will not make a promise to you but to history.

MH: You forgot about history that will never forgive you. Remember the past, even if it cannot be changed. Under the rose leaves hides the thorn and its poison is lethal.

Appendix IV

Field recordings in the refugee camps by Luis Gimenez

Charha traditional melody (2-11-2004) by Sweta, Salma and Ahmed Zein/CD 1, Track 7

Chawada in Smara (4-11-2004) by Bepa, Mohamed Salec and Ahmed Zein/CD 1, Track 20

Cowboys get crazy (6-11-2004) by Sidahmed Buyema, Ergueibi Mufid and Ahmed Zein / CD 1, Track 14

Catalonia (16-11-2004) by Moraksi and Ali Seibda/ CD 2, Track 7

Identification (6-11-2004) by Sidahmed Buyema, Ergueibi, Mufid and Ahmed Zein / CD 1, Track 6

I love my Prohpet (2-11-2004) by Salma, Bara, Sweta and Ahmed Zein / CD 2, Track 1

Independence (13-11-2004) by Abdulai, Ali Seibda and Mahfri / CD 1, Track 5

Instrumental leboer (4-11-2004) by Bepa, Mohamed Salec and Ahmed Zein / CD 1, Track 10

Instrumental lebteit (4-11-2004) by Bepa and Mohamed salec / CD 1, Track 17

Lebleida traditional melody (2-11-2004) by Sweta, Salma and Ahmed Zein / CD 1, Track 7

Love song (13-11-2004) by Abdulai, Ali Seibda and Mahfri / CD 1, Track 15

Meziem Wadna (2-11-2004) by Sweta, Salma and Ahmed Zein / CD 1, Track 1

My dear Prohpet (3-11-2004) by Sweta, Salma and Ahmed Zein / CD 1, Track 11

My feet are broken if you do not love me by Sidahmed Buyema, Ergueibi, Mufid and Ahmed Zein CD 2/ Track 17).

My freedom is crying (13-11-2004) by Abdulai, Ali Seibda and Mahfri / CD 1, Track 9

My God (12-11-2004) by Sidahmed Buyema, Ergueibi Mufid and Ahmed Zein / CD 2, Track 7

Our question is African, The country called us. (2-11-2004) by Sweta, Salma and Ahmed Zein / CD 1, Track 13

Praying to our Prohpet (6-11-2004) by Sidahmed Buyema, ErgueibiMufid and Ahmed Zein / CD 1, Track 16

Revolutionary sing, In the armed struggle, Come revolutionaries (2-11-2004) by Sweta, Salma and Ahmed Zein / CD 1, Track 12

Salam Beina (13-11-2004) by Ali Seibda, Mahfri, Abdalai Sinima / CD 1, Track 2

Serbet traditional melody (2-11-2004) by Sweta, Salma and Ahmed Zein / CD 1, Track 7

The bracelet of that girl (13-11-2004) by Abdulai, Ali Seibda and Mahfri / CD 1, Track 4

There with her skirt (6-11-2004) by Sidahmed Buyema, Ergueibi, Mufid and Ahmed Zein / CD 1, Track 3

To my daughter (12-11-2004) by Ali Seibda, Abdulai and Mahfri / CD 1, Track 8

Traditional Chawada (2-11-2004) by Sweta, Salma and Ahmed Zein / CD 1, Track 19

Wind of Sahara (2-11-2004) by Sweta, Salma and Ahmed Zein / CD 1, Track 18

Appendix V

Songs courteously provided by Nube Negra Records.

Don't cry for me *from the album Sahara tierra mia by Nayim Alal (Nube Negra, 1998) / CD 2, Track 13*

Eleaila al-yamuha rhythm *by Sweta from Medhj album by Nube Negra 2004. Lyen / CD 2, Track 5*

Medhaha rhythm *by Mariem Hassan from Medhj album by Nube Negra 2004. Chawad / CD 2, Track 6*

Mulana ya Tawab *from the album Nar by Nayim Alal (Nube Negra, 2004) / CD 2, Track 11*

Rah alik eleil rhythm *by Sweta from medhj album by Nube Negra 2004. Leboer / CD 2, Track 2*

Shouka *from the album Shouka by Mariem Hassan (Nube Negra, 2010) / CD 2, Track 15*

Sid el Basar rhythm *by Faknash from medhj album by Nube Negra 2004. Chawada / CD 2, Track 3*

Tfarrah *from the album Nar by Nayim Alal (Nube Negra, 2004) / CD 2, Track 12*

Who does care about sadness? *from the album Sahara tierra mia by Nayim Alal (Nube Negra, 1998) / CD 2, Track 14*

Ya hawih rhythm *by Jeirana from Medhj album by Nube Negra 2004. Chawada / CD 2, Track 4*

Appendix VI

Brief chronology of the history of Western Sahara.⁶⁷

- 700 “Shanaja Berber tribes of the Sahara were mostly nomads, pastors and camel drivers. Shanaja tribes were later divided into three strong clans: Lamtuna, Judala and Massufa. Arabic scripts and literacy were introduced in Western Sahara by the Shanaja Berber tribe. After that, the Arab beni Hassan tribe gained political power throughout Western Sahara in the 14th century” (C. El Hamel, 1999: 64).
- 1600 “Towards the end of the 15th century, the mixing of Hassanya Arab and Berber Shanaja societies began to form the Bedouin personality as we know it today and the hierarchy of Bedouin society began to take shape” (A. G. Gerteiny, 1967: 33).
- 1600-1900 “The main families occupying the Western Sahara were Rugeibat, Izargien, Oulad Delim, Oulad Tidrarin, Ait Lahsen and the Aroisen.[The people of] Western Sahara are part of the same broad ethnic group as the Beidan or Moors of Mauritania. They are all descendants of Shanaja Berbers and Hassani tribes. The land of the Moors never experienced political unity. It was composed of a number of emirates, confederations and tribes” (Tony Hodges, 1983: 30).
- 1960 At the UN, Morocco claims sovereignty over Mauritania and Western Sahara.
- 1966 UN Resolution 2229 obliges Spain to organise a referendum in Western Sahara so that the autochthonous people can freely exercise their right of

⁶⁷ This brief chronology is provided courtesy of Nube Negra except of the first three quotes provided by other sources cited in the Bibliography.

self-determination. Between then and 1977 six further resolutions of a similar wording appeared.

- 1968 Mohammed Basiri founds the Anti-Colonial Saharai movement “El Polisario” in Smara (Western Sahara).
- 1972 With Resolution 272 the OAU (Organisation of African States) supports the UN demand for a referendum. Meanwhile in a secret meeting the president of Algeria, the King of Morocco and the president of Mauritania agree to divide Western Sahara amongst themselves.
- 1973 On the 20 May the Frente Polisario (name of the Saharai political party) attacks a Spanish military post in the north of the Sahara.
- 1974 As Frente Polisario increases its warlike activities, the Spanish government postpone the statute of autonomy for the Saharai independence.
- 1975 On 22 May Spain declares itself prepared to end its presence in the Sahara. On 20 August Hassan II announces in the newspaper *Maroc-soir* “[b]y October we will know whether we will liberate Western Sahara by military or by peaceful means”. On 6 November the “Green March” of 350 000 Moroccan civil volunteers invaded the Western Sahara. On 14 November the secret three-page agreement of Madrid is signed to cede Western Sahara to Morocco and Mauritania, lacking any basis with respect to international law.
- 1976 The first Saharai refugee camps appear in the Hamada desert, near Tindouf.
- 1980-87 In order to control the occupied territory, Morocco constructs immense fortifications constituting a 2 000 kilometre long wall along the Western Sahara and Algeria.

- 1991 In April, Morocco and the Frente Polisario accept the peace plan recommended by the UN. A referendum is planned to decide upon independence or integration into Moroccan sovereign territory, but Morocco does not adhere to its obligations and thwarts the referendum.
- 2004 My first trip to the Saharai refugee camps of Hamada next to Tindouf.
- 2011 After 35 years in exile, the situation with the referendum for self-determination remains unclear and is constantly postponed by international organisations such as the UN.

Appendix VII

Musicians, poets and collaborators for this research

<i>Abdalai Sinima:</i>	Poet from <i>Smara</i>
<i>Ahmed Fadel:</i>	Research assistant from <i>Auserd</i>
<i>Ahmed Larbi:</i>	Translator of Saharai songs into Spanish, from Aiuun, a territory occupied by Morocco
<i>Ahmed Zein:</i>	Guitarist from <i>Auserd</i>
<i>Ali Seibda:</i>	Singer and accordionist from <i>Auserd</i>
<i>Antonio Pomares:</i>	Researcher on Bedouin poetry from Elche, Spain
<i>Bara:</i>	<i>Medhj</i> singer from <i>Auserd</i>
<i>Bepa:</i>	Keyboard player from <i>Smara</i>
<i>Ergueibi:</i>	Singer from <i>Auserd</i>
<i>Fakhla:</i>	<i>Medhj</i> singer from Dakhla
<i>Ibrahim Alibaiba:</i>	Translator of Saharai songs into Spanish, from Aiuun, a territory occupied by Morocco
<i>Jeirana:</i>	<i>Medhj</i> singer from Dakhla
<i>Lualy Lehsan:</i>	Poet from <i>February 27</i>
<i>Mahfri:</i>	Guitarist from <i>Auserd</i>
<i>Mahjuba:</i>	Dancer from <i>Auserd</i>
<i>Manuel Dominguez:</i>	Director from the record label Nube Negra
<i>Mariem Hassan:</i>	Singer from Aiuun, a territory occupied by Morocco
<i>Mohamed Salec:</i>	<i>Tidinit</i> player from <i>Smara</i>
<i>Moraksi:</i>	Singer from Aiuun, a territory occupied by Morocco
<i>Mufid:</i>	Singer from <i>Smara</i>

Nayim Alal:

Salem Mohamed Badi Luely Abdelah:

Salma:

Sidahmed Buyema:

Sweta:

Guitarist from *Smara*

Poet from *Auserd*

Medhj singer from *Auserd*

Keyboard player from *Auserd*

Singer from *Auserd*

Appendix VIII

Authorisation of Nube Negra records to use their information

Madrid, 14 Octubre 2011

Por la presente:

autorizo a Luis Giménez Amorós, con número de estudiante G11G6707 de la Rhodes University, a utilizar las imágenes y las canciones de NUBENEGRA, con fines didácticos e informativos, dentro del marco y trabajos que está desarrollando en su tesis sobre la música Haul.

Para que conste, firmo

Manuel Domínguez
Director
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Glossary

Almoravids:	Berbers who became Muslim after arrival in Trab el Bidan in the 7 th century. They are also referred to as Shanajas.
Arab:	The Arabs in Bedouin societies are seen as warriors who came to Trab el Bidan in the 14 th century, producing a change resulting in the stratified societies.
Ardin:	A harp that comes from Trab el Bidan.
Barm:	Guitar technique with index and thumb.
Barm asaba:	Same guitar technique as barm but with index finger only
Bhor:	Literally means sea but it is used to refer to the musical modes. For instance bhor seinicar (seinicar mode).
Bubisher:	It is believed that bubisher is the only bird in the refugee camps. It is black and white.
Charha:	Typical dance and rythm of fagu mode.
Chawada:	Literally means exorcism but it is an additional mode in Haul.
Chorfa:	Direct descendants of the Prophet and the highest rank of Bedouin stratified societies.
Donsongoni:	A harp that comes from the Wassoulou region, Mali.
El Fen el Asri:	The name for Saharai modern music.
Elmenfaga:	Strumming technique on the guitar and tidinit.
Entamas:	First mode in classical Haul.
Fagu:	Third mode in classical Haul.
Gaaf:	Type of rhyme in poetry, with the structure: A-B-A-B.
Griot:	The name for musician castes in West Africa
Hamada:	Desert where the Saharai refugee camps are located.
Haul:	The name of the traditional music style in Bedouin societies.
Hassaniya:	The language spoken in Trab el Bidan
How dal:	Part of a song where the singer recites certain verses of the Koran, or poetry.
Igagwen:	Musician castes in Trab el Bidan.
Igiw:	Singular of igagwen.
Jeri:	Strumming guitar technique in 6/8 rhythm.
Kamalengoni:	A harp that comes from the Wassoulou region, Mali.
Lamar:	The two melodic strings in the middle of the tidinit.

Kora:	A harp that comes from the Bambara region, Mali.
Kouyate:	A musician caste in Mali.
Lebleida:	Dance and rhythm in fagu.
Leboer:	Fifth mode in classical Haul.
Lebiadh:	Literally means white and described when a song has free tempo.
Lebteit:	Seventh mode in classical Haul.
Lefguea:	Guitar technique with index and middle finger.
Lehrar:	Literally means black and describes a song with regular tempo.
Lyen:	Sixth mode in classical Haul.
Medhj:	Religious songs in Trab el Bidan.
Medra:	Guitar technique to accompany poetry.
Saharai:	The term Saharai is spelt in various ways, such as: Saharwi, Sahrauis, Sahraouian or Saharaoui. I have decided to use the term Saharai because it is the closest to Hassaniya pronunciation, in my personal opinion.
Seinicar:	Second mode in classical Haul.
Serbet:	Dance and rhythm in fagu.
Sgaller:	Fourth mode in classical Haul.
Shanaja:	Shanaja is the short name for Berber Almoravids.
Sor:	Verses from the Koran.
Sudani:	The term commonly used to describe the chawada mode or music related to Sub-Saharan Africa.
Talaa:	Type of rhyme in poetry, with the structure: A-A-A-B.
T'bal:	Percussion instrument from Trab el Bidan made out of acacia tree and goat skin.
Tidinit:	Melodic string instrument from Trab el Bidan made out of acacia tree.
Tichibtin:	The first and last strings of the tidinit.
Tindouf:	Algerian town next to the Saharai refugee camps.
Trab el Bidan:	The name for the Bedouin region which covers five different African countries: Mali, Algeria, Mauritania, Morocco and Western Sahara. This is the region of Hassaniya-speakers.
Znaga:	Name for the last level of old Bedouin stratified societies, consisting of artisans, slaves and musicians.
Zuaia:	Second level of the old Bedouin stratified societies.

