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Reviving Cultural Roots through Music: Exploring the Impact of Moroccan Music on the Moroccan Jewish Community in the Diaspora

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ABSTRACT

Throughout history, music has served as a significant medium for recording diverse narratives and expressing the needs, aspirations, and experiences of individuals and groups. This article examines the multifaceted roles of music within the context of diaspora, focusing specifically on the Moroccan Jewish community. By delving into the experiences of five prominent Moroccan Jewish artists who are members of this community, this study sheds light on the profound ways in which Moroccan music bridges the past and present, reconnects individuals and groups with their sociocultural roots, and firmly affirms both individual and collective identities. Drawing from a qualitative research approach that leverages semi-structured interviews with these prominent Moroccan Jewish artists, this research uncovers how Moroccan music, in its various forms, operates as a powerful tool for asserting identity, transmitting and preserving culture, and ensuring generational continuity within the diaspora. The content analysis of these interviews identifies five main themes that elucidate the intricate roles of music in this context: cultural and emotional connection, cognitive connection, the significance of sonic narratives, the role of textual and linguistic narratives, and the importance of Andalusian and Malhoun music.

Keywords: Diaspora, Moroccan Jewish community, Tamaghrabit, identity, individual and collective narratives.

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1. Introduction

Music, as a subject of study, has garnered significant attention from scholars in various disciplines such as musicology, sociology, anthropology, and psychology due to its multifaceted functions and uses within society. The exploration of music's social roles holds great value as it provides profound insights into societal dynamics, thereby allowing for a better and deeper understanding of

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society. In this regard, Merriam (1964) emphasizes that "the functions and uses of music are as important as those of any other aspect of culture for understanding the workings of society" (p.15). Further, Nettl (2005) asserts that music serves as a cultural product that contributes to the definition of a given society through the roles and functions attributed to it. In this sense, music becomes a "serious sociological business, business which allow as to understand a great deal about society" (Kotarba,2013, p.13). This justifies why researchers, primarily sociomusicologists and ethnomusicologists, have continuously pondered and deliberated on the diverse social roles of music and its impact on individuals and groups in various sociocultural contexts.

This reliance on music as a sociological analytical tool extends beyond the confines of traditional physical borders, encompassing virtual and "displaced" geographies. Notably, scholars have increasingly turned to music as a means to decipher the social dynamics within imagined communities, particularly in the context of diaspora. Within this realm, the exploration of how musical experiences and practices give voice to the social, historical, and cultural commonalities of diasporic subjects, while influencing their negotiation, construction, and maintenance of identity, has been a focal point for numerous inquiries and studies.

Following this perspective, this article delves into the intricate connections between musical performances, identity, and cultural diaspora, using the case study of Moroccan Jews. The overarching aim is to comprehensively grasp the role of music in the formation, execution, and validation of cultural continuity, as well as its contribution to the consolidation of diasporic subjects' sense of belonging and sameness. In alignment with this objective, the significance of music and the act of making music are examined, with an emphasis on their impact on the preservation and expression of a distinct cultural heritage. Zheng (2010) emphasizes that music in the diasporic context plays the role of "a cultural signifier" that yearns for "a sense of cultural belonging" (p.7). Moreover, Rommen (2007) explains that diasporic musical practice and experience "creates a sense of community, commonality, and unity" (p.18). In the same vein, Issa (2023) adds that music stands for content that serves as "a reminder of family and home, of one's individuality, of one's position in a community, and, possibly, in the diaspora, of one's inability to gain complete integration" (p.2). On her part, Shelemay (2006) explains that music and musicking:

Can serve as a space and practice that binds group members together, so that they understand themselves as belonging to each other and maybe even having a specific task or mission to accomplish. Through musicking, emotional, social, and cognitive ties can develop, implying the construction and enactment of a social identity and a social memory where the individual and social are linked (as cited in Lidskog, 2016, p.25)

Therefore, music assumes a pivotal role in facilitating the establishment and cultivation of an imagined homeland by the Moroccan-Jewish diaspora, thereby fostering a profound connection with their sociocultural origins in Morocco. It is important to recognize that this imaginative construct goes beyond a mere representation of cultural diversity, as it encompasses an active and performative endeavor. The Moroccan constitution, reformed in 2011, explicitly recognizes the fusion of various influences, including Arab-Islamic, Amazigh, Andalusian, Hebraic, and Mediterranean, as integral to Morocco's unity, highlighting Morocco's commitment to values such as openness, moderation, tolerance, and dialogue, promoting mutual understanding among different cultures and civilizations worldwide. While the official recognition of the Jewish component of Moroccan identity occurred in 2011, the kings of Morocco have undertaken numerous large-scale initiatives to safeguard religious diversity. Notably, in 2010, under the patronage of king, the House of Life initiative was introduced, aiming to restore 167 Jewish cemeteries across the country. King Mohammed the Sixth expressed his support for this initiative, stating this initiative:

Is a testimony to the richness and diversity of the Kingdom of Morocco's spiritual heritage. Blending harmoniously with the other components of our identity, the Jewish legacy, with its rituals and specific features, has been an intrinsic part of our country's heritage for more than three thousand years. As is enshrined in the Kingdom's new Constitution, the Hebrew heritage is indeed one of the time-honored components of our national identity (Maroc. ma, 2013, para .2).

The present study was guided by three primary research questions, which aimed to provide comprehensive insights into the dynamics of music in relation to Moroccan Jews in diaspora:

1. What types of connections are established and nurtured through music between Jews in diaspora and their Moroccan sociocultural heritage?
2. What are the formal and structural musical components that hold significant meaning for Moroccan Jews, serving as poignant markers of their identity?
3. Which musical genres exhibit stronger connections to the Jewish musical tradition?

To answer these research questions a qualitative design was employed, utilizing interviews as the primary data collection tool. This approach aimed to establish a higher level of closeness, intimacy, and consequently, credibility in the findings. Through content analysis of the transcripts, it was confirmed that music, with its main components of melody, rhythm, and text, plays a significant role in fostering strong connections between the Moroccan Jewish Diaspora and Morocco. Additionally, music contributes to the preservation of cultural continuity across generations.

From a different perspective, this study aims to provide various contributions. Firstly, it is worth noting that despite scholars showing interest in the intersection of music and diaspora, limited efforts have been devoted to this area of study. Slobin (1994) argues that:

No one has formulated a worldwide viewpoint on music in diaspora, most work being done in the United States among "ethnic groups," with more recent efforts being made in Europe to look at "immigrant/guestworker" contexts. Newer work, such as Jay Pillay's,¹ on Indian music in South Africa, is starting to expand the geographic horizon (p.243).

This passage serves to highlight the scarcity of substantial literature on the subject matter. The multifaceted nature of the musical product itself, with its diverse forms encompassing live performances or recordings, secular or religious contexts, and government-funded or privately supported initiatives, adds complexity to the task of scholars in terms of devising suitable strategies and perspectives for approaching the topic (Slobin, 1994). The present article holds substantial scholarly merit by contributing to the advancement of the current body of literature on music in the diaspora, particularly in relation to the unique case of Moroccan Jews residing in Israel. This study enriches the existing scholarship by shedding light on a previously unexplored aspect of the diasporic musical experience, thereby adding value and depth to the field of inquiry.

Furthermore, this study aims to meet the need to explore and understand the role of music in the lives of Moroccan Jews in the diaspora. By examining this role, it seeks to shed light on how music can help reconnect individuals with their socio-cultural origins and preserve their cultural heritage for future generations.

Additionally, the study aims to understand the significance of musical practices and experiences in strengthening the community's sense of Tamghrabit (Moroccanity) and also how this can provide insights into the cultural identity and sense of belonging of the Moroccan Diasporic Jewish community.

Ultimately, through the case study of Moroccan Jews, this study will contribute to a deeper overall understanding of the importance of music in diasporic communities and its impact on cultural continuity and identity.

This article consists of four main parts. The first part is devoted to reviewing literature, specifically the novelties brought by new musicology and ethnomusicology to the field of music studies. It also highlights the relationship between music and the concept of diaspora, with a special focus on the case of Moroccan Jews. Additionally, it includes examples of previous studies on the uses and functions of music in the context of diaspora. The second part covers the methodology, placing emphasis on the method used, sampling and participants, data collection procedures, and data analysis techniques. The third part is dedicated to presenting and discussing the findings that emerged from the research. It provides a comprehensive analysis and interpretations of the data collected, shedding light on the key themes and patterns. It also includes a discussion of the implications of the findings. The fourth part expands the discussion to include policy implications.

2. Literature review and theoretical framework

2.1 Novelties of new musicology and ethnomusicology

Throughout history, music has been examined and understood from diverse epistemological perspectives, encompassing various levels of inquiry. These approaches have spanned the spectrum, ranging from abstract contemplations rooted in philosophy and religion to more empirical analyses

influenced by positivism and interpretivism. As a result, the functions and applications of music have consistently garnered attention across both micro and macro levels of examination. Notably, in the past two centuries, the field of music studies has undergone a revolutionary transformation, leading to paradigmatic shifts in approaches and methodologies. This transformative trajectory has witnessed a departure from traditional theories mainly associated with old musicology, which tended to isolate music from its broader sociocultural milieu. In contrast, contemporary conceptualizations have embraced a more holistic perspective, critically scrutinizing the myriad dimensions of music, whether they are structural or extrinsic, social or cultural, individual or collective in nature. These evolving research dynamics have reshaped the scholarly landscape, enabling a more comprehensive understanding of music's multifaceted significance within diverse contexts.

The field of musical studies has been significantly enriched by the advent of new musicology, which has introduced innovative analytical and cultural approaches that extend beyond the confines of traditional music-centered inquiries. This new approach considers a range of extra musical factors, including ethnicities, immigration, gender, and the postcolonial context. Giffhorn (2009) emphasizes the shift brought about by new musicology, stating that "the truth is no longer embedded exclusively in the piece but in the social environment" (p. 35). In a similar vein, Kramer (2011) posits that the emergence of new musicology reflects a desire to combine aesthetic insights into music with a more comprehensive understanding of its cultural, social, historical, and political dimensions (p. 64). Thus, the objective of this approach is to comprehend the multifaceted meanings of music as a cultural practice (Kramer, 2011, p. 64). This expanded perspective seeks to explore the intricate interplay between music and its sociocultural context, shedding light on the broader social, cultural, and historical significance of musical expressions.

With an expanded scope, ethnomusicology is dedicated to examining the socio-cultural contexts in which music unfolds. Kerman (1985) emphasizes that the core of ethnomusicological inquiry lies in exploring the "entire matrix of extra-musical social and cultural factors which to some extent form music and to some extent are formed by it" (p. 168). Additionally, Rice (2014) defines ethnomusicology as the study of "why, and how, human beings are musical" (p. 1). Similarly, Nettl (2005) presents ethnomusicology as "the study of music in culture" (p. 12). He further elucidates that the central focus of ethnomusicology lies in examining music within its cultural context or as an integral part of culture. Undoubtedly, ethnomusicologists exhibit a profound interest in music as a constituent element of culture. Post (2018) argues that the value added by ethnomusicology becomes apparent through its methodological shift, which encompasses a transition from a primary concern with music and sound to a concentrated focus on socio-cultural contexts. Specifically, ethnomusicology investigates the ways in which music-making influences social formations, constructs identities, and shapes power relations. Through this analytical lens, ethnomusicology contributes to a deeper understanding of the intricate interplay between music, society, and culture.

2.2 Music and the concept of diaspora

Within the realm of unconventional investigations into the functions and applications of music, new musicologists, and particularly ethnomusicologists, have turned their attention to the intricate construct of diaspora. This focus on the interplay between diaspora and music has resulted in noteworthy scholarly interest due to its multifaceted intersections, which incorporate the negotiation, maintenance, and transformation of identity; the perpetuation of generational continuity within diasporic communities; and the expression of social injustices and the reconstruction of collective memories. These intersecting themes underscore the rich and complex relationships between music and the experience of diaspora, offering a fertile ground for scholarly exploration and analysis. The examination of music within the diasporic context provides valuable insights into the multifarious ways in which music functions as a powerful tool for cultural expression, social cohesion, and the negotiation of complex identities.

Within this vision, Bohlman (2002) argues that music has become "a way of explicitly expressing diaspora", embodying the "multiple consciousnesses" that characterize diasporic subjects (p.305). It serves as a conduit for identifying with a specific place, ethnicity, religion, and cultural heritage. Manson (2003), evoking the case of the African sub-Saharan diaspora, elucidates that "music holds a special place in the cultural definition of the African diaspora" (p. 2). Across the globe, the sense of Africanness

is fundamentally articulated through the rich musical heritage of African countries. In the United States, blues and jazz are intrinsically associated with African American music, serving as a means to negotiate dual belonging. These genres also uphold, reinforce and disseminate the original social values of African heritage. Salomon (2015) suggests that music functions as a powerful social "glue", connecting diasporic communities dispersed globally (p. 205). With digital technologies, music solidifies the consciousness of diasporic individuals sharing a common origin but residing in different locations. The pleasurable embodied experience of music, including singing and dancing, facilitates emotional attachments to both the homeland and diasporic compatriots in various host lands. This resonates with Anderson's (2006) concept of imagined communities, which connects individuals and groups with shared cultural and social traditions. These insights underscore the role of music in expressing diasporic experiences, fostering a sense of belonging, and forging connections among dispersed individuals. Music serves as a powerful means of cultural preservation, identity formation, and social cohesion within diasporic communities.

From a purely musicological standpoint, Slobin (1994) affirms that "music is central to the diasporic experience, linking homeland and here-land with an intricate network of sound" (p. 243). It serves as a potent tool for personal and cultural identification. According to Slobin (1994), every element of music, such as the singer's voice, rhythm, melody, tempo, instrumentation, or dance, holds significant meaning in bridging the diasporic reality with the nostalgic longing for the homeland. Each component functions as a cultural bridge, capable of registering individual and collective memories.

2.3 From Arabization to Tamaghrabit

Considering the case of Moroccan Jews, and despite their significant emigration from Morocco to Europe or Israel, the Moroccan Jewish diaspora currently consists of approximately 3000 individuals. They maintain a strong connection with their ancestral homeland through various artistic and cultural practices, both within Morocco itself and among the Moroccan Jewish community in Israel and Europe. The preservation of ties is facilitated through spiritual pilgrimages to Jewish shrines located in Morocco. In Israel, the community revives Moroccan cultural and traditional rituals during their ceremonies. This includes adopting the Moroccan traditional dress, incorporating traditional Moroccan music into their wedding celebrations, and organizing local festivals dedicated to celebrating Moroccan music. Notably, the re-establishment and normalization of diplomatic relations between Morocco and Israel in 2020 served as a significant turning point. It prompted critics and cultural historians to delve deeper into the Jewish aspect of Moroccan identity. This renewed interest in Moroccan identity has culminated in the emergence of the concept known as Tamaghrabit, which encapsulates the essence of Moroccanity.

During the initial years after Morocco gained independence, there was a deliberate effort to foster a unified national identity by promoting the use of Arabic. However, this policy had the unintended consequence of marginalizing the Amazigh language and culture while simultaneously advancing Pan-Arabism. The state-led initiative of Arabization prioritized certain cultural elements over others. In contrast, the concept of Tamaghrabit does not seek to enforce a specific cultural configuration. Instead, it aims to explore, revisit, and unearth the layered and intertwined nature of Moroccan culture, with particular attention given to the Jewish component. This article seeks to amplify the voices of Moroccan-Jewish artists, allowing them to reflect upon and reinterpret the recent cultural and political transformations in Morocco, particularly in the wake of the reestablishment of diplomatic relations with Israel. These artists offer an alternative perspective on the concept of Tamaghrabit, shedding light on their distinct understanding of its implication.

2.4 Previous studies on music in diaspora

Numerous studies have focused on the multifaceted roles of music within diasporic contexts, exploring various dimensions such as identity assertion and the reconstruction of individual and collective narratives and memories. In a first study, Shelemay (2006) examines the significance of musical practices, habits, and experiences as a locus for shared narratives and memories in the Syrian Jewish community of Mexico City. This community actively relies on *pizmonim*, Jewish religious songs, to establish psychological, cultural, and historical connections with their roots. In interviews conducted for the study, participants evocatively referred to "the past in the present as conveyed through music"

(p. 20). Shelemay (2006) explains that in the diasporic context, musical experiences and practices serve as a narrative that transcends time and space, transporting past experiences into the future, depicting a sense of place, childhood memories, and subsequent journeys. This narration holds both individual and collective dimensions, with *pizmonim* serving as a significant marker of individual and collective identities, a sense of locality, and community. Even at the pure musicological level, the use of the *maqam rā'st* in this musical composition, as reported by one of the interviewees, evokes a profound sense of belonging to a place, an era, and a religion, as "*rā'st* is considered to be the father of the *maqamat* and is used in the Syrian Jewish liturgy to set the first portion of four of the Five Books of Moses" (p. 24). Within this diasporic context, music is associated with pivotal roles in psychological, cognitive, and historical reconstruction.

In a second study conducted by Volgsten and Pripp (2016) in Sweden, the potential of music to serve as a reminder of the collective past, encompassing both positive and somber aspects, is once again emphasized within the Kurdish diaspora. The study's interviewees highlighted the psychological, musicological, and cognitive patterns of identification that Kurdish songs, rhythms, instruments, and dances provide. Specifically, this music evoked their somber memories of the atrocities of racism. However, it is equally significant "in other ways such as for the relations among young Kurds in the diaspora, both in Sweden and elsewhere" (Volgsten & Pripp, 2016, p. 155). Hence, this music establishes an affective bond and feelings of togetherness that contribute to the self-articulation of Kurdish identity (p. 156).

In a third study by Lidskog (2016), which presents a meta-analysis of various articles on the uses and functions of music within diasporic communities, it is shown that musical practices play a central role in consolidating, developing, or changing the identities of diasporic groups. Depending on the contexts and nature of the groups, music can primarily create a diasporic consciousness that encompasses collective memories, history, and emotions in both the home and host lands. Additionally, it fosters a sense of cohesion and harmony within a "displaced" community. Lidskog (2016) explains that different musical practices, such as listening and performing, concretely contribute to the articulation of national, cultural, and ethnic identities. Furthermore, they serve as bridges connecting older and newer generations within the diaspora, in terms of history, culture, and social dynamics. At a second level, music can also be used "to renegotiate established identities and belongings" (Lidskog, 2016, p. 9). In other words, through musical experiences and practices, individuals and groups, particularly younger generations, engage in a hybridization process aimed at constructing an adapted identity that acknowledges the duality of the home/host land context. Interestingly, these variations in the uses and functions of music are dialectically linked to variables such as ethnic groups' positions in the diasporic context, musical genres, types of migration (e.g., refugee and labor migrations), and the availability of public spaces for musical performances.

Furthermore, in a different study by Alfonso (2013) that focuses on the Cuban diaspora in London, the tangible impact of music in the diasporic space is demonstrated. This qualitative research provides strong evidence of music's powerful contribution to the overall sense of Cubanness. Most of the interviewees emphasized that Cuban music is perceived as "a generator of nostalgia, as a means to overcome traumatic experiences, and as an incentive for a learning process" about home traditions and culture (Alfonso, 2013, p. 264). This quote intriguingly implies a triple dimension encompassing nationalistic, psychological, and cognitive aspects. Many musical genres, even those considered as new commodified hits and representing "exile" musics, were mentioned, such as mambo, cha-cha-cha, and bolero, serving as cultural references to which Cubans maintain psychological, cultural, and nationalistic connections. Moreover, it is noteworthy that interviewees demonstrated a great interest in exploring the history of their music, particularly the traditional musics of artists like Maria Teresa Vera, Sindo Garay, and Los Zafiros, which further underscores the role of music in connecting diasporic communities to their homeland cultures. At a different level, it is important to highlight that Alfonso (2013) focused more on the individual level in the process of identity formation and change, arguing that "Cubans in London experience diaspora more personally than collectively" (p. 265).

3. Methodology

3.1 Method

This study primarily adopted a qualitative approach, driven by the intention to attentively listen to "the voices of participants" (Creswell & Poth, 2018, p. 83) and comprehend their narratives pertaining to practices and experiences that hold great significance for them. In essence, the researchers aimed to access and interpret the connotations participants ascribe to the uses and functions of a specific communicational medium (music) within the diasporic context. Kumar (2014) elucidates that "the primary focus in qualitative research is to understand, explain, explore, discover, and elucidate the situations, feelings, perceptions, attitudes, values, beliefs, and experiences of a group of people" (p. 595). Furthermore, Creswell (2007) asserts that qualitative research is conducted when the objective is to empower individuals to share their stories, amplify their voices, and minimize the power dynamics that often exist between researchers and study participants (p. 40). The latter quote encapsulates the underlying rationale behind employing the qualitative method: to establish a profound sense of proximity and intimacy with the respondents.

3.2 Sampling

The selection of participants in this study employed a purposive sampling approach. This decision was primarily justified by the recognition that "choosing the purposive sample is fundamental to the quality of data gathered" (Tongco, 2007, p. 147). Additionally, it was motivated by the necessity to engage individuals who fulfill the key-informant criterion. In other words, the nature of the present study necessitated the identification of respondents who possess both knowledge and experience. Etikan et al. (2016) argue that in such cases, "the researcher decides what needs to be known and sets out to find people who can and are willing to provide the information by virtue of knowledge or experience" (p. 2). The primary concern, therefore, is "to identify and select the information-rich cases for the most proper utilization of available resources" (Etikan et al., 2016, p. 2).

Within this framework, five Moroccan Jewish artists were chosen as participants. All of them met the criteria of being well-known, knowledgeable, and experienced. Their artistic backgrounds varied in terms of musical perspectives, with three male singers, one female singer, and a university music researcher included in the sample. The participants represented three different generations of Moroccan Jews residing in Europe and Israel, thus offering a diverse perspective on the diasporic experience.

3.3 Data collection procedures/ instruments

Data collection in this study primarily relied on semi-structured interviews. The utilization of this direct contact was of utmost importance as it facilitated a close and intimate engagement with the participants. Highly emotional phases marked the course of conversations. It is worth pointing out, in this sense, that this approach resulted in rich and insightful discussions that touched upon different levels. From a different perspective, and due to the constraints imposed by the Covid-19 pandemic, all interviews were conducted using the ZOOM communication platform. Prior consent for audio recording was obtained, enabling subsequent meticulous and precise analysis of the data.

3.4 Data analysis

The data evaluation in this study followed an inductive content analysis approach. As described by Elo and Kyngäs (2008), the process of inductive content analysis involves organizing qualitative data by employing open coding, creating categories, and abstraction. In accordance with this perspective, the reactions of the interviewees were transcribed and subjected to repeated readings. The objective at this stage was to identify common patterns in ideas and perceptions. Initial coding was then applied to assign labels to similarities in viewpoints. Subsequently, similar meanings were grouped together into categories, which were further reorganized into major themes. Through this comprehensive process, five main themes emerged and formed the foundation of the final report.

4. Results and discussion

The thematic content analysis of interviews revealed five themes that are related to both the psychological and cultural levels of emotions, cognition, sound, text, and language.

The Cultural and emotional connection

The interviewees conveyed their reactions regarding the multifaceted roles of music in the diasporic context through an abundance of emotionally charged words and phrases. According to their perspectives, music emerges as a powerful and deeply meaningful tool that establishes strong connections between the homeland and the host land. It serves as a means to preserve, reinforce, and transmit their identities and cultural roots, while also ensuring the continuity of parental and generational heritage over time. The interviewees used impactful language to depict the remarkable significance of music, employing terms such as nostalgia, identity, reminder, joy, sadness, reconnection, blood, and DNA:

Participant 1: as a Moroccan Jew, I think that music has an extraordinary role, it is what brings us back to our roots all the time...when I come to sing in a Jewish wedding, there are no longer Moroccans who were born in Morocco, there are only their sons currently.... so what do their sons need? ...they need nostalgia... so when I will sing a passage from Malhoun music, *Ana L' kaoui*, for example, or another song like, *Bent Bladi*, they will remember their grandparents, and for them, to feel close to their parents, they have to listen to music, and this the power of music, they will be happy, they will say "ah! You remind me of my grandmother, you remind me of my grandfather"

Participant 2: music in diaspora is our history...and our history does not exist in writings, because the history is written by the victors not by the vanquished, and we lost, people of diaspora have lost a lot of things so we reconnect our families, our grandparents through music, and we read our history through the lens of music ... when I sing, I am feeling the history of my roots, my blood my DNA.... it is not something that I can read when I open a book (crying)

Participant 2: what was important for me was not only to search for my musical traditions and to preserve my culture, but to make it an integral part of my life, of my present and also of my future.

Participant 3: having the Jewish music, here, and having it presented as Jewish, there in Israel, is already a huge thing, right... and I think that, in Israel, Moroccan music is such an important part because there is such a huge Moroccan Jewish community there, and the big aspect of Moroccan cultural identity has to do with music.

Participant 5: In Israel, I notice sometimes, when consulting Facebook, a very young child who is just 10, 11, or 12 years old who was not born in Morocco, and even his parents were not born here, and he sings Moroccan music.... he sings the *Moual*, popular songs and everything, and he does not speak Arabic, but he sings in Arabic.

The statements from the participants collectively reveal the profound impact of music in the diasporic context for Moroccan Jews. Music serves as a powerful tool for connecting individuals to their cultural roots, evoking nostalgia, and bridging generational gaps. It is viewed as a means of reclaiming and understanding history, providing a tangible link to personal and communal heritage. Moroccan music holds a central place within the cultural identity of the diaspora, transcending linguistic and religious boundaries, and serving as a source of pride and empowerment. These narratives highlight the transformative and unifying role of music in preserving traditions, fostering a sense of belonging, and shaping the individual and collective experiences of the Moroccan Jewish diaspora.

The Cognitive connection

From the perspective of participants, music serves as a cognitive link that connects Moroccan Jews to their sociocultural roots and fosters a shared artistic narrative across different generations of the diaspora residing in various geographic locations. This role of music is manifested through educational settings for the transmission and acquisition of Moroccan Jewish musical traditions, as well as official and professional musical events such as festivals. Additionally, music plays a significant role in personal and familial contexts, particularly during celebrations such as *Hanna*, *Aquikah*, and weddings. Through these diverse contexts, music contributes to anchoring the musical heritage of Moroccan Jews within their collective memory and consciousness in the diaspora, as illustrated by the following statements:

Participant 4: In Israeli conservatoires, the Moroccan music is taught...the Moroccan music in general, the Moroccan *Matrouz* and the Andalusian music sometimes.... there are even courses on some Moroccan traditional musical instruments like "tar", used mainly in the Andalusian music.

Participant 4: each year, more than 200 concerts of Moroccan music are organized in Israel...the aim of these concerts is the preservation of the Moroccan musical patrimony.

Participant 2: there are private schools and also other institutions... in Al Quds university, there is a student of *Ninou Piton* who has founded a department for the Moroccan Andalusian music... there are also teachers of Andalusian music who founded private schools, like the one in Messrara and Jerusalem where *Edaad Levy*, the violin player, and *Omri Mor*, the pianist, offer lessons.

Participant 3: in Israel, there are so many conservatoires in which the Moroccan music is taught... and there are also concerts, not only those great concerts, but also each night, each Saturday night, in cafés, there are musicians who play Moroccan popular songs... Moroccan songs of *Abdoulouhab Doukkali*, *Abdelhadi Belkhiat*, *Naima Samih*, ... there are cities like Ashdod where there are many Moroccans ... And each night Moroccan music is played. In addition to this, in weddings, there is the Hanna ceremony, and it is celebrated by Moroccan songs, traditional dress, the *Jellaba*, *Tarbouch* and the *Kaftan*... and there are also many orchestras, there is even the Andalusian orchestra.

The cognitive function of music in the diaspora is further facilitated through institutional configurations. In the context of Israel, orchestras have emerged as particularly effective platforms for the performance, instruction, and preservation of Moroccan music, especially the Andalusian genre, ensuring its transmission to future generations. Notably, this transmission process is characterized by a dynamic process of renewal, as the music is creatively fused with diverse global styles. The respondents articulated that this approach aims to captivate and engage the newer diasporic generations, specifically the second and third generations:

Participant 2: yes, because 20 or 30 years ago, they have founded a big Andalusian orchestra, and later on, another one, and now, we have three Andalusian orchestras: one in Ashdod, another one in Jerusalem under the direction of Tom Cohen, and a third orchestra in the north... they do not play the Andalusian music like in Morocco, they make a lot of fusion in order to attract the new audience, but it is still Andalusian and it is directed by Moroccans.

Participant 2's statement highlights the establishment and growth of multiple Andalusian orchestras over the past few decades. The presence of three Andalusian orchestras, located in Ashdod, Jerusalem, and other regions, refers to the significance and popularity of this genre within the Moroccan Jewish diaspora in Israel. However, it is worth noting that these orchestras incorporate fusion elements in their performances, aiming to appeal to a wider audience while maintaining their Andalusian essence. This fusion approach represents an intentional adaptation to contemporary musical tastes and preferences, while still being led and managed by individuals of Moroccan heritage. The statement underscores the evolution and adaptability of Andalusian music within the diaspora, reflecting an effort to bridge tradition and modernity.

The Sonic narrative specificity

When exploring the musical elements that foster a sense of connection to Moroccan cultural roots among Moroccan Jews, participants emphasized the significance of rhythm as a prominent marker of their Moroccanity. Specifically, they identified the rhythmic patterns of 6/8 and 12/8, which are characteristic of Moroccan music, along with the syncopated rhythm of 5/4, as integral components of their diasporic Moroccan identity. The 6/8 and 12/8 structures are primarily associated with Moroccan Chaabi music (popular music) and contemporary genres that have prevailed from the period of independence until the present day. On the other hand, the 5/4 structure is closely linked to Malhoun music and its distinctive *Guebbahi* structure. The participants' evocation of their attachment to these specific rhythmic patterns concretely highlights their musical Tamaghrabit, and also emphasizes the importance they attribute to maintaining Moroccan cultural heritage within the context of diaspora.

Participant 2: the first thing that is stimulated in my mind is rhythm, it is different. Here, in the middle east, all music is always based on a 4/4 rhythm... but from the first moment I start working on the Moroccan music, I rapidly understood the rhythm ... it is the 6/8 rhythm ... it was in my blood, I directly recognized it, no one taught it to me, I only listened to *el bendir* and it came out naturally... and I think that this related to my childhood, I was educated on and I grew up with that rhythm, so this is the first musical aspect.

Participant 3: I think that it is the rhythm, yes... I do think that there is something about the polyrhythms, the syncopations, and the cycles of five and four and seven, of five -two, five -three, seven, you know... these forms and cycles with multiple rhythmic aspects, this way of building rhythm on top of each other that does not happen, for example, in the music of the Americans or the British...

I think that, here, rhythm is more important...here, you have to have the rhythm, right, you have to have it.

It is noteworthy to acknowledge that the rhythmic structures mentioned above are not exclusive to Moroccan music but can also be found in other global musical traditions, particularly in Latin America and the Arab Gulf. However, what distinguishes the Moroccan variations is the specific distribution of weak and strong beats. Additionally, the instrumentation employed in playing these rhythmic patterns is unique, with distinct percussion instruments such as the *derbouka*, *tar*, and *Bendir*. These instrumental choices further contribute to the distinctiveness of Moroccan rhythms and their magical specificity in shaping the Moroccan musical identity within the diaspora.

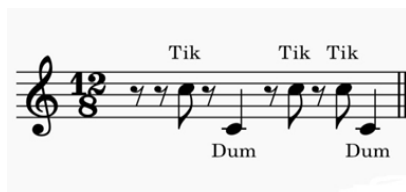
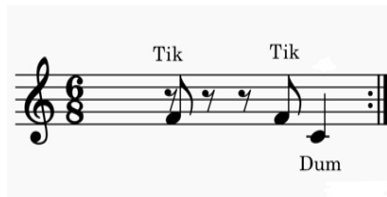


Figure 1: The 6/8 and its Extension rhythmic structure 12/8 with distribution of Weak and Strong beats:
Tik: the weak beak
Dum: the strong Beat

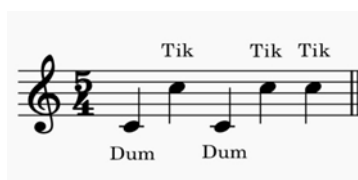
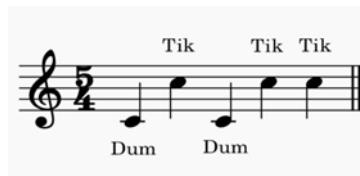


Figure 2: The two version of Guebbahi

On another note, the interviewed artists also highlighted melody as a significant element in shaping the Moroccan Jewish musical identity. They specifically referred to renowned songs from Malhoun and Chaabi music as prime examples of melodies that deeply resonated with previous generations and continue to captivate and inspire present-day audiences. These melodies are regarded as enduring symbols of cultural heritage and serve as vehicles for connecting generations within the Moroccan Jewish diaspora.

Participant 1: Ah, it depends, real Moroccans, generations that left Morocco... it is the melody and lyrics... if you sing for them *Ana L 'Kaoui...* aye aye, or *Bent Bladi...* this melody that rocked them, it

is nostalgia... then, for the second generation who did not grow up in Morocco but have Moroccan parents... for them, it is only the melody because this latter will bring them back... for the diaspora in all over the world, once Jews listen to these musics, they are rocked, and they are brought back.

Participant 5: yes, all these, it is normal, we start with music, we start with rhythm... and the melody, why, because these melodies... I sing them in Hebrew, and I sing them in Arabic... it is the melody that ... it is the melody that I build everything on...

In particular, the term "shgouri" was consistently used to denote melodies or the distinct "Jewish" musical mode that exemplifies Jewish creativity in Moroccan music. It is noteworthy to emphasize that the shgouri style predominantly encompasses ornamentation techniques that refine the fundamental minor mode. Typically, this ornamentation involves alterations, such as the addition of a sharp to the 4th and 7th degrees of the minor mode.

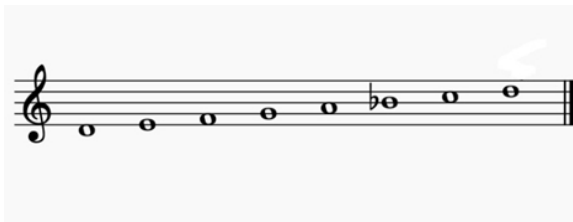


Figure 3 : Mode re (D) Ionian minor

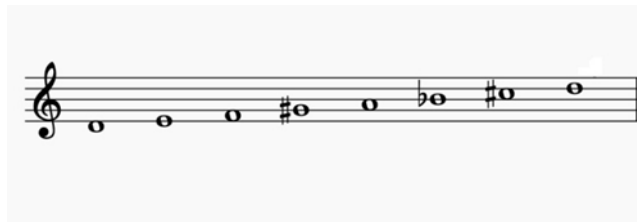


Figure 4: Mode shgouri on the re (D) Ionian minor

Two of the interviewees elaborated on this sense of ornamentation explaining that:

Participant 1: the shgouri style refers to the Moroccan song with the Jewish touch and taste, which means that the Jew adds his own seasoning ... so well call this shgouri.

Participant 3: ornamentation is different, which I think, and as I have written about, represents this aspect of creativity... right. It is like the embroidery that was applied to the *Kaftan*, which was the Jewish embroidery... well, then, it is the same... there is a vocal embroidery, a Jewish vocal embroidery... and it is not the melody, the melody is still there, it is the way Jewish musicians ornament it... this has to do with one of the functions of Jewish musicians in Moroccan society... which I think is about showing their creativity... that there is an element of Jewish creativity that is performed by Jewish musicians within the larger Moroccan society.

The textual / linguistic narrative

The interviewees highlighted the significance of song lyrics as narratives that portray Moroccan Jewish traditions and history. These lyrics were regarded as powerful indicators of identity and as repositories of individual and collective consciousness. The use of Moroccan Arabic (*Darija*) and Amazigh dialects (such as *Tachelhit*) in these texts serves as a poignant reminder of the memories, parental influences, and the diverse multicultural and multilingual landscape of Morocco:

Participant 1: The public just responded by saying: "talk to us in Arabic, we need to hear this language that rocked us, we grew up with this language" ... so this is a part that we do not want to be separated from... and we cannot be separated from it... it is so beautiful and it is our heritage, we grew up with it, and we are proud of it.

Participant 3: I think that of one the ways societies have built identity throughout thousands of years is through songs.

Participant 2: the second musical aspect is our language, our words... my grandmother spoke *tachelhit*, her Arabic was full of *tachelhit*, it was the accent of the mountains, with an intonation that included musicality.

Participant 2: and when they saw me singing... they listened intently. It reminded them of their parents... they cried... music brings them back to their memories, their childhood, their parents... and this is natural since this is the language of their grandparents... and sometimes, this happens when I only use Moroccan Arabic words: *labass alikoum* (are you well?), *achkhbarkoum* (how are you doing?) ... they are happy.

These statements provide insights into the profound impact of music and language on the Moroccan Jewish identity. Participant 1 emphasizes the deep connection between the Arabic language and the Jewish cultural heritage, expressing pride and a desire to remain inseparable from this linguistic tradition. Participant 3 highlights the historical role of songs in shaping identity within societies throughout history. Participant 2 underscores the significance of language, specifically the use of

Tachelhit and Moroccan Arabic, in preserving ancestral connections and invoking nostalgic memories. The experiences of these participants demonstrate how music and language serve as powerful conduits, evoking emotions and fostering a sense of belonging. This is evidenced by the heartfelt reactions of the audience, which signify the psychological and cognitive process of reviving shared cherished memories.

The Andalusian / Malhoune musics' significance

The interviewees' responses conveyed a notable admiration and appreciation for Moroccan music, with specific genres consistently mentioned. Participants referred to the Andalusian music, Gharnati, Malhoune, Chaabi, and Moroccan contemporary music. Various song titles, such as "*Bent Bladi*," and "*Ana L'Kaoui*," and artists, such as "*Bent Bladi*," "*Ana L'Kaoui*," *Abdelouhab Doukkali*, *Abdelhadi Belkhiat*, *Naima Samih*, *Briouel*, *Sami Al Maghribi*, *Albert Suissa*, and *Sanae Mrahati*, were cited. The Andalusian and Malhoune genres hold particular significance due to their association with familial ceremonies, official events, and religious rituals in synagogues. The importance attributed to these genres stems from their historical prominence within the Sephardic community at large:

Participant 1: The Andalusian music, for example, we sang it for more than 200 years, and we will sing it again for more than 200 years.

Participant 2: when I come to sing at a Jewish wedding, there are no longer Moroccans who were born in Morocco... there are only their sons... so what do their sons need? They need nostalgia.... so when I sing a passage from Malhoune music, like *Ana L' Kaoui*, for example, they will remember their grandparents.

Participant 4: all of our prayer songs are based on Andalusian music and Gharnati melodies.

Participant 5: I discussed this with Mr. Briouel the first time we met. I told him that there are some melodies from Andalusian music that we use in *Al Amdah* ... I did this when I was very young. I would go to the synagogue each Friday night at 3 am in the morning to sing. I would sing Andalusian pieces accompanied by Malhoune music from 3 am am to 7 am.

The strong inclination towards Andalusian music and Malhoune was expressed by the interviewees, who openly conveyed their concern for the preservation of these "cultural" genres by suggesting various measures. For example, one participant proposed the establishment of dedicated radio stations that exclusively broadcast these genres:

Participant 4: we do not have specific radio stations for culture. For example, a specialized station for Andalusian music where you can exclusively listen to this music ... where they will talk about it, about the *Noubas*. This is what I have been criticizing for years... another station for Malhoune where they will discuss a specific *Kssida*, when it was written, and who recorded it.

Another participant brought attention to the relative neglect of these two "original" genres in Moroccan television programs, prompting a call for increased attention and recognition:

Participant 1: They are not put in the front of the scene.... The entire Moroccan heritage is not given attention ... if we want to listen to the Moroccan original music, with its Moroccan roots, we have to wait for Ramadan... this is when we start to listen to the Andalusian music and Malhoune.

The testimonies presented in the previous section provide unequivocally confirm the vital roles that music plays for Moroccan Jews in the diaspora. These roles include its significant potential as a cognitive, psychological, and sonic vehicle for recalling individual and collective pasts, memories, and sociocultural roots. The profound impact of musical practices and experiences in the diasporic context was eloquently expressed through the poignant words, phrases, and sentences articulated by Moroccan Jewish artists who participated in this study. Notably, the participants perceived their Moroccan music, whether it is Andalusian music, Malhoune, or Chaabi, as a space for emotional and psychological encounters that facilitate sociocultural reconnection. Specific songs such as *Bent Bladi* and *Ana L'kaoui* were invoked as possessing a remarkable power to bridge the gap between the past and present while also ensuring cultural continuity across generations. This resonates with Shelemay's (2006) study, in which *pizmonim* was recognized as a song typology that brings forth the past into the present, narrating and celebrating individual and collective memories and stories. Consequently, this transcendence of conventional notions of place and time creates an imagined cultural comfort zone fueled by musical nostalgia.

Furthermore, participants' understanding of the cognitive roles of music in the diaspora aligns with the findings of Alfonso's (2013) regarding the educational functions of diasporic music.

Accordingly, musical practices and experiences, whether in the form of concerts, courses, or newly created songs, serve as tangible mechanisms for presenting, celebrating, teaching, and perpetuating home musical traditions, myths, and social values. Drawing from Alfonso's (2013) study on diasporic Cuban music in London, where exiled Cubans were encouraged not only to passively listen to their music but also to actively explore its origins and traditions with explicit learning objectives, the teaching of Moroccan music in Israeli conservatoires and its prominent presence in festivals and familial events serve to celebrate its cultural transmission and ensure its continuous cognitive presence in the consciousness of Moroccan Jews living in Israel and the wider diaspora. The objective is thus to guarantee cultural transmission, enabling the perpetuation of Moroccan Jewish musical traditions from one generation to another.

From a different perspective, it is striking how participants attribute particular value to musicological aspects, particularly melody and rhythm, as potent markers of both personal and musical identities. The sense of Tamaghrabit, specifically, finds expression through rhythmic patterns such as 6/8, 5/4, or 2/4, and melodies found in Andalusian, Chaabi, Malhoun, or Shgouri songs. This sonic identification affirms Shelemay's (2006) conclusion that the ra'st Makam functions as a tonal representation of a place, time, and even a religion. Furthermore, it aligns with the findings of Volgsten and Pripp (2016), who established tangible personal and sonic identifications between the Kurdish diaspora and the rhythms, melodies, instrumentation, and dances of their homeland. Moreover, song lyrics equally serve as potent identity markers. The use of language, represented by Tamazight and *Darija* in the present study, along with the content they convey, encompasses a shared set of ideas, values, and morals. In this sense, the lyrics symbolize a sociocultural adhesive that unites individuals and groups within the same diaspora, even when dispersed across different geographical areas. Songs such as *Bent Bladi* or *Ana L'kaoui* exemplify this role, akin to the significance of *pizmonim* songs for the Syrian Jewish community in Mexico City.

5. Contributions and policy implications

This study highlighted the significant role of music in reconnecting Moroccan Jews in the diaspora to their sociocultural roots and, thus, to their Tamaghrabit. It tangibly confirmed the emotional, cognitive and sonic impact of Moroccan, rhythms, melodies and language on their individual and collective identities. The study also demonstrated how Music can bridge the past, present, and future by ensuring cultural generational continuity. Familial, institutional, and educational contexts and uses were shown to play fundamental roles in this regard. Furthermore, the findings incorporated the strong need for the preservation of Moroccan musical heritage through the establishment of many mechanisms. One such mechanism is the creation of specialized radio and TV channels that would exclusively broadcast Moroccan authentic music.

These conclusions suggest the need to implement numerous measures. Firstly, Moroccan TV and radio channels are encouraged to ensure a significant presence of Moroccan authentic music, including Andalusian music, Malhoun, and shgouri in their programming. Secondly, Moroccan policy makers, particularly in the field of education, are urged to incorporate the teaching of Moroccan music into the curricula of different educational levels, with clear learning objectives. This integration should not be limited to local institutions and teachers within Morocco but also extend to teachers working in cultural missions abroad and through partnerships with other countries. By taking these steps, policy makers can raise awareness and promote cultural transmission among younger generations, ensuring the continuity of Moroccan musical traditions, both within Morocco and in the diasporic context. Thirdly, it is recommended that the Moroccan authorities and institutions responsible for organizing musical events, particularly festivals, whether held in Morocco or abroad, prioritize the inclusion of Moroccan authentic music, including the Jewish component, in their vision. By adopting this strategy, these events can play a crucial role in ensuring the continuity and transmission of Moroccan musical heritage.

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