Ethnomusicology Forum
Vol. 14, No. 2, November 2005, pp. 185–211

Routledge
Taylor & Francis Group

Open Borders. Tradition and Tajik Popular Music: Questions of Aesthetics, Identity and Political Economy

Federico Spinetti

The fundamental theme to be addressed in this article is the relation between musical styles and cultural identities in Tajikistan. Specifically, I am interested in how changing practices and metaphors in Tajik musical history have engaged local and Russian, Western or other foreign cultures in a complex dynamic of representation of selfhood and otherness. Processes of assimilation, indigenization, appropriation and differentiation will be central to my examination. Initially, I will look at the ways in which Soviet and post-Soviet official ideologies have articulated discourses about musical tradition and the national self in Tajikistan. This serves as a backdrop against which developments in Tajik popular music over the last two decades may be assessed. The main focus will be then on discussing aesthetic, economic and identity issues in Tajik popular music in the context of contrasting centralized and decentralized social ideologies.

Keywords: Tajikistan; Tradition, Authenticity and Ideology; Popular Music; Post-Soviet Economy of Music; Identity

Europeanization and nation-building are generally acknowledged as being the main characteristics of Soviet intervention in Central Asian music.[1] Both were crucial to implementing Soviet-led modernization, and, in music as in other aspects of social life, European culture was expected (according to ethnocentric, perhaps colonialist paradigms) to *lead* the development of the Soviet people, while nation-building was envisaged as a means to *root* them in the cultural and political frameworks essential

Federico Spinetti is a PhD student in Ethnomusicology at the School of Oriental and African Studies, London. His thesis examines Tajik musical life with a focus on musicians from the Kulob region of Southern Tajikistan. Key issues addressed are the construction of cultural and social identities in music and their relation to political discourses of nationalism and regionalism in post-Soviet Tajikistan. Email: federicospinetti@inthemiddleofasia.com

ISSN 1741-1912 (print)/ISSN 1741-1920 (online)
DOI: 10.1080/17411910500329971

for modern societies to be built. In Tajikistan, as in all the other Central Asian republics, Europeanization has entailed both the installation of European art music and the reformulation of local musics according to European models. These were arguably bound to remain two distinct and ultimately conflicting processes, as the latter came to be identified with the construction of 'national culture'.

Two aspects of nation-building in music may be worth emphasizing. First, traditional musics were transformed into national monuments in order to comply with Soviet internationalism.[2] This entailed standardization to ensure compatibility with, and inclusion within, a monolithic Soviet culture. The adoption of standardized European performance modalities thus enabled local musics to find a place among their peers in the parade of national heritages of the USSR, and to join the large-scale cultural engineering that was triumphantly displayed at inter-national festivals. Here, Europeanization followed less evolutionist dictates than political strategies aimed at weaving the nations into an inter-national Soviet community. Compatibility among musical cultures was also brought about by the transportation of (reformed) instruments from one "national" culture to another. These operations have affected local perceptions very significantly: for instance, lutes such as the Azeri-Iranian *târ* and the Turkish-Kurdish *sâz* are nowadays considered by most Tajik musicians to be part of their native musical culture.

Second, local musical practices were expected to mobilize newly constructed national identities, so it was important that their reformulation should not go so far as to erase the distinction between European and national musics. This implied that, within the process of modernization, Europeanization was as much *limited by* as indispensable for nation-building. It is significant that the injection of European art music into the repertoire of musicians trained in traditional instruments (as was the case with the music named *akademik*)[3] has had, in fact, very limited impact, although its effects are still tangible in the performance attitudes of a number of contemporary Tajik musicians. In particular, it has not broken down the conceptual divide running between European music proper and national (*millī*) Europeanized music. As national demarcation became the primary purpose of local elites, occasional (Moscow-led) attempts at sweeping away all traditional forms and implementing outright assimilation (*slianie*) proved short-lived and were eventually abandoned.[4] Nationalities were clearly bound to stay and rapprochement (*sblizhenie*) was the only realistic policy which remained at the forefront.[5]

Field and Habitus

One particularly productive way of looking at Soviet aesthetics in Tajikistan may be derived from the concept of *field* introduced by Pierre Bourdieu.[6] According to this reading a number of musical practices came to be positioned as relational units forming a constellation of mutually defining spheres (i.e. a *field*), such that their differentiating signs *resided* in musical features but *drew their meaning* from ideological priorities, aesthetics thus being linked explicitly to politics. The particular

relevance of traditional music to the process of nation-building concerns the gradual overlapping of the notions of "traditional" (*an'anavī* or *sunnatī*) and "national" (*millī*) which largely catalysed representations of the national self,[7] thereby marking off the "traditional" from two other major musical components within the aesthetic *field*: European classical music and pop music. The latter was and remains today placed under the label *Estrada*.[8]

Given the all-embracing aspirations of Soviet state supervision, it is no wonder that *Estrada* also fell into the orbit of the institutions in Tajikistan and began to receive educational and financial support from the State.[9] Both European art music and pop music have contributed to discourses about the prestige of the nation due either to the high status assigned to the former or the modernity heralded by the latter, but none has been essential to structuring national identity: they were not *millī*, and they have arguably remained steadily perceived as Europe-derived and perhaps Europe-oriented traditions. Among the restricted circle of Tajik composers of European art music, some turned their hands to fusing this with traditional musics. But, to judge from the reception history of such works, it seems that they have been stubbornly assigned to one sphere or the other and have not attained a full integration in the eyes of the public. Fattoh Odinaev's orchestral *Falak* provides an example of this situation. As it drew considerable musical material from the folk genre *falak*,[10] it lay on the borderline between European art and traditional musics; however, instead of achieving their desired amalgamation, it has increasingly attracted the attention of traditional musicians as an erudite elaboration of traditional music, while being confined to marginality in the field of symphony music. Whereas the first recording of this orchestral piece was made in Moscow by the Symphonic Cinematographic Orchestra of the USSR in 1973, subsequent recordings (1987, 1993) were conducted by orchestras of traditional instruments only and, recently, by a major traditional ensemble of the Tajik State Radio, the Daryo Ensemble (2000). Thus official cultural policy too seems to have opted for assigning Odinayev's *Falak* to the domain of traditional music.[11]

It may reasonably be argued that in Tajikistan the defining markers of traditional music include indigenous elements but add to them others which do not originate from local musical practices. A certain credit should be accorded to the official establishment in these matters, since it has long had a pervasive influence on the value systems of the former Soviet republics. Current official policy places great importance on instrumentation as a marker of national culture. However, the range of instruments may be broad enough to include the Turkish *sâz* or the *dutor-bass*.[12] Additionally, although it is evident that playing Mozart on a *rubob* by no means transforms Mozart into an *ustod* at the court of Bukhara, traditional repertoires may variously incorporate non-local features which are perceived more often than not as being integral parts of tradition. These may include aspects of harmonization, large ensemble performance and temperament. Arrangements may be also strongly influenced by compositional and performance techniques which have been disseminated by institutional music education.

It may thus be worth insisting that virtually no aspect of Tajik traditions has remained unaffected by the 70-year-long history of the Soviet Union. To regard "local" and "Soviet" practices as distinct (even oppositional) might be to neglect the extent to which Sovietism has been part of local people's lives, permeating social and aesthetic dispositions to the point of becoming integral.[13] These considerations have a certain weight in relation to the meaning of "post-Soviet" in the study of contemporary Tajik musical life.[14] It appears plausible to contend that "post" may be less close to "beyond" or "despite" (evidence strongly suggests that it can hardly mean "against" either) than "after", in a historical sense which contemplates both fractures and persisting traces. It is clear that Sovietism has been more about a cultural alignment involving a wide range of social relationships and conceptual categories than a straightforward ideological profession. By saying this, I mean to draw attention to the internalized dispositions marked by Sovietization, a Soviet *habitus* as it were, rather than to the variety of opinions individuals and groups may have about Bolshevism or the Soviet Socialist cause.[15] The Soviet aesthetic *habitus* has shaped to a large degree the assumptions according to which contemporary Tajik musicians and audience alike identify "tradition" in music. On the one hand, these assumptions include a number of aesthetic paradigms which did not belong to the pre-Soviet period. On the other, musical culture has been disposed into a *field* of categories where the discrimination between European and national musics is paramount.

Post-Tradition

Given the current feebleness of European classical music in Tajikistan, it is traditional and pop musics that are presently catalysing the scope of aesthetic debate. Official attitudes conceive *Estrada* and *musiqi-i sunnatt* as distinct categories and unrelated practices, no matter that pop performances may be regarded as "Tajik pop" (*Estrada-i Tojik*) or occasionally feature traditional instruments. However, given the centrality of nation-(re)building in current Tajik politics,[16] we find, possibly against expectations, that pop music is being recruited alongside traditional music in defining the nation in ways which are indebted to the Soviet paradox of constructing nationhood through the unresolved tension between assimilation to and differentiation from Europe. As a matter of fact, an official policy is being pursued whereby national culture is being *mobilized* towards modernity by promoting pop music and *asserted* by isolating it from pop music. On the one hand, official concerts to date typically display this *mélange* and may stage in sequence the Shashmaqom Ensemble, the latest house-beats of Parvina Shukrulloeva, a solo-voice *falak* of the mountains, a break-dance team going acrobatic and a young student of the Art Institute singing the main theme from *Titanic*. On the other, performers in traditional music are instructed to use exclusively national instruments (*sozho-i millī*), as President Rahmonov has recommended in a recent appeal to the artistic community addressing the integrity of national culture.

Alongside the legacy of Soviet *habitus*, new trends have emerged in post-Soviet Tajikistan, which seem to be offering readjustments of inherited conceptual and practical frameworks. Two such innovative attitudes are in my view particularly significant. One (which is only briefly introduced here) concerns a number of musicians who wish to recuperate pre-Soviet musical practices, including individual or small-ensemble performance and non-tempered pitch material. This is the case of musicians such as Abduvalt Abdurashidov (head of the Shashmaqom Ensemble at the State Radio and lately appointed director of the Academy of Shashmaqom in Dushanbe) and Davlatmand Kholov (head of the Falak Ensemble at the State Radio), two outstanding figures of Tajik classical music and South Tajik mountain music respectively. Although these musicians may partially comply with the aesthetic paradigms of Sovietized traditional music, they are certainly also giving new weight to a perception of how Soviet intervention has significantly affected or broken with local practices. Both Abdurashidov and Kholov have been strongly influenced by the curriculum within Soviet institutions, which complemented the musical education they received through traditional one-to-one transmission. Although their current nativist attitude does not seem to be a straightforward reaction to their background but may represent the outcome of aesthetic debates that had begun already in Soviet music institutions, it has found opportunities to develop further in the cultural climate of post-Soviet Tajikistan. The re-evaluation of tradition which these musicians embody is, I argue, a peculiarly contemporary process related to important issues in current Tajik cultural politics. In addition to an emphasis on nationalism in the wake of independence, these issues also include responses to the concerns of ethnomusicologists for the integrity of native musical practices, to the marketing of traditional music on the world music circuit and to initiatives for the support of artistic activities in Central Asia such as those promoted by the Aga Khan Trust for Culture.[17]

A second emerging trend may be exemplified through focusing on, among others, the singer Gulchehra Sodiqova (b. 1942) and her family. In particular, Gulchehra's four sons, all professional musicians who have been active in Dushanbe over the last ten years, offer a range of perceptions and practices suggestive of a phase of transformation towards a synthesis of traditional and pop musics.[18] Gulchehra is largely acknowledged as being one of the major upholders of traditional music. Her repertoire includes *falak*s and other, related genres which belong to the rural musical traditions of the region of Kulob (South Tajikistan).[19] She usually performs accompanied by a single *dumbra* (small two-stringed long-necked lute) or by a small ensemble of traditional instruments. All members of her family have become deeply acquainted with the traditional idiom of Kulob thanks to her expertise, and have also cultivated mixings of traditional and pop musics. They employ instruments such as *ghijak* (spike-fiddle), *doyra* (frame-drum) and *dumbra* alongside synthesizer, drum-machine and electric violin, their compositions and arrangements typically integrating features of Kulobi music (principally rhythms, melodic contour and vocal style) with harmonic progressions and bass lines that derive largely from pop

music.[20] Lately, Gulchehra Sodiqova has been persuaded to move from Kulob to Dushanbe with a view to profiting from the lively professional opportunities offered by the city. As a result, she is actively participating in the recordings and performances of her sons, including reworking her own repertoire and that of her late husband (the *ghijak* player Dostī Orzuev) into synthesized music. It appears that the trajectory of this fusion venture, which has also involved a number of other Tajik musicians, has its roots in the 1980s, when synthesizers were first being largely adopted to play music at weddings. At the time, much of the wedding repertoire was often transferred altogether onto the multi-track, orchestral capability of the new medium and, initially at least, synthesizers tended to supersede all other instruments. However, I have been informed that during the 1990s traditional instruments were increasingly reintroduced and regained their former importance. Wedding music has gradually provided the breeding ground for experiments with new combinations of traditional and pop instruments as well as idioms.[21]

It seems reasonable to argue that the interpenetration of traditional music, new technologies and musical idioms other than the traditional is having the effect of expanding, without fracturing, the very notion of "tradition". Traditional music is being understood and practised in more flexible ways than any assumption of bounded musical systems might predict. The perspective of Gulchehra's son Muhammadvalī Orzuev (b. 1972) is particularly instructive in this respect. He holds the view that, in much the same way that *falak* had been developed over the years into, say, six or seven types (*ravya*, lit. 'pathway'), new types are now being worked out. He points to a perception of continuity whereby musical material drawn from pop music may be appropriated without any sense of rupture (interview February 2003). Clearly, there is an emphasis on foregrounding specific aesthetic markers that enable the retention of the notion of tradition. However, evidence suggests that such markers are variable and may range from prominent elements such as the song form or the changes of register peculiar to the traditional *falak* to mere quotations of its typical instrumental interludes or vocal style. Sodiq Kholov, a singer who collaborates with Gulchehra's family on a regular basis (b. 1972), goes so far as to have in his repertoire an electrified *falak* in which a 5/4 rhythm and long drawn-out vocal cadences are the only elements retained. It is the perception of insiders that these are still sufficient to maintain *falak* identity.[22]

This raises important questions about the grounds upon which perceived continuity may rely. The relation between the music under discussion and traditional music may be less productively assessed by examining the extent to which it complies with 'the system of traditional music' than by emphasizing that it re-functionalizes elements of it. An important aspect of this process is that the perceived need for continuity is articulated by a selection of signifiers which form new paradigmatic relations: units which are being given distinctive value in the new electrified music may not necessarily equate with systemic elements habitually foregrounded in traditional practice. A case in point is the 5/4 rhythm of Sodiq Kholov's *falak*: it provides a sign of tradition in the context of the new system whereas in traditional

music it would mean hardly any distinction, say, between the performance of a *falak* and that of a *ghazal*. One possible way of looking at the enmeshing of traditional and pop musics in Tajikistan may accordingly suggest that the persuasiveness of the idea of tradition does not adhere of necessity to one specific code instead of others, but is able to migrate from one to another provided that a number of elements are *perceived* to offer the link. While the notion of musical system as mark of authenticity seems thus to be of rather little use, emphasis should be placed upon the active capability of agents in identifying at any time elements which can be held to represent the tradition.

Representation and Appropriation

Gulchehra's family also offers examples of how Soviet *habitus* is being remodelled in matters of conceptual structuring. In particular, they tend to be uneasy with existing categories and the lines of cultural belonging which separate "national" (*millī*) music and *Estrada*. They are inclined to conceive traditional and electrified musics as "old" (*qadima*) and "contemporary" (*hozira zamon*) musics and thus lay emphasis on their being not separate or oppositional spheres, but moments of a coherent, stretched-in-time *musiqi-i khalqī* ("popular" or "people's music"). A case can be made that, in such an approach, hybridization is being encircled by a modernist trope which partly reiterates Soviet (and more generally colonial) politics of representing the East/West relation. However, we may be inclined to wonder with Martin Stokes: "Who and what is involved in deciding where (and when) Europe and its programmatic modernity begin and end" (Stokes 2000, 213).[23] Here, as in much of the trajectory of Sovietism, unbalanced truth claims equating modernity with the West have related to local processes of construction of self and otherness in complex ways, and have also taken the form, in Spivak's words, of an "enabling violation".[24] In particular, the conceptual readjustments mentioned above are laying new grounds for appropriation and self-representation: they suggest that, by employing a modernist paradigm, local agents may play back on themselves colonial tropes of representation with a view to voicing their multifaceted cultural identity and affirming the aesthetic and ideological legitimacy of the hybrid practices which have intensified in unofficial (especially wedding) circuits of music making in post-Soviet Tajikistan. This is having the important effect of questioning and bypassing the borders of geo-cultural affiliation posited by Soviet and inherited by post-Soviet cultural ideologies. Continuity with local traditions seems to be crucial to this operation. It is proving to be the indispensable catalyst on the basis of which hybridization may convincingly attend to innovative, resilient readings of locality, and concurrently be relevant to a contemporary cultural and political Tajik context where redefining and asserting the national self and local identities are major concerns.

By attending studio rehearsals and wedding performances of Gulchehra and her sons, I was able to observe how "locality" was in one important respect about choosing the ingredients to be used in making the music sound modern, while

excluding elements which were regarded as *begona* ("alien"). This occurred, for example, in a studio session when a musician proposed to insert a jazz interlude in one of Gulchehra's songs, a suggestion that was summarily rejected. The preferred synthesized sounds were those considered as "sweet" (*shirin*), usually bearing iconic reference to traditional timbres (e.g. flutes, acoustic guitars or zithers) or to other appreciated sound qualities (e.g. string orchestra, clarinets, accordion), while distorted or aggressive sounds were avoided. A highly ornamented playing technique on the synthesizer was identified as the distinctive "Tajik way" of playing (*tojikī*): the more ornamented and chromatic it was, the more Kulobi it sounded. While these inclinations can be generalized only to a certain extent, they can suggest ways in which pop vocabulary is being indigenized according to specific local ways of listening and performing, that is according to "the phonemic significance of these elements for native listeners" (Manuel 1988, 21).[25]

The preoccupations of Gulchehra's family are far from constituting an isolated case. For example, the Dushanbe-based band of musicians originally from Badakhshon, led by singer Nobovar Chanorov (b. 1970), named *Shams*, present a similar profile. Proficient in both traditional and pop forms, they often confine these to distinct repertoires, while elsewhere providing remarkable examples of a conscious breaking of ranks. One of their songs, entitled *Az Ghami Tu*, calls on myriad musical sources to create a multi-layered narrative where traditional and pop elements seem at no point to be treated as subsidiary to one another or to drift into mere ornamentation and caricature. Heterogeneous elements are rather combined so as to influence each other and weave an integrated texture. Much of the melodic phrasing insists on pitch material and motifs derived from traditional music, but combined with harmonic riffs and a song form drawn from rock formulas. A fast 7/8 metre, customary in traditional dance tunes, provides a steady backbone but it is recast to fit a performance for *tablak*, acoustic drums and drum-machine patterns. A multi-faceted sound quality also results from interlacing Jew's harp with turntable scratches, *ghijak* interludes with electronic loops, while rap in English alternates with folk quatrains in Tajik. *Az Ghami Tu* seems to reveal a playful, if not disruptive treatment of dominant aesthetics as it undertakes a hybrid exploration while raising the provocative claim that it is "the deadly sound of Tajik national music" which is actually being heard. This announcement is made in English at the beginning of the piece with the Tajik in the background: *dast bidihed ba musiqi-i Tojikiston* (Open your hands to the music of Tajikistan).[26]

There appears to be sufficient evidence to argue that hybrid music in Tajikistan is expanding the notion of tradition in ways which may suggest close similarity with the concept of *deformation of mastery* introduced by Houston Baker and profitably taken up by Richard Middleton in connection with African American music.[27] In particular, a number of Tajik musicians are intentionally unravelling dominant aesthetic norms and destabilizing the borders of musical authenticities. They seem to be doing so without dispersing the self in a decentred postmodern pastiche, but with a view to reassembling local identity and asserting it afresh. They are truly making

Figure 1 Gulchehra Sodiqova (Playing the *dumbra*) Accompanied by Synthesizer and Electric Violin at a *tūy* in Kulob, Summer 2003 (Photo Courtesy of Stefano Triulzi).

a statement about belonging: not to the ranks of normative musical styles but to interlaced musical histories.

Popular Music

Studies in popular music have long been concerned with processes of hybridization and appropriation. While acknowledging the impact of global(izing) cultural flows and, possibly, of global hegemonies, they have also and increasingly laid emphasis on the potential of hybridized musics and technologically mediated popular cultures in demarcating locality and referencing local dynamics of identity construction. They have often argued both against crude theses of cultural imperialism and against postmodernist claims about the dissolution of narratives of local or national identities.[28] In the context of Central Asia however, music scholarship has predominantly focused on traditional art and, to a lesser extent, folk musics, while electrified popular styles have received only occasional mention. Certainly, the role of popular music in local musical experience and its implications for the construction of socially shared meanings and ideologies remain largely unexplored.[29] With reference to Tajikistan, it may be suggested that popular music should be addressed not only because it participates importantly in the political economy of music and in the articulation of identities (as the evidence discussed below will try to highlight), but also because it increasingly meets and expresses local musical tastes: it has a central (if not dominant) position in common performance and listening practices, and it can thus provide an essential entry to collective musical experiences.

The notion of popular music that I wish to employ in the following paragraphs needs to be qualified. Although the proliferation of synthesized musics in post-Soviet

Tajikistan has gone hand in hand with the development of a local cassette industry, technological mediation on a mass scale can hardly be taken as the distinguishing trait of the music in question. In this respect, other musical genres discussed so far are also to a certain extent "popular music", having been disseminated through media networks for decades.[30] Further, it has been seen that institutionalized traditional music is not simply the result of the recruitment of grassroots musical forms into an ideologically controlled context, but it is in fact a hybrid idiom embedded within the fabric of popular national culture.

Nonetheless, contemporary Tajik state ideology is oriented towards promoting a popular culture which encodes centralized nationalist projects and global aspirations through separate pathways and regulative distinctions of musical genres. But once we take into consideration unofficial practices the state of affairs looks markedly different. There is a high degree of fluidity in both sonic practices and musical metaphors which tends to elude the regulatory vocabulary of official taxonomy and allows for considerable mobility between the labels *Estrada* and *Khalqī*. The former (which has been rendered with "pop" so far in this article) is applied without hesitation in common usage only to musical forms which have a distinctive non-local character. The latter, which in official terminology unambiguously designates a genre of traditional music, may be used (as I have already suggested) to encompass a variety of musical practices which range from traditional forms to those that cross into synthesized pop. Typically, the two are conflated in a very fluid use of metaphors whereby differentials such as *be barq*/*barqī* ("non-electrified"/"electrified") or *qadima*/*hozira zamon* ("ancient"/"contemporary") may be also be employed. This flexibility repositions musical genres and re-encodes the relation between them.

Popular music in our context may thus be taken as a concept standing in opposition to normative state-appointed taxonomies and primarily linked to the decentralized possibilities of aural experience offered by one technological medium (i.e. cassettes) and by unofficial performance settings (especially weddings). It is to these decentralized contexts that I will now turn in order to elucidate how the practice of popular music has been embedded within important economic and identity processes in post-Soviet Tajik social life.

Political Economy

Professional musicians in the Soviet period were for the most part state employees gravitating towards musical institutions of various scale, ranging from centres of nation-wide import to peripheral theatres, houses of culture or music schools. Income, housing and even vacation trips were secured by the system. The fabric of Soviet musical professionalism crosscut ethnic and regional binaries, and coalesced in an occupational guild administered vertically by the Union of Artists. Many musicians could also rely on networks of private patronage linked primarily to wedding and circumcision parties (*tūy*s). This service (*khizmat*) for private families, neighbourhoods or local communities was likely to represent a significant additional

economic resource. The state Philharmonia was the cultural organ which exerted a certain degree of control over such unofficial activities: it imposed a system of registration and taxation for wedding troupes while also providing for transportation, announcements of booking opportunities and, occasionally, instruments. The State also made sure that public funds were directed to building wedding houses (*tūykhona*) in most urban neighbourhoods, rural districts and village communities.

The advent of independence (1991) precipitated drastic transformations in the Tajik political economy of music. All the former Soviet republics in Central Asia were affected, but the upheavals in Tajikistan were exacerbated by prolonged social instability and economic collapse during the years of civil war (1992–7). While the appeal of state employment may endure as a matter of prestige in post-Soviet Tajikistan, musicians can no longer rely on a system which provided stable economic benefits from cradle to grave. The value of state wages has collapsed as a result of galloping inflation rates and continues to linger way behind average living costs. In post-Soviet Tajikistan the relative weight of state and private patronage in the political economy of music has reversed. *Tūy*s have become central to the economy of music, as has the newly established and rapidly proliferating cassette industry. Sponsorship from affluent businessmen or high state-officials, relentless activity in private performance contexts and, possibly, remunerative flat fees from cassette labels are essential prerequisites for earning a living from professional musicianship. These compelling circumstances and the challenge of engaging on a freelance basis in a deregulated and highly competitive market have arisen almost overnight and have affected the way musicians think of themselves in professional and economic terms, being disruptive for many and resulting in diverse responses. Some have embraced wholeheartedly the new entrepreneurial ethos, others carry on making music despite difficulties, while yet others have left the job altogether, joining the wave of migrant labour to Russia.

The transformed structure of patronage has arguably heightened competition among musicians, adding an economic edge to the traditional importance of compositional ownership. Jealousy in matters of repertoire and performance opportunities has eroded the professional solidarity encouraged and developed in Soviet institutions. This is still perceptible on occasion, but is receding in the face of growing individualism or band-based affiliation in a free market. The effects can also be seen in the micro-politics of musical groups, where the traditional leadership of singers is translated to the domain of economic power and management. There was certainly a disparity between singers and instrumentalists in wedding bands in Soviet times, but it never approached the degree seen today, when singers are in a position to exploit their importance and become entrepreneurs and employers, with all the associated benefits and risks. Despite economic difficulties, it is a common perception that an ever-increasing number of singers are turning up in the popular music scene. Given that the newly deregulated environment has produced considerable profit for a number of prominent artists, it is reasonable to think that the prospect of achieving popularity has attracted many newcomers; also, the cassette and wedding markets

have brought about a fragmentation of musical units and a proliferation of bands with one lead singer, which are more visible than compact, centralized state ensembles. Unquestionably, this situation is effecting important transformations in the soundscape, in the structure of musical professionalism and ultimately in the popular culture of Tajikistan.

Cassette Culture

Despite the constraints of official ideology, state cultural bodies are not hermetically sealed. While the repertoires of state ensembles, official concerts and centralized media broadcasts are supervised, many side activities within state venues are less exposed to direct control. Artists employed within state ensembles often exploit their position to gain privileged access to recording facilities for parallel musical activities involving synthesized repertoires. Although the state cultural intelligentsia is particularly zealous in enforcing its normative responsibilities and appears to have a clear sense of what should and what should not be encouraged *from an official perspective*, they are also inclined to turn a blind eye since *in the private sphere* they are part of the audience of popular music and their munificent parties are often central to its patronage. But, even more importantly, a variety of decentralized musical activities has been encouraged by the development of an informal economy within state-run institutions such as the State Radio and Television Committee. State ensembles are the exclusive recipients of government financial support, but audio- and video-recording facilities in state premises may often be available for individual artists through informal negotiations with sound engineers or by hiring the studios. Privately sponsored recordings or video clips may be broadcast by national radio and TV channels, generally for quite a high fee and certainly depending on official approval. During four months spent at the State Radio in Dushanbe, I had occasion to appreciate how negotiations for songs or videos to be recorded or broadcast involved artistic or ideological evaluations, privileged connections within the institution and money. I have been informed about, and occasionally I have also witnessed, controversial cases in recording sessions at the State Radio. One of these involved the outright censorship of a song which made reference to the Tajik civil war. The same song was later released independently on cassette. In other cases, debates were more about aesthetic issues, but they were no less indicative of ideological concerns. In one of these sessions, a group of instrumentalists was about to record a folk song from Kulob which they had rearranged for (reformed) traditional instruments in a virtuoso fashion involving aspects of harmonization and echoing what they named *stil-i akademik*. One musician revealed to the Radio engineers that an additional track was to be performed with a synthesizer. The studio manager reminded them that they were not at a wedding party and he invited them to play "pure" (*toza*). Later the recording was edited with a video clip where the musicians would display their abilities in a "pure" *akademik* folk style.

State premises and channels of dissemination are seen as offering advantageous opportunities of public visibility leading towards non-institutional music circuits, i.e. the wedding circuit and the cassette industry. In fact the majority of recordings in popular music are made and packaged in private venues; they circulate predominantly on audio cassettes and are sold mainly in bazaar kiosks. CDs and video CD-ROMs are not unknown and are beginning to multiply, although tape players are at the moment the only kind of play-back facilities the majority of Tajik people can afford. Although cassettes were already circulating in the 1970s and local production began on a very moderate scale during the 1980s, a large-scale Tajik cassette industry is a relatively new phenomenon. It made its first steps in the early 1990s and boomed in the aftermath of the civil conflict. Most local independent labels were established after 1997. On the basis of my findings, I would estimate that some ten labels were operating in Dushanbe by summer 2004. Some of these had been let state facilities on contract or had made deals with communication or joint-stock companies for printing their corporate identity logos on cassette covers or receiving financial support in exchange for shares of profits. With no exceptions, the local industry is very much a backyard business operating with very low production costs and effectively escaping corporate or state control in matters of marketing or aesthetic choices. Typically, music enterprises in Dushanbe manufacture cover designs and duplicate recordings in one and the same apartment-block room. Their role in production is predominantly confined to packaging and distribution while recordings are only occasionally made by or under the supervision of the label. Parallel to the growth of independent cassette firms a whole universe of private recording studios has emerged in post-Soviet Tajikistan. These are most commonly owned by musicians turned entrepreneurs who, in addition to producing their own recordings, offer their facilities for a fee. Label managers receive recordings made in private studios or within state premises directly from the artists. It has been common practice for singers to draw from their own pockets and invest in recordings and in session fees for musicians to produce their albums. They would benefit from cassette sales more in terms of publicity leading to bookings on the wedding circuit than in terms of direct income since there is no operating copyright or royalty system in Tajikistan. However, I have been informed that lately a number of prominent singers have embarked upon financial negotiation with labels to license their recordings. Although these contracts are ostensibly meant to be exclusive, in fact informal negotiations may allow the same pieces to be released by a number of labels. The scale of distribution of cassettes varies and may reach out to district towns and countryside bazaars depending on the popularity of the singers and the investment on the part of the labels. Bazaar retailers from peripheral centres do often undertake business trips to Dushanbe and purchase stocks of cassettes from the labels at wholesale prices.

Popular music dominates the cassette industry. Most of it falls in the domain of synthesized music with idiosyncratic local characteristics, but the presence of *Estrada* pop is also considerable. The growing role of *tūy*s in the political economy of post-Soviet Tajik music is inscribed tangibly in the repertoires which many singers develop,

which are dominated by wedding music, dance pieces and more generally by synthesized forms fit for live performances. It may be argued that this orientation signals the growing pressure of a market-driven logic on music-making, as opposed to (state-appointed) ideologically driven concerns. Although the cassette industry and wedding circuit are ostensibly two distinct spheres of economic activity and musical experience, in fact they generate an interdependent circulation of capital and they are also related in terms of musical developments. Such interrelations demonstrate the close link between mediated popular culture and live communal musical experiences.

Traditional music is also being marketed on cassettes (albeit only to a limited extent), featuring professional musicians who in this context contravene the large-ensemble aesthetics of state broadcasts by preferring fewer instruments and settings of learned poetry in the intimate performance style typical of male indoor gatherings (*gap* or *ma'raka*) or early-morning wedding gatherings (*osh-i nahor*). Both traditional and synthesized musics thus participate in technologically mediated mass consumption, thereby representing distinct but no less connected economic strategies to accommodate the demands of one and the same market. In addition, their proximity in the bazaar stalls is paralleled by proximity in performance contexts, both of them being central to specific gatherings where interpersonal relations, ethical values and collective memories are mobilized. In the decentralized popular sphere of Tajik social life, I argue, traditional and popular musics stand side by side in responding to a transformed political economy and in perpetuating social rituals. This situation adds to their aesthetic amalgamation as well as to the resulting terminological fluidity already explored in this article, and contributes to questioning the plausibility of their apparently obvious duality.[31]

Unquestionably, the State's loosening grip on influencing public cultural trends has paralleled its loss of economic power. The unprecedented proliferation of popular music in post-Soviet Tajikistan is the result of the increasing impact of bottom-up aesthetics which find a way through thanks to the fragmentation of the means of musical production and the primacy of unofficial performance contexts. Post-Soviet Tajik popular culture allows considerable scope for self-appointed expression and decentralized musical initiative, being at present unconstrained by international corporate capitalism and largely unsupervised by the State. In the next section, I will be concerned with suggesting how popular music in this context is also able to address openly issues of local identity and propose idiosyncratic readings of social ideologies and group affiliations.[32]

Identity in Popular Music

One rather obvious implication of the new economy of music is that the growing importance of unofficial contexts, as opposed to flagging state sponsorship, has increased the dependence of musicians upon audiences and patrons who belong to the same solidarity groups as they do. These groups are predominantly constructed

along regionally based identity boundaries and, typically, cut across class differentiations. Bookings for *tūy*s are usually offered to musicians who perform familiar cultural symbols through recognizably regional musical styles. Although professional musicians are clearly interested in expanding their audience as much as possible, regionally based marketing strategies are proving to be the most profitable, and determine to a great extent their expectations of patronage. As opposed to centralized national projections embodied in the structure of state musical professionalism, economics, I argue, is reinforcing the link between popular music practice and regional identity which is already strongly grounded in ordinary musical preferences in Tajikistan.

Regional identity has a significant impact upon political and cultural affiliations in Tajikistan, but, it should be emphasized, it embodies no more (and no less) an "authentic" layer of perception than national, neighbourhood or otherwise defined formations. Whatever the situation before Soviet intervention, it is clear that regional groups in Tajikistan and the relations between them have been strongly influenced by political processes embedded within Soviet power structures. We should be wary, however, of dismissing such constructed identities as artificial, since the evidence clearly points to their persuasiveness in local politics and their unquestionable potential for mobilizing social loyalties as well as ideas of cultural authenticity.[33] It is again the concept of Soviet *habitus* which may usefully account for such formations. In addition to territorial segmentations on a regional (Tajik *viloyat*; Russian *oblast*) and district scale (Tajik *nohiya*; Russian *raion*) with their associated political elites, Soviet practice also established a system of power allocation at a central level (i.e. within the Tajik Communist Party and within the administrative and political organs of the government) whereby different sectors and responsibilities within the machinery were distributed (albeit unequally)[34] among different regional groups. A situation was created where competing regional elites would pursue factional interests as their power came to be grounded on alliances with local chiefs and on increasingly crystallized regional loyalties. "Localism" (Tajik *mahallgaroyi* or *mahallchigi*) in Tajikistan may be articulated along a variety of fault-lines, including clan, neighbourhood or district affiliations, but regional solidarity groups have certainly proven to be the most significant ones in recent history. Regional differentiation also intensified as a result of substantial forced migrations beginning in the 1950s, from various mountainous areas of Tajikistan to the collective farms of the south and south west, where labour was needed for single-crop cotton plantations. Communities of migrants from Gharm, Badakhshon, Darvoz and Kulob, but also of local Uzbeks, coagulated into regionally based *kolkhozes* or regionally based groups within *kolkhozes*. The competition among these groups, together with the power disputes among regional elites on a national scale, contributed to the regional nature of the alignments which characterized the Tajik civil war, overshadowing the genuine political issues that were also at stake.[35]

In the post-war period, state policy on music has reflected a preoccupation with performing the political compromise, embraced by regional elites, which has brought

about the resolution of the conflict. A discourse of national consolidation is being articulated through traditional music, in a process whereby different regional forms are not only assigned public visibility but are also co-opted to create supra-regional cultural representations. The art music of the *Shashmaqom*, which is predominantly cultivated in the north, and suffered a notable decrease in state support with the rise to power of factions from Kulob during the civil war,[36] is being newly proposed as the classical repertoire for the whole nation, as was the case for much of the Soviet period. Other traditional musics, including those of the south and the south east, are being enlisted under such labels as *khalqī* or *folklor*, and assembled in a fashion which attempts to promote a unitary image of Tajik popular and folk traditions: the Falak Ensemble and the Daryo Ensemble at the State Radio gather professional musicians from various region of Tajikistan and perform repertoires where local forms are juxtaposed in a symbolic contiguity or combined through sonic amalgamation.

Musicians in popular music are embedded in kinship, regional and ethnic affiliations which to a great extent mould the fabric as well as the social meanings of the music they play. Their repertoires allow multiple levels of identification to be experienced by the musicians themselves and their audience. My research with Gulchehra Sodiqova has highlighted, for example, how, according to different circumstances, Gulchehra's repertoire may sound to listeners and practitioners alike (including herself) as the expression of her idiosyncratic artistry; it may demarcate her musical lineage in the context of distinct musical families; it may evoke Dashtijum, her native valley, addressing the cultural identity of a sub-regional community whose perception of self is often articulated in musical terms; or it may be classed as "Tajik music" or "southern music" in wider contexts of ethnic or national discourses. However, evidence strongly suggests that Gulchehra's music draws the meaningfulness of its social *presence* predominantly from the association of its sonic imagery with one regional domain, that of Kulob: it is mainly according to this affiliation that her repertoire can mobilize social relations. More generally, it can be argued that popular music, negotiating between centralized national projections and more localized individual, village or sub-regional perceptions, is particularly effective in encoding those intermediate, regionally based processes of identification that are central to structuring the experience of social loyalties in Tajikistan. It may be observed that popular musics with idiosyncratic regional character inform choices in mediated aural practices, such as cassette consumption, tuning into radio or TV programmes or selecting the tapes for the car radio. In addition, they enable communal settings (especially *tūy*s) where families or clans actively fabricate their social affiliations.[37]

The urban environment of Dushanbe is the main breeding ground of popular music. It also provides a major locale for the articulation of regional musical identities in a post-Soviet context. Although a (quite limited) number of musicians there may identify (or be identified) with a distinctive "neutral" urban ethos, the overwhelming majority of popular artists are part of an urban setting whose social fabric is made up of enclaves of urbanites or neo-urbanites for whom regional

identity is a persistent discourse of cultural and social affiliation spanning generations and classes. However, regional identity in Tajik popular music, I argue, should not be considered as typically being generated by the response of urbanized groups to urban social proximities. It seems more appropriate to inscribe it in a wider context of cross-fertilization between urban and peripheral locales. I have already mentioned how the principle of regional identity formation in Tajik political history has involved both central and peripheral power dynamics, and the close connection between them. Furthermore, the deep interrelation of urban and peripheral locales in Tajikistan is reinforced by the high level of mobility of individuals between the two, by active social and family links, and not least by thriving musical circulation. Musicians in popular music have close relations with rural and peripheral locales, primarily through providing service for weddings, but also through the selective, regionally based distribution of cassettes. While details of such interactions are beyond the scope of this article, it is important to highlight that musical identities reverberate on a national scale thanks to a popular music which is primarily being manufactured in the capital, but which draws much of its ideological force, stylistic imagery and also many of its performers from the periphery, while simultaneously going back to the periphery. While a number of musicians in Dushanbe (especially among the younger) may approach "tradition" as something they need to *discover* from older or rural performers, many others (Gulchehra Sodiqova and her sons are again a clear example) regard local traditional music as something they were born with. They testify that "tradition" may not be viewed necessarily from a "modernist distance" in Tajik popular music, but rather from a "modernist proximity" as it were. Popular culture seems to provide an effective, deeply felt connection between tradition and modernity, as well as between periphery and centre, contributing importantly to the construction of what I define as a "homeland ideology".

While musicians from different regions collaborate in the context of state ensembles, in the popular music scene evidence suggests that they organize themselves predominantly, if not exclusively, along regional lines.[38] I have already illustrated how sonic choices in popular music may be concerned with expressing a certain fundamental locality. Here, I wish to give a few additional examples of how musical vocabulary may activate perceptions of selfhood and otherness in relation to regional discourse. It seems that regional boundaries, as opposed to larger or smaller fault-lines of aesthetic differentiation, regulate to a great extent the actual possibilities of engagement in music making, containing the scope for variations and idiosyncratic features in musical style.

Recognizable signs of regional locality are incorporated in popular music through sonic resemblance and adaptation, that is through a range of stylistic icons which include vocal style, rhythms, instruments, playing techniques, but also accents of Tajik.[39] In popular as much as in traditional music, playing techniques on the *doyra* (frame-drum), for example, will discriminate between Kulobi and Khujandi or Uzbek performances, depending on whether the instrument is held between the knees or lifted upright with both hands, whether strokes include four-finger fan-outs in a

single rolling gesture (*rak*) or swift snapping single-finger strokes (*lik*). The *daf* (large goat-skin frame-drum) is generally used by popular musicians from Badakhshon. Synthesized arrangements may be moulded on distinctively regional rhythmic or melodic patterns. Notably, in a Kulobi setting, in addition to transposing on the drum-machine characteristic rhythms such as *zarb* (fast 7/8), *ufar* (a rhythm alternating triple and duple patterns over a 2/4 metre) or combinations of the two (*ufarzarb*), harmonization in dance tunes will be conceived idiosyncratically and insist on chord progressions one semitone apart and changes of register one fourth apart. Popular music may use these and other elements separately or simultaneously, distancing itself to varying degrees from traditional forms and allowing for myriad possibilities of aesthetic elaboration. Regional ingredients may be attached to a non-traditional form or may instead combine in straightforward synthesized re-embodiments of traditional repertoires, as in the case of synthesized *Shashmaqom* performances in Khujandi weddings or regional variants of *sartaroshon* (groom-haircut songs) in virtually all weddings. Identity formation in popular music, it can be argued, relies strongly on indexical semiotic processes which are activated by regional musical icons and encode internalized associations with the places, the experiences of communal social life and the idiosyncratic aesthetics which are constitutive of perceived regional cultural authenticities. This often results in the formulation of stereotypical metaphors to define other groups' popular musics, especially those hybridized forms which bear apparent continuities with tradition. Such stereotypes usually refer to what is perceived as the emblematic trait of someone else's music and, although often inaccurate, reveal important categories of differentiation. In a Khujandi or Uzbek context, for instance, Kulobi popular music may be referred to as *falakī* although it is by no means confined to re-workings of the traditional genre *falak*; Kulobis may in turn refer to northern styles with encompassing labels such as *maqom* or *klassikī*.[40] In addition, the indigenization of pop vocabulary and instrumentation may entail semiotic processes whereby the different ways in which pop is being incorporated into local popular musics are related, at least by some local listeners, to specific regional preferences. While the synthesizer is ubiquitous, playing techniques, especially patterns of ornamentation, may tell the difference; Russian-style techno-house with very few local markers, if any (the lyrics may also be in Russian), can readily be assigned to Khujand; ballads featuring electric or acoustic guitars may be associated with Badakhshon, possibly due to the very distinctive, rock-oriented musical style of Daler Nazarov, an influential artist from Badakhshon active since the 1970s. Such perceptions may combine with extra-musical considerations, such as the known provenance of performers, in a process whereby musics which do not ostensibly bear any idiosyncratic regional feature may also be classified in regionalist terms.

But the assertion of regional authenticities in popular music does not rule out the possibility of exchange and transfer: the recognition of otherness does not necessarily imply rejection. The circulation of musical signs in the urban environment of Dushanbe has arguably contributed to cross-regional appropriations and also to

translating a number of distinctive regional signs into urban fashion (*mod*). For example, what are generally known as Kulobi rhythms according to my informants are increasingly appealing to the composite urban audience and are being taken up also by musicians of different origins (especially in the case of the fast 7/8 beat *zarb*, much less so in that of the Kulobi *ufar*). The piece *Az Ghami Tu* by the Badakhsoni group Shams, which has already been discussed in this article, is one such case. Nobovar, the group's singer, claimed in an interview with me that the *zarb* rhythm used in the song is neither Kulobi nor Badakhshoni (Badakhshoni rhythms may also be articulated on a 7/8 metre but are usually much slower), but a 'modern urban rhythm' (*vazn-i modern-i shahrī*), which is very much in fashion in today's Dushanbe. On the basis of our conversations, I would suggest that Nobovar is very much oriented towards circumventing regional affiliations in music and addressing an urban, especially young audience that may embody a distinctively "neutral" urban ethos.[41] However, there is an evident disjunction between Nobovar's attitude and how readily he was identified by many within the public, included young DJs in disco-clubs, as Pomiri (this being generally the term used by other regional groups for Badakhshonis) and how his music was often associated with a distinctive regional character. Nevertheless, urban musical circulation does appear to be encouraging cross-regional appropriations and the re-negotiation of musical identities.

It can be argued, finally, that popular music is dismantling on multiple levels the *field* of musical categories promulgated by the State. In reattempting national consolidation through inherited Soviet paradigms, official policy conceives traditional culture and modernity as separate functions in the construction of the national self. Popular music, possibly contrary to the assumption that it would encode modernity as the experience of a fundamental *distance* from what is considered as traditional society, is undertaking a thorough amalgamation of modernity and locality. On the one hand, it does so by engaging in aesthetic hybridization regardless of normative stylistic closures. On the other, hybrid forms are being recruited to address indigenous social concerns so that the traditional/modern cluster in popular music practice (an alternative popular *field* as it were) is being articulated according to the main discriminating criterion of regional affiliation. The plausibility of official discourses about an authentic national music as well as about a pan-Tajik musical identity or that of broad cultural areas such as 'north' and 'south', is thus being questioned through a different reading of what modernity and diversity are all about.

Conclusion

By considering state-supported processes of modernization and nation-building in connection with an examination of contemporary economic and aesthetic developments in Tajik popular culture, I have attempted in this article to highlight some aspects of how social and cultural identities relate to constructs of authenticity in Tajik musical history. I have suggested that essentialist propositions about the

equation of musical style and cultural identity are inadequate for an understanding of how music is experienced in relation to notions of selfhood and otherness.

At the same time, I have been concerned with showing how the Tajik situation may require an approach similar to that adopted by Paul Gilroy in connection with diaspora black musics, when he argues that "the unashamedly hybrid character of these black cultures continually confounds any simplistic (essentialist or anti-essentialist) understanding of the relationship between racial identity and racial non-identity, between folk cultural authenticity and pop cultural betrayal" (1991, 123, quoted in Mitchell 1996, 57). While the developments in post-Soviet Tajik popular music point to the mobile relation between musics and identities, the evidence discussed in this article highlights also that hybridization and multiple cultural flows in Tajikistan have been importantly paralleled by indigenization and assertion of local identities. It should be emphasized, thus, that a non-essentialist perspective in the Tajik context needs to acknowledge the extent to which authenticity continues to be used "as a discursive trope of great persuasive power" (Stokes 1994, 7), and be wary of embracing post-modernist propositions about the ultimate dispersal of cultural roots in a context of unanchored global transmutations.

Acknowledgements

My research into Tajik music, including one year's fieldwork across 2002–3 and shorter trips in 2004, has been aided by the University of London Academic Trust Funds Committee (Ouseley Memorial Studentship; Central Research Fund), by the Art and Humanities Research Council (Fees-only Award), by the AHRC Centre for Asian and African Literatures at SOAS (Fieldwork Grant) and by the School of Oriental and African Studies (Additional Fieldwork Grant). I gratefully acknowledge all these donors. I would also like to thank Owen Wright, Rachel Harris, Razia Sultanova and the anonymous readers for their insightful comments and suggestions regarding this article. In Tajikistan, my gratitude goes out to all my friends and associates and, in particular, to Rustam Duloev and his family, Madvalī Hasanov, Gulchehra Sodiqova, Muhammadvalī Orzuev, Nobovar Chanorov and Abduvalī Abdurashidov for their continual help.

Notes

[1] Soviet policies on Central Asian music have been dealt with at length in a number of scholarly contributions. See, in particular, Levin (1979, 1993, 1996, 45–51, 89ff., 111–15), During (1993, 35–42; 1998, 91–115), Djumaev (1993) and Frolova-Walker (1998).

[2] In Tajikistan (and Uzbekistan) the classical traditions of the Bukharan *Shashmaqom* were granted an eminent position in the musical representation of national culture. Other traditional forms also, although arguably of lesser status, were involved in the formulation of national emblems through labels such as "national folklore" (*folklor-i milli*) or "music of the people" (*musiqi-i khalqī*). Soviet scholarship in all these genres has been extensive. See among others Mironov (1932), Zubkov and Lenskii (1941), Belyaev (1950–67, 1962), Tursunzoda and Boldïrev (1954), Dansker (1965), Amonov (1968), Tadzhikova (1972, 1973),

Nurdzhanov (1974, 1980, 1989), Karomatov and Nurdzhanov (1978–86), Zehni et al. (1986), Rajabov (1986, 1989), Braginsky and Nazarov (1987), Rahimov (1986, 1988), Osimī and Rajabov (1990), Tadzhikova and Khromov (1991), Abdurashidov (1991).

[3] See During (1993, 36ff.; 1998, 93ff.).

[4] See During (1998, 73) and Levin (1996, 46) for Stalinist policies in the 1950s.

[5] See Stringer (2003, 158) for general considerations on this point.

[6] See Bourdieu (1971, 1975, 2001, 69–72).

[7] Tajik national cohesion has been in fact haunted by profound regional differentiations, in both political and cultural terms. Its fragility was dramatically laid bare in the inter-regional strife of the Tajik civil war (1992–7). Similarly, regionalist discourses have informed the variety of repertoires included within traditional music, which encompass idioms as different as the Bukharan *Shashmaqom*, the mountain music of Kulob or that of Badakhshon. In the present context, I am concerned more with the constructed consistency of the rubric "traditional music" and its relevance to nationhood than with the contrastive discourses which have gone parallel to both. Such issues will be addressed later in this article.

[8] *Estrada* may be defined as electrified, Western-derived music, while commercial exploitation was a side-feature in the USSR (cf. Manuel 1988, 15). I translate *Estrada* with "pop music" to avoid confusion with the Tajik *musiqi-i khalqī* ("popular music"), which falls, according to official discourse, within the rubric of traditional music. Reviews of concerts and scholarly discussions in the periodical *Adabiyot va San'at* (organ of the Tajik Union of Writers) offer examples of normative discourses entrenching distinct musical categories in Soviet Tajikistan (e.g. Qurbonov 1986a, 1986b; Rahimov 1987; Tadzhikova 1986). I will explain later why the term "popular music" should be reintroduced to reference synthesized musics in unofficial contexts.

[9] One of the first Tajik pop ensembles, "Gulshan", was founded in 1964 in the context of the State Philharmonia and remained prominent during the Soviet period.

[10] Characteristic of mountain Tajik traditions and found also in northern Afghanistan, *falak* ("vault of the sky", "destiny") designates a number of musical forms whose lyrics (popular quatrains) and musical features are traditionally expressive of sorrow, separation and despair (cf. Amonov 1956, 13–37; Ayubī 1989; Shakarmamadov 1990; Temurzoda 1990; in connection with Tajik Badakhshan, see Berg 2004, 146, 350–56; for Afghanistan, see Shahrani 1973; Slobin 1970, 1976, 124–5, 204–1; Sakata 1983, 53–7, 156–6).

[11] A recording of Fattoh Odinaev's *Falak* is included in the forthcoming CD *Falak: The Voice of Destiny* (see discography).

[12] Tempered four-stringed long-neck lute, which was derived, in Soviet times, from the local *dutor* so as to fit the lower registers of a symphony orchestra.

[13] See Roy (2000 [1997], xv, 162, passim) and Atkin (1994, 128).

[14] The point I am making is indebted to a discussion by Terry Eagleton (2003 [1996], viii, 30) around historical markers, as opposed to theoretical ones, in the concept of "postmodernism".

[15] The notion of Soviet *habitus* is used in connection to similar concerns in Roy (2000, xv, 162, passim). The concept of *habitus* elaborated by Pierre Bourdieu (see particularly 1977 [1972], 78–88; 1979, 189ff.) is close in many respects to the Gramscian understanding of 'automatism' and 'common sense' (2001 [1929–35], 1245–6, 1375ff., 1396ff.; see also Turino 1990, 400–3). Gramsci has explored at length theoretical arguments (which inspire much of my discussion) around the ways ideologies may effectively inform internalized practical and conceptual dispositions (see 2001 [1929–35], 868–75, 1224–6, 1411–17).

[16] The centrality of the national question in Tajikistan does not respond only to the demands of independence after the collapse of the Soviet Union but also to the necessity of rescuing social integrity from the upheavals of the Tajik civil war (1992–7).

[17] Nativist trends are discussed also in Levin (1993, 54–8) and During (1993, 38–9).

[18] Gulchehra Sodiqova's family is by no means unique in this: they are offered as an example (one which I am particularly acquainted with) to illustrate attitudes that are widespread among a significant number of Tajik performers.

[19] One of the prominent musical figures of Kulob was Odina Hoshimov (1937–94). *Ustod* Odina had an important role in reworking and classicizing performance and compositional practices, including those related to genuine grassroots styles such as *falak*. He founded one of the most influential schools (*maktab*) of Kulobi music. Although he encouraged innovations such as ensemble performance and the use of the accordion, his influence has not involved explorations of electrified mixings such as those discussed here. On Odina Hoshimov see Jalilzoda (1985) and Tabarov (1988).

[20] It is not essential to my argument to specify the actual forms of pop music Gulchehra's sons have been acquainted with. Suffice it to say that Russian and Iranian L.A. pop songs as well as Bollywood film music appear to be among the prominent sources of inspiration. Details on pop musical flows in Tajikistan and specific dynamics of adoption, appropriation or rejection would need separate discussion. A number of recent recordings by Gulchehra Sodiqova and her family are included in the forthcoming CD *Falak: The Voice of Destiny* (see discography).

[21] For wedding music as a locale of "Europeanization 'from below'", see also Levin (1993, 58). The rise of musical practices escaping institutional supervision in the wedding circuit of the 1980s was noticed and discussed polemically by Ghoib in an article in *Adabiyot va San'at* titled "Who will educate the vagrant singers?" (Ghoib 1987; see also Muhammadī 1991).

[22] Sodiq Kholov's *Falak* is included in his album *Ishqi Man* (see discography).

[23] Relevant to the present context is the way in which Stokes has highlighted in connection with Turkish *arabesk* how constructed "others" may "themselves engage with, reproduce, and manipulate colonial representations, diverting them toward more localised struggles for power, accommodation, or resistance, nuancing and adding to them in ways which owe little (while remaining in certain respects connected) to their original configurations" (2000, 215).

[24] See Spivak (1996, 19).

[25] See a similar concern also in Mitchell (1996, 264).

[26] *Az Ghami Tu* is included in the compilation *The Rough Guide to the Music of Central Asia* (see discography; also review section of this journal).

[27] See Middleton (2000, 73–4, drawing from Baker 1987, 56, and 76–7, referring to the work of South African composer Abdullah Ibrahim). Gulchehra's family may display also another, often overlapping strategy of signification attributed by Baker to African American cultural practices: *mastery of form* (see Baker 1987, 31–2, 49–50, 85–7), which encapsulates the attitude towards complying knowingly and strategically with hegemonic cultural affiliations. On occasion (in TV programmes such as those I could watch in 2003), the family may present their work according to a reading which emphasizes the native, authentic or national character of their music, thus bracketing the challenge implied in their hybrid manipulations.

[28] For examinations that are particularly relevant to my concerns here see, for example, Manuel (1988, 1–23), Cohen (1994), Langlois (1996) and Mitchell (1996, 1–7, 49–56, 263–5).

[29] For a notable exception, see Harris [2002].

[30] In addition to radio and TV broadcasts, Soviet media comprised the state record company Melodiya, which has issued a great variety of musics, including traditional genres, for local markets (see Gronow 1975).

[31] Similarly, Langlois argues in the context of Algeria that during the 1980s electrified and technologically mediated Rai "remained well imbedded in local traditions, both musically and culturally" (1996, 260).

[32] For discussions on the link between popular, especially cassette, cultures and decentralized identity expressions, see, among others, Manuel (1993), Langlois (1996) and Harris (2002).

[33] Cf. Stokes (1994, 5–7, 20–1) and Waterman (1990, 368, 377–8).

[34] In particular, the executive and the highest ranks of the Party were held for much of the Soviet period by elites from the northern region of Khujand. On these issues, see Dudoignon (1998, 57–70).

[35] On "localism" in Tajikistan and other related issues, see Roy (2000, x–xi, 13–15, 85ff., 94–5, passim).

[36] See During (1993, 39).

[37] Typically, inter-regional or mixed marriages will perform proximity of collective cultural symbols, including the co-presence of distinctive regional musics.

[38] My research has focused on popular musics of what is considered locally as one regional unit, i.e. Kulob. My evaluations are based on a survey of 15 popular music groups based in Dushanbe, 11 of which were from Kulob. The regional uniformity of their members is a feature of all 15 groups. Although my observations should be taken as addressing principally a Kulobi social milieu, according to my findings other regional groups seem to operate very similarly.

[39] In using notions of "icon" and "index" to define different semiotic processes involving a relation between musical signs and their "objects", I rely on Thomas Turino's (1999, 234–6, passim) musical interpretation of the semiotic theory of Peirce. According to such a reading, iconicity involves a relation of resemblance between musical signs and their object; indexicality involves a relation of co-occurrence and typically allows the possibility of experiential associations, imagination and ideological meanings.

[40] Similarly, Stephen Blum argues with reference to Iran that "the high degree of differentiation in Iranian society . . . functions to some extent by means of 'stereotypes', perpetuated through a wide variety of techniques (including musical ones), which establish points of reference for individual behaviour. Thus, statements of informants which turn out to be quite inaccurate may nonetheless provide valuable evidence of the stereotypes against which individuals may react in making music" (1974, 101).

[41] Other bands seem to be inclined to forge an urban musical synthesis, intentionally turning their backs on regionalist discourse. One of these bands is Farzin, who together with Shams are the only ones, to my knowledge, to include songs in English in their repertoire.

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