

On definitions and guiding principles in ethnomusicological minority research

Ursula Hemetek & Marko Kölbl

Abstract

The foundation of the MMRC in November 2019 as the first Music and Minorities Research Center worldwide raised a lot of questions concerning theories and methods in ethnomusicological minority research. At the core of the lively discussions among the international advisory board of the MMRC were definitions as well as guiding principles. While the varying definitions of the term “minority” are a theoretical issue, the guiding principles of research are very much connected to methods. Adelaida Reyes was a key figure in these discussions but also in earlier ones that happened at the time of the foundation of the ICTM Study Group on music and minorities.

Drawing from her work this article deals in its first part with the term “minority”, the historical perspectives of its use and meanings. The second part is concerned with methodological issues with a special focus on future perspectives, that include dehierarchisation as well as decolonisation of ethnomusicology. The article pays tribute to the foundational work of Adelaida Reyes and many of her peers in the early development of ethnomusicological minority research, which helps scholars of today to pay attention to power relations as well as intersectional approaches in ethnomusicological minority research.

Thus minority research proves to have the potential to influence the discipline ethnomusicology in general.

Keywords: Ethnomusicology, minority research, Adelaida Reyes, terminology, theories, methods, engaged research, (forced) migration, representation.

Remarks on theories and methods inspired by Adelaida Reyes

In November 2019 the first Music and Minorities Research Center worldwide – the MMRC – was founded at the University of Music and Performing Arts Vienna (mdw). The foundation of the MMRC was facilitated by the money from the Wittgenstein award that Ursula Hemetek received in 2018 (www.musicandminorities.org). One precondition was the research focus “Music and Minorities” within the Department of Folk Music Research and Ethnomusicology at mdw that was established in 1990, due to third party funded research projects on minorities. It started with projects on Roma music, continued with research on Bosnian refugees and has continuously

widened its scope (Hemetek 2019, Hemetek 2014). This research, as well as the foundation of the ICTM Study Group Music and Minorities in 1999, had laid the ground for the Research Center.

Although discussions had been ongoing in both above-mentioned bodies, the foundation of the research center again raised a large number of questions concerning theories and methods in ethnomusicological minority research. At the core of the lively discussions among the international advisory board of the MMRC were definitions as well as guiding principles.¹ One of the wonderful scholars in this advisory board was Adelaida Reyes (1930–2021). She participated very actively, as theory and method had played a major role in her life as a scholar. We want to honour her scholarly legacy by making her contributions our point of departure.

While the varying definitions of the term “minority” are a theoretical issue, the guiding principles of research are very much connected to methods. Looking into the history of minority research that started with fieldwork on Native American music at the end of the 19th century, we find a great variety of methods as well as theories. Nowadays, certain guiding principles have been developed in minority research in ethnomusicology and there is an ongoing discussion about these matters in the Study Group as well as in the MMRC. For example, guiding principles for research like “engaged ethnomusicology”, “dialogical knowledge production” and “countering power imbalances” are mentioned on the website of the MMRC (www.musicandminorities.org). In this paper Ursula Hemetek focus on terminology, definitions and historical aspects, while Marko Kölbl continue with future methodological and theoretical possibilities. Together these two perspectives provide an understanding of the development and directions of guiding principles in ethnomusicological minority research.

Terminology, definitions and historical aspects – the concept of minority

Ursula Hemetek

Terminology – namely the definition of the research “object”, minorities – seemed to be crucial from the very beginning of the foundation of the ICTM Study Group Music and Minorities and has continued to be so.² I will provide some facts about the Study Group’s history in order to contextualize the terminology discussion and as a background information.

Emergence of the Study Group Music and Minorities

The first internationally visible event with the keywords “music” and “minorities” took place in Zagreb 1985. The key person was Jerko Bezić, the representative of the host institution, *Zavod za istraživanje folkloru Instituta za filologiju i folkloristiku* (currently, Institute of Ethnology and Folklore Research). Participants of this historical conference included colleagues from Yugoslavia and from neighbouring countries. Interethnic connections

1. The present members of the MMRC’s Advisory Board are: Samuel Araujo, Philip Bohlman, Naila Ceribašić, Beverley Diamond, Marko Kölbl, Svani-bor Pettan, Mayco Santaella, Stephen Wild, Deborah Wong. Former members: Bruno Nettl († 15 January 2020), Adelaida Reyes († 24 August 2021), Terada Yoshitaka († 29 March 2023).
2. Some of the following paragraphs are also to be found in an ICTM Anniversary publication. There, the history of the Study Group is presented in much more detail (Hemetek 2022).

were in the focus of most presentations (Pettan 2012:450). Bezić (1986) was responsible for a publication following this conference. For me, being in the process of writing my dissertation on a minority (Hemetek 1987), it was a crucial experience to see that minorities could be a topic for a whole international conference. There were similar problems and approaches at an international level and mutual understanding amongst colleagues from different regions due to their shared experience of studying minorities. Probably unconsciously, the idea for my later activities was born there and was also due to the personal contacts I made during this experience.

Much later, when I had started to do research on Roma music in 1989 (Hemetek 2006), I actively contacted some of the people I had met in Zagreb, as I felt rather alone with this research topic in Austria. Among the first was Svanibor Pettan, who at that time was based in Croatia, and Anca Giurchescu in Denmark, both of them doing research on Roma music and dance. I found them within the ICTM, the largest international network of ethnomusicologists worldwide.

The first symposium that served as point of departure for the foundation of the ICTM Study Group Music and Minorities was organized in Vienna in 1994. The results were published (Hemetek 1996) as this was a requirement for the approval of a Study Group within the ICTM.

The whole process went slowly, probably because of the political implications associated with such a topic. In order to make things move more quickly, I asked some colleagues to participate in a roundtable on the topic at the ICTM World Conference in 1997 in Nitra. It showed the diverse approaches and wide range of topics that we considered to be part of the discussions of such a study group: Max Peter Baumann (Germany): "Indigenous peoples as minority groups and immigrants in Germany", Anca Giurchescu (Denmark): "Migrant communities and the problem of identity in Denmark", Svanibor Pettan (Croatia): "Refugees and their integration through processes of applied ethnomusicology", Eva Fock (Denmark): "Youngsters of Pakistani, Moroccan, and Turkish backgrounds and their musical identities", Iren Kertesz-Wilkinson (UK): "The Gypsies as a minority the world over", Jerko Bezić (Croatia): "Experiences in international cooperation and minority groups". The panel was very well attended. When we finally spoke about the plan to establish a study group, the audience supported this idea enthusiastically and signed a letter to the ICTM president (at that time, Anthony Seeger) and Executive Board.

After further discussions and negotiations concerning the definition of the term (see below), the Study Group was finally approved and could hold its foundational business meeting in 1999 during the ICTM World Conference in Hiroshima. Since 2000, when the first Study Group Symposium was held in Ljubljana, there have been symposia every two years in different parts of the world, followed by publications. The membership was growing rapidly (up to 400 members) and discourses on music and minorities began to influence the discipline ethnomusicology as a whole.



Terminology as a theoretical topic remained an important issue throughout all symposia from the beginning. Adelaida Reyes was one of the highly influential thinkers in these discussions and her work had laid the ground for the work of the Study Group.

Figure 1. Adelaida Reyes having lunch during the SEM-conference at Wesleyan University, October 2008. Photo by Ursula Hemetek.

Adelaida Reyes as a central figure

Adelaida Reyes' dissertation, "The Role of Music in the Interaction of Black Americans and Hispanos in New York City's East Harlem", is a ground-breaking work in urban ethnomusicology, nominated for the Bancroft Dissertation Prize in 1975. It marked the beginning of a career devoted to shifting the paradigms of her disciplines through rigorous fieldwork and incisive methodology. The importance of her contribution to discourses in international ethnomusicology is indisputable.

In a time when the theme of migration was new in ethnomusicology Adelaida Reyes started her research on the topic. At that time, she became the first researcher to question as to whether there were special qualities in the refugee experience, within the general context of migration and resettlement, that should be taken into consideration by ethnomusicology. And certainly, she found that there were. Her motivation probably had to do with her own migratory experience, as Kay Kaufman Shelemay points out:

Her own life as an immigrant – a self-described 'flying Dutchman' – included heading the first Filipino family in Waldwick, NJ. These experiences, both

good and bad, paved the way for her sensitivity to the complexity of the migration process and resonate in her later work among other refugees from Southeast Asia (Shelemay 1997).

There are several ground-breaking publications on the topic, for example, Adelaida Reyes' guest-edited special issue on "Music and Forced Migration" of *The World of Music* (1990), or her book *Songs of the Caged, Songs of the Free: Music and the Vietnamese Refugee Experience* (1999). Her work has influenced generations of researchers sharing Adelaida Reyes' interest in the topic, including me.

From 2000, Adelaida Reyes was actively involved in the ICTM Study Group on Music and Minorities, as co-editor of the first publication in 2001 (edited by Svanibor Pettan, Adelaida Reyes, and Maša Komavec), as Secretary (2005–2011), and as Vice-Chair (2011–2021). She attended all the Study Group symposia up to 2018, held regularly every two years. Her wise comments, especially concerning the ongoing discussions about defining the concept of minority have influenced and shaped the discourses within the Study Group.

Adelaida Reyes always tried to remind us that "our definition is always the most useful one for the time being, but the discussion process is ongoing" (personal communication). She was also the one who strongly argued that great attention should be paid to migration, as "migration creates one of the largest, if not the largest, human groups out of which minorities emerge" (Reyes 2001:38), and to the relationality of the term, because without a dominant group there are no minorities: "these require a minimal pair – at least two groups of unequal power and most likely culturally distinct, both parts of a single social organism" (Reyes 2007:22).

Adelaida Reyes also argues why minority research did not emerge earlier in the discipline, and she sees its emergence as being very much connected to the field of urban ethnomusicology:

in a scholarly realm built on presumptions of cultural homogeneity, there was no room for minorities ... The conditions that spawn minorities – complexity, heterogeneity, and non-insularity – are "native" not to simple societies but to cities and complex societies. (Reyes 2007:22)

Terminology and theoretical implications

When the Study Group came into existence, the field was prepared for such activities insofar as certain old theories of the discipline had already been abandoned. Urban ethnomusicology was already established, also thanks to Adelaida Reyes, and we did not have to carry out pioneering work to challenge old-fashioned models like a supposed "homogeneity" of musical cultures. Heterogeneity and hybridity have proven to be important theoretical models within the Study Group's discourses.

Doing research on marginalized groups was not that new if we look for examples in research at the very beginning of our discipline: Research on Native Americans that would nowadays be included in the definition of

minorities. Bruno Nettl, one of the members of Advisory Board communicated in an e-mail:

When (ca. 1950) I was a student with George Herzog, who was involved in Native American, West African, and European folk musics, the term “minority” never came up. Somehow the role of these societies and their musics within a larger social context was not (very) significant to most of our ethnomusicological predecessors (Email to Ursula Hemetek, 8 August 2019).

It is noteworthy, as Bruno Nettl suggests, that the larger social context was neglected at that time, which is why the term ‘minority’ was not applied. The same neglect holds true for many other publications on what today would be called ‘minority musics’ in the history of our discipline. Besides not paying attention to broader social contexts there was also a lack of a common term. And lacking a common term, there was no means and obviously no intention of comparison. This was the novelty about the ICTM Study Group when it was founded. Dealing with parallels, with certain repeated patterns, comparing different groups and thereby gaining insights into mechanisms of discrimination and how to react musically, that was rather new. The fact that music might play a special role for marginalized groups, and that there might be parallels worldwide, was an approach considered a novelty in 1997.

The first definition of ‘minorities’ for the purpose of the Study Group is from 1997 when the foundation of the Study Group was proposed to the Board of ICTM. It reads as follows:

The Study Group understands minorities to mean underprivileged groups within national states: migrants, refugees, autochthonous/ethnic groups, indigenous peoples and religious communities, among others. Underlying the relationship between minorities and majorities lies the same imbalance of social and economic conditions, an imbalance that accounts for many similar situations on an international level (letter to the Executive Board, 27 June 1997).

This quote is from a letter to the ICTM Executive Board signed by 50 colleagues who had attended a Roundtable discussion at the World Conference in Nitra (see above). Note that only ethnicity and religion are mentioned as markers of identity. This might be a result of the themes that were presented at the Roundtable, but there is a focus on the relationship within a broader social context as well as in an international comparison.

For the ICTM Executive Board the endeavour was obviously too political because of the definition of the term. As an international organisation ICTM always had to balance diverse political interests. The term minority did have and still has different connotations in various parts of the world. There were and still are regions in the world where obvious oppression of certain groups of people officially will be denied. Using a definition of the term that clearly points to that imbalances might have led to diplomatic problems. Additionally,

there were colleagues – especially from the countries of the former Soviet Union – who had experienced that their work had been used for political propaganda and therefore wanted to avoid every political connotation. Therefore, the answer was that the Board had only “tentatively” accepted the Study Group. What they asked for was further discussion of terminology. This discussion took place in 1998 in Vienna, involving a smaller group of people. The outcome was a less political definition of the term “minorities”: “Groups of people distinguished from the dominant group for cultural, ethnic, social, religious or economic reasons”.

There were discussions of the term at least every two years at the Study Group symposia. They were lively and there were many suggestions. For example, I remember very well when in Zefat/Israel 2012 Tom Solomon proposed to rename the Study Group to a “Study Group on Power Imbalances”.

There were other suggestions in the direction of getting rid of the term “minority”. I was always in favour of keeping it, because in spite of the different meanings that the term might have in different political constellations it does make sense to have one term that can be defined in different ways. Its meaning can be subject to ongoing discussions, but it seems to be a term that makes sense in many areas of the world and is broadly understood.

The last intensive discussion of the term within the Study Group took place in 2018 at the Study Group meeting in Vienna, inspired by a fundamental paper by Naila Ceribašić (forthcoming). The outcome of the discussions is the currently used definition:

For the purpose of this Study Group, the term minority means communities, groups and/or individuals, including indigenous, migrant and other vulnerable groups that are at a higher risk of discrimination on grounds of ethnicity, race, religion, language, gender, sexual orientation, disability, political opinion, and social or economic deprivation (<http://www.ictmusic.org/group/music-and-minorities>)

I was very happy to draw from this definition when the Advisory Board started to discuss the term for the purpose of the MMRC. The current definition there shows many similarities but it is more explicit concerning intersectionality and power relations.

The term **minority** refers to communities, groups and/or individuals that are at **higher risk of discrimination** on grounds of ethnicity, race, religion, language, gender, sexual orientation, disability, political opinion, displacement and social or economic deprivation. These identity markers may and often do intersect. Due to the diversity of discrimination mechanisms and the historical development of certain groups, **different socio-political agendas** may emerge. Minorities can only be defined in relation to a dominant group, since these two poles co-define each other in hegemonic discourse. This relation is a **power relation**, not a numerical one. [words in bold from the original] (<https://www.musicandminorities.org/about-us/essentials>)

Adelaida Reyes' input to the MMRC discussion was again very wise:

I wonder if it might be useful to indicate that the definition upon which an edifice of research activity will be built is a working or a baseline definition. This would signal the recognition and the expectation that deeper insights into and greater understanding of minorities will be forthcoming as a result of the MMRC's efforts. A working definition invites fresh ideas and indicates an openness to refining the definition (as opposed to defending its rightness) in response to new and properly argued contributions. Where does the Center see itself positioned as it begins the construction of a research edifice that takes minorities as a focal research issue? (e-mail communication on 7 August 2019)

We followed her advice, as you can read on the MMRC's website:

One of our key terms is *minority*. Being aware of the fluidity of the concept of minorities, we propose the following definition as a working tool, expecting that future research will bring new insights [italics from original] (<https://www.musicandminorities.org/about-us/essentials>)

The currently used definition of minorities in the MMRC is based on conversations within the Advisory Board. I am very grateful for the inspiring comments, especially by Naila Ceribašić, Beverley Diamond, Bruno Nettel, Svanibor Pettan, Adelaida Reyes, Mayco Santaella and Stephen Wild. There is definitely a need for further discussion, as in part there were controversial inputs depending on the different areas of research of the board members. Therefore, MMRC launched a post-doc project that should bring new insights into the matter and has hired Kai Tang, a post-doc researcher from China who will add new perspectives on the definition from her experience in a different part of the world. History as well as the respective political situation are the main factors to take into account when we define the term minority. Personal scholarly insights from China might change our definition, it is work in progress.

In an insightful recent article on theories and methods of minority research in ethnomusicology, Svanibor Pettan (2019) looks at definitions of the term in other disciplines and emphasizes Adelaida Reyes influential concept: "power as the key factor that determines the majority-minority relation, where one concept cannot and does not exist without the other" (Pettan 2019:43).³

The MMRC does have a mission, a research question, and also clear goals:

The MMRC conducts research on the role music plays in the context of relationships between hegemonic and marginalized social groups within societies. What are the (constantly changing) meanings and values of music of and for marginalized groups and individuals?

This includes local, national and global levels, the consideration of socio-political conditions, a historical perspective, and the dominant group's impact. Likewise, both ethnomusicological research and socio-political

3. As this article is based on Adelaida Reyes' legacy and her influence on the current discourses within MMRC I, do not go further into a discourse analysis on the term minorities. Pettan's article provides further insight.

engagement play an equally important role in the MMRC's work. (<https://www.musicandminorities.org/about-us/essentials>)

I have tried to show here that for this intention terms matter. Terms like “minority” involve theoretical, methodological, historical, regional and socio-political considerations. Therefore, it is worthwhile to have an ongoing discussion on the question of what we mean by “minority” in our research.

Theoretical considerations do influence guiding principles of research, they are closely interwoven. The website of MMRC states:

There is an awareness that there are structures that produce and maintain power imbalances and hegemony, such as structural racism, colonialism, and heteronormativity. The center re-thinks ethnomusicological theories and methods in order to expose and avoid approaches that reinforce such structures. Scholarship is seen in close collaboration with activists and communities, bringing up minority issues and re-shaping our ways of reading them. (<https://www.musicandminorities.org/about-us/essentials>)

Therefore, dialogical knowledge production and engaged ethnomusicology go methodologically hand in hand with these theoretical considerations of countering power imbalances. All research projects in MMRC follow these guiding principles and the inaugural collection of articles of the journal *Music and Minorities* also demonstrates these (Hemetek 2021).

Envisioning Future Methodological and Theoretical Possibilities in Ethnomusicological Minority Research

Marko Kölbl

The above discussion on the development of definitional discourses that have shaped the evolving understandings of the term “minority” within the community of ethnomusicologists dedicated to minority research also points towards methodological and theoretical implications. The historical perspective on ethnomusicological minority research presented here is not only a first-hand testimony, it also serves as a foundation for my attempt to explore possible future directions regarding theories and methods, and ultimately to share my own personal visions. While my own positionality and my own research experiences have strongly shaped what you are reading,⁴ I am also departing from a more general perspective prioritizing Adelaida Reyes' ideas and approaches as valuable impulses for this section. Foregrounding theories and methods, this section discusses what ethnomusicological minority research might encounter in its future developments and tries to grasp already palpable tendencies and trends.

4. My ethnic minority identity as a member of the Croatian minority of Burgenland/Austria and my open self-understanding in terms of gender and sexuality are important aspects of my positionality that influence my research.

Recalibrating Methods in Fieldwork and Engaged Research

Not exclusively, but very often, ethnomusicological minority research takes place within the scope of the researcher's living environment. This is especially the case with research on music and migration that is carried out in urban settings, an area of research that still relies on Adeleida Reyes' groundbreaking work, as she was indeed a pioneer of "urban-focused domestic fieldwork" (Barz & Cooley 2008:12).

Further methodological developments in ethnomusicological migration research might critically engage with the fact that power relations in "urban-focused domestic fieldwork" have changed. Today's post-migrant societies take different shapes and forms depending on the respective part of the world they are situated in.⁵ But distinguishing migratory and non-migratory individuals is becoming increasingly absurd, leading to the fact that researchers and those researched might share very similar realities regardless of their ancestors' migration history or their post-migrant positionality. Referring to shared lived realities, I am not only pointing out the blurring of hierarchies in fieldwork but also to the very meaning of post-migrant social togetherness.

In this respect we might also find ourselves inclined to reconsider the engaged or applied methods that are mentioned in MMRC's guiding principles and that so often mark our fieldwork and research and the attempt to engage in socio-politically effective research pertaining to the social discrimination and political situation of minorities. In my own research with refugees, for example (Kölbl 2021), I could clearly see that engaged approaches are very much marked by inequalities that are inherent to not only academia but also to political activism. Engaged work is very much linked to the researchers who design it: ethnomusicologists that frame their approaches as "politically engaged" and "socially effective". Often these framings are considered to contribute to de-colonizing academic knowledge production and the discipline of ethnomusicology in particular. Through this methodological positioning emerges a "good researcher subject". However, despite aiming for the very opposite, engaged framings often tend to reinforce majority-minority hegemonies. As one of the previous publications of the Study Group on Music and Minorities titled *Voicing the Unheard* (Defrance 2019) suggests, engaged attempts often depart from advocacy, from giving voice instead of departing from marginalized voices themselves. I envision a shift from advocacy to a true understanding of minoritarian agency that is necessary to overcome preconceived notions of White European sovereignty over humanitarian and compassionate forms of approval and the facilitation of minorities' cultural expressions.

There is no question that collaborative models of fieldwork and dialogical knowledge production are well-tested and efficacious ways of including people with a minoritarian standpoint positionality⁶ not only in fieldwork, but in as many steps in the process of knowledge production as possible.

5. Postmigrant theory is a very vital field of thought, especially in German-speaking academia, and particularly in migration studies. Wolf-Dietrich Bukow, Erol Yildiz and Marc Hill (2015) define a postmigrant society as a new social normality independent of binaries between minority and majority or natives and migrants – binaries that fall short of acknowledging the plurality of urban forms of living together. Naika Foroutan (2019) argues that in a postmigrant society migration is not the crucial phenomenon. The focus lies rather on the processes that occur when migrants and their descendants claim political rights and foreground their social and cultural agency.
6. My use of the term "minoritarian standpoint positionality" draws on feminist standpoint theory (see Harding 1993) that understands knowledge production as dependent on the researchers' social positionality and that claims that marginalized researchers can gain a privileged position in researching and theorizing their specific experiences of marginalization. While feminist standpoint theory focused on women and their contribution to feminist scholarship, the concept was further developed and transferred to other markers of marginalization, for example in indigenous standpoint theory (see Nakata 2007) not the crucial phenomenon. The focus lies rather on the processes that occur when migrants and their descendants claim political rights and foreground their social and cultural agency.

Also in these attempts, ethnomusicological minority studies could be a productive realm in the attempt to further methodologies. Very often collaborative and dialogical models fail to really depart from the deadlocked structures of neoliberal academia. How does dialogical knowledge production translate to publishing, to academic achievements, to university politics? Critically engaging with these questions and developing radical reconsiderations of methodological traditions are tendencies that we can observe not only in ethnomusicological minority studies but within ethnographic research on social difference on a broader level (see Alonso Bejarano, López Juárez, Mijangos García & Goldstein 2019). It seems most crucial that ethnomusicologists join the discussion on ethnographic methodologies in research on social difference in an interdisciplinary mode.

From Intersectionality to Decolonizing: On Theoretical Tendencies

These methodological considerations tie in with theoretical positions on social and cultural difference. No doubt, power relations, individual and structural discrimination (as becomes clear in the discussion on the definition of the term minority at the beginning of this article), questions of identity (e.g. Stokes 1994, Hemetek et. al. 2004) as well as transculturality or hybridity (e.g. Hemetek et.al. 2019, Keller & Jacobs 2015) mark important theoretical arenas in our field. Since these paradigms have accompanied us for some time, we might gain insights by looking closer at how new paradigms in ethnomusicology might have an influence on the study of music and minorities.

As mentioned by Ursula Hemetek above, the MMRC's current definition of minorities makes more explicit references to intersectionality and power relations. This also relates to theoretical directions foregrounding the intersection of social categories within the field of ethnomusicological minority research. Intersectionality is certainly a theoretical trend within the humanities in a broader sense, but specifically within ethnomusicological minority research, as we witnessed at the 2018 joint symposium of the ICTM Study Groups on Music and Minorities and Music, Gender and Sexuality in Vienna. When Deborah Wong argued in 2015 that as ethnomusicologists "we have trouble living up to the intersectional analyses we know we need" (Wong 2015:178), she sharply establishes how mainstream ethnomusicology seems somehow reluctant to embrace this thread of theoretical thought. Still, I would argue that today intersectional thought is about to become a well-received and beneficial theoretical impulse, especially for researchers who foreground the intersection of multiple oppressive structures within the minority communities they work with.

Today, theoretical impulses are often connected to political activism that responds to socio-political challenges and crises. Adelaida Reyes convincingly notes how paradigms come into being in the light of crisis. Crisis "calls for a departure from normal science, a period of extraordinary [...] research" (Reyes 2019:38). Adelaida Reyes thus argues that "innovation no longer

suffices; change, or in Kuhnian terms, a paradigm shift, looms ever larger on the horizon” (2019:38). Following this argument, we can clearly keep track of a paradigm shift in ethnomusicology following the Black Lives Matter movement’s re-gaining of immense global political relevance and the ways that “decolonizing ethnomusicology” has been declared a priority of most scholarly organizations in our discipline. The ICTM dialogues are a good example of that.

In the light of the Black Lives Matter protests, Danielle Brown’s open letter on racism in music studies specifically seems to have incited a sudden self-reconsideration of ethnomusicological societies globally, from the SEM to the ICTM. Danielle Brown’s own experience as a black female academic in ethnomusicology indeed provides strong evidence of the problems with ethnomusicology’s institutional principles and scholarly traditions:

What was strange and uncomfortable was the ways that predominantly white scholars in attendance presumed that they understood BIPOC [Black, Indigenous, People of Color] and were authorities on cultures to which they did not belong. Over the years, I have witnessed white ethnomusicologists attempt to dominate and exert power over scholars and artists of color (who did not kowtow to their status as an expert). (Brown 2020:n.p.)

Large international ethnomusicological organizations’ initiatives have indeed incited a paradigm shift. Decolonial ethnomusicology became a buzzword with incredible academic currency. But how might this paradigm of decolonizing ethnomusicology relate to ethnomusicological minority studies? How does the critique on representation, the question of who speaks for whom, for whose music, relate to music and minorities?

In light of these questions, it is central to acknowledge that not all regions of the world correspond to the specifics of social struggle in the US context. Racism is different in different parts of the world, and the representation of marginalized groups – a core matter of ethnomusicological minority studies – relies heavily on local histories of institutionalized forms of racisms, classism and processes of Othering. Likewise, it is important to acknowledge the ways that researchers in ethnomusicological minority studies have studied exactly these forms of exclusion before references were made to contemporary critical theoretical thought – mostly using a different linguistic repertoire and a different theoretical framing. However, I would argue that linking work in ethnomusicological minority studies to broader theoretical impulses from Critical Race Theory and decolonial approaches actually benefits our work, since it helps to create a more interconnected and interdisciplinary research environment. Furthermore, there are benefits in confronting ourselves with this question of claiming knowledge and the representation of marginalized groups following the fashion of radically reconsidering one’s own habits and habitus. Speaking from my research perspective, for example, this also means to be aware of and to appeal against the coloniality of ethnographic research on music and migration *per se*.

Who speaks?

The trending debate on representation and decolonizing in academia may lead to misconceptions of what it means to critically interrogate researchers' positionalities in knowledge production on musics of minorities. When we think of who represents knowledge on minorities' musics, it is crucial to not confuse the need of critical reflection on non-minoritarian positionalities with an a-priori prioritization of researchers belonging to a minority. Being a minority member does not guarantee for a representation of minoritarian knowledge that is inherently accurate and above that preferable to other perspectives. Likewise, a researcher who does not belong to the group whose music is subject of knowledge production may achieve valuable insights, develop intriguing ideas, and present important findings. Further, it often is not possible to draw a sharp distinction between majority and minority affiliation – a distinction that rests on essentialist understandings of minority identities.

It is, however, vital to contemporary ethnomusicological minority research, to consider the critique of minority members on how their knowledge was and is being represented in academic settings. Their perspectives become increasingly important within ethnomusicological discourse. Especially in the last decades, the number of minority member ethnomusicologists doing research on their own minority is increasing. Minority researchers' experiences, however, often bear witness to the discipline's power structures and colonial patterns:

As a minority researcher, I saw little that validated my forms of knowledge, my experiences, my ways of being. I had become disillusioned with the system, and I could feel fatigue setting in. Academia had become a game that I no longer wanted to play, at least not under the current terms. It was time for me to go. (Brown 2015:2)

This quotation by Danielle Brown poignantly displays how marginalized experiences may not be validated in academia. A field like ethnomusicological minority studies needs to make it a central mission to problematize these dynamics, since the field actually aims to foreground the marginalized experiences in question (see “countering power imbalances” as one of MMRC's guiding principles). To end this paragraph with Danielle Brown's words, ethnomusicology at large is bound to “acknowledge that my people's stories are just as valid as the stories that others tell about us” (Brown 2015:6).

Migration and Forced Migration as Main Topics of Ethnomusicological Minority Studies

Also of relevance in Adelaida Reyes' conception of the field of music and minorities were the relations between ethnomusicological minority studies and other fields of research on social and cultural difference. In her foundational text on music and the refugee experience, she highlights the possibility of situating our music-specific perspective of migration and

forced migration in particular within the broader context of migration and refugee studies. In addressing the possible ways of locating refugee research within ethnomusicology, she not only asks whether research on music in refugee settings represents a “break from traditional ways of thinking” in ethnomusicology or whether it represents a “continuity in an albeit less familiar territory” (Reyes 1990:3). She also discusses the topic that ethnomusicological refugee studies might contribute sound perspectives to migration studies in general. It becomes apparent that there is beneficial potential in the interference between ethnomusicological minority research and the manifold disciplinary realms that also deal with minority communities whose music and dance expressions and social and political situations are of concern to ethnomusicologists. Relating to the beginnings of “urban ethnomusicology” and research on migrant communities in particular, Reyes again makes clear how links to other disciplines benefit ethnomusicological endeavors: “a perspective *from outside* of ethnomusicology became necessary to see more clearly what could not be seen *from within*” (Reyes 2007:18).

Generally, the study of music and migration, as Adelaida Reyes reminds us, constitutes an extremely important field of research in ethnomusicology:

The contemporary, however, is not so accommodating. Its very presence is a demand for attention. It is expected that events are reported with the utmost fidelity to perceivable reality. This is the case, for instance, with migration, particularly forced migration, and its currently incessant coverage by the media. It is a here-and-now phenomenon and promises to be such for the foreseeable future. In its many forms, in its global reach, and in its immediate as well as far-reaching effects on human life, migration has become part of contemporary life. It has the power to transform both migrants and the society within which they live. (Reyes 2019:43)

Adelaida Reyes relates this to ethnomusicology, and especially ethnomusicological minority research:

Ethnomusicology is thus confronted with virtually unexplored territory that has a population large enough to people nation-states, a growing population that must interact with international institutions as well as a host society as it constructs an expressive culture that incorporates the distinctive experience of forced migration. Is the discipline up to and willing to meet the challenge? (Reyes 2019:47)

Monitoring the political developments in our world during the last decade, we see that Adelaida Reyes’ observation is becoming more and more topical as time progresses. This pertains to all regions of the world and, I would argue, transcends the topic of migration and flight. It also pertains to political populism and anti-democratic developments that affect all kinds of minorities all over the world, even though the social, cultural and political rights of migrants and refugees are particularly curtailed.

Conclusion

Ursula Hemetek & Marko Kölbl

From discussing the development of theoretical and methodological issues in ethnomusicological minority research we may draw the conclusion that there is a certain change of paradigms in the discipline due to the topic of research. As Timothy Rice showed in his article from 2014 “Ethnomusicology in Times of Trouble”, the topics and environments of research also reshape methods and theories. Rice points out some of the issues we mentioned, like “equal partnerships with communities and community musicians” in our research, or “diminishing the conceptual distance between so-called theoretical and so-called applied work in our field” (Rice 2014: 204–205). Among other things, the work of Adelaida Reyes has laid the ground for these changes. Her persistent focus on power relations in the study of music and minorities seems once again to be most relevant in our methodological and theoretical considerations. Specifically, the work of the ICTM Study Group on Music and Minorities and the MMRC consistently addresses and contests power relations within ethnomusicological minority research and focuses on the political effects of ethnomusicological research undertakings on the minority communities in question.

The foundational work of Adelaida Reyes and many of her peers in the early development of ethnomusicological minority research equips us to further a de-hierarchization and decolonialization of ethnomusicological minority research that might also find points of reference and possibilities of expansion in broader debates on marginalization and social and cultural difference across the boundaries of music and dance research.

Resources

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