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## Introduction

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Music making among marginalised individuals and communities has been abundantly investigated and reported in ethnomusicology. One of the driving forces behind the advancement of the subject has been the International Council for Traditional Music (ICTM)'s Music and Minorities Study Group. The group was formed on the initiative of mostly European scholars and approved by the ICTM authorities in 1997. In the beginning, there was a particular interest in the music cultures of the Romani and Jewish populations, but since then topics have been expanded as the study group attracted members from other regions. Since the group's inception, the definition of 'minority' has often been a topic of considerable debate because it decisively affects the very identity of the group and determines what should be studied and how the topic may be approached. The working definition of the term up to 2018 used to be 'groups of people distinguished from the dominant group out of cultural, ethnic, social, religious or economic reasons' (Hemetek 2001: 21). The fundamental assumption of this definition is that 'minority' is a relational concept; that is, a group emerges as a minority only when it is distinguished from the majority—hence, the concept of 'minority' does not exist by itself. While the exact nature of the relationship between majority and minority in any given situation can be a point of contention, an unequal power relationship between these two groups has been regarded as a determining factor in defining a group as 'minority', as Adelaida Reyes (2001: 38) cogently delineated.

Since 2018, there has been an ongoing debate about the term within and outside the ICTM study group. The 2019 foundation of the Music and Minorities Research Center (MMRC in Vienna) again inspired conversations on the topic. The result is a revised definition that is used by the MMRC as well as by the study group. The relational concept is still in effect but the focus has shifted: '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.<sup>1)</sup>

The symposium on which the current volume is based served as a venue for reassessing the basic assumptions by broadening our research base towards the further refinement of how we conceptualise the term 'minority' and for imagining a methodology that is capable of providing the most effective guidance for research.<sup>2)</sup> In this context, we are extremely pleased and thankful that Ricardo Trimillos (Professor Emeritus at the University of Hawai'i, Manoa) agreed to deliver the keynote speech, which effectively set the tone for the entire symposium. With three of his case studies as illustration, Trimillos advanced two domains of inquiry (lived experience and performed identity) as effective tools to reach a more nuanced understanding of music making among minority individuals and groups. These two domains are not mutually exclusive and can overlap with one another, in that the same music (as sound phenomenon) can be analysed in both domains. Trimillos then encouraged the participants to problematise the binary construction of minority and majority and critically reflect on ethnomusicologists' roles to decide who are minorities and who are majorities. He also stressed the need to strive for theorisation beyond individual case studies. More than once in his speech, Trimillos challenged the commonly accepted notion that minorities do not have and/or exercise power, which he finds erroneous based on fieldwork data from his case studies. Trimillos thus pushes us to strive for a more critical re-examination of the concept of power, which occupies a central place in the study group's definition. While an unequal power allocation or distribution in the minority–majority relationship has been generally assumed, we still rarely see a critical analysis of power itself. Power is frequently mentioned in our spoken and written narratives, but what type of power do we really talk about? What effects does power have on the relationship? How is power actually acquired, exercised, implemented, and contested in musicking by both the majority and the minority?

The previous definition of 'minority' at the outset of the study group was based on the concept of the European nation state. Since then, there has been a constant expansion of subjects, including immigrants, indigenous groups, race–class–gender discourses, and sexual minorities, that are now mirrored in the definition quoted above. Connected to these 'minority categories' are scholarly discourses that often come from other disciplines. Trimillos's essay opens up new ways of formulating definitions by using the tools of ethnomusicology and concentrating on the musicking itself. Taking this view, the concept's definition can never be conclusive and the process of updating and refining it is to be continually sustained.

Another related point that was raised during the symposium concerns the lack of serious attention to the majority, touched upon in Trimillos's speech. While the study group has assumed that the minority can be defined and studied only in relation to the majority, attention has been directed disproportionately to the minority, whereas the majority has been considered a given.<sup>3)</sup> Although this volume does not directly address this matter, the essays that are included lay a foundation for such analysis with concrete

case studies.

The present volume aims primarily to complicate and problematise our current narratives on the minority–majority relationship using concrete case studies. The book begins with a revised version of Trimillos’s keynote speech (Chapter 1), followed by fifteen essays divided into six parts: 1) Empowerment, 2) Beyond the Minority–Majority Binary, 3) Interaction and Negotiation, 4) Tourism, 5) Gender and Sexuality, and 6) Minorities in Japan. The essays are grouped together according to their themes and content; these groupings do not necessarily reflect the four themes by which the symposium was organised. The objectives of each part and the salient features of the essays included therein are discussed below.

## 1. Empowerment

Music is often one of the limited number of venues available for minorities to empower themselves; identifying potentials and limitations of music in realising such empowerment has been an important task in the study of music and minorities. While a good number of case studies as well as deliberations on ethnomusicologists’ roles have already been conducted (Sheehy 1992; Pettan 2008; Tan 2008), more critical attention should be paid to the process and mechanism of such enactment: how and on what conditions can music empower? Each of the three essays in Part 1 offers a fresh perspective on the relationship between music and empowerment.

In his seminal work, Johannes Brusila (Chapter 2) validates the relevance of humour as an important topic in the study of music and minorities. Based on his work on a humorous online music video created by Finland’s Swedish-speaking minority, the author asserts that humour is a formidable instrument of empowerment for minority groups. Of particular interest to the study group is his assertion that in addition to its role in constructing a minority identity, humour can also be a tool for expressing multiple identities through negotiation with a minority’s established self-image. This essay is a persuasive reminder that the field of humour needs our full attention.

Lin Wei-Ya (Chapter 3) analyses how government policies since the 1950s have affected the music practices and tradition of the Tao, which constitute one of the sixteen indigenous groups in Taiwan. The policies resulted in the assimilation of the Tao and other indigenous groups into ‘Han-Chinese culture’, thereby destroying their traditional music and dance, among other things, in the name of development and modernisation. Lin describes the activities of two Tao vocalists who, as part of non-Tao performing groups and with a distinct inclination for social activism, sing songs to criticise governmental policies. Finally, she describes her own intercultural work: a collaborative concert to bring Tao singers together with performers and composers from Austria and Taiwan. The essay resonates well with the discourses on the empowerment of indigenous groups through music and the debates on the roles of activist ethnomusicologists in applied ethnomusicology (Pettan 2008; Tan 2008; Titon and Pettan 2015).

Nakamura Mia (Chapter 4) offers an illuminating case study of disaster and music, which she considers to be one of the emerging fields of study in recent years. Triggered

by her own reservations about the hasty connection that has frequently been made between music and power in the wake of the East Japan Earthquake in 2011, she launched a project to analyse how musical activities can actually empower those who were severely affected by unprecedented human and material losses. Following her previous research on sexual minorities (Nakamura 2014), she continues to cast new light on the minority–majority relationship. Nakamura concludes that it is cooperative, emphatic human creation by and through which music can empower disaster victims.

## 2. Beyond the Minority–Majority Binary

As mentioned above, the study group has relied on the fundamental assumption that the definition of the minority is conditioned upon its relationship with the majority; that is, the minority exists only in relation to the majority. This minority–majority binary is a theoretical construct and its simplicity has both benefits and pitfalls. It provides an overall conceptual framework to think about the power relationship between groups, while the same construct, due to its very generality, can also have an effect of concealing the complex and often multi-layered relationships between individuals and communities. Although the authors do not specifically articulate the limitations of the definition, they in effect challenge and refine the binary with their concrete case studies, which do not fit neatly into the model.

Mashino Ako (Chapter 5) suggests that a local minority–majority paradigm may be reversed in a national context. Her study examines the musical tradition of the Muslim Sasak people in predominantly Hindu Bali, in the context of an Indonesian state where Muslims constitute the overwhelming majority. While the national cultural policy dictates the documentation of and the provision of an education in the traditional performing arts, a traditional Sasak *rebana* ensemble, which is unique in relation to the Islamic concept of music, has been largely neglected. With easy access to worldwide digital media, Sasaks shift self-identification today from the local to the pan-Indonesian and to the global Muslim network; as such, the *rebana* is on the verge of extinction.

Chow Ow Wei (Chapter 6) explores the multi-layered minority-ness among the Chinese in Malaysia (Buddhists, Chinese speakers, vegetarians, and vegans) as interlocking and intersecting, which he terms as a ‘syncretic Buddhist group’. He illustrates the problems of establishing a musical genre in the mainstream music market by analysing the activities and philosophy of Imee Ooi, a female Chinese Malaysian composer and a devout Buddhist who pursues the goal of spreading *dharma* (a behavioural code) despite the restrictions the Ten Buddhist Precepts impose on music making. By analysing her attempts to get her music into the mainstream (a process he calls ‘mainstreaming’), Chow attempts to demonstrate how multi-layered identities are played out in an individual musician’s activities.

While frequently perceived by the majority as a monolithic group, a minority group may be internally divided by home region, class, religious belief, or migration time and condition. Chinthaka Prageeth Meddegoda (Chapter 7) cites Malaysian government censuses that treat Indians in Malaysia as a single entity despite the fact that they are

divided by religious faith as well as by their place of origin and the socio-political status of their ancestors at the time of relocation. For instance, the nineteenth-century migrants from North India were brought in as ‘clerical officers and civil servants’ while South Indians were engaged as plantation workers. Although Malays view Indians as a uniform community, they have respected and adapted the North Indians’ Hindustani *ghazal* (lyric poem set to music), partially because of the performers’ complexion (lighter skin) and their religious faith (Islam). Meddegoda calls this phenomenon ‘selective tolerance’.

### 3. Interaction and Negotiation

Minority communities negotiate their identity through their music activities in their interactions with the majority and other minorities and in the context of their own internal diversity. The dynamics of such negotiation involves the foregrounding and appropriation of pivotal (and problematic) concepts like ‘authenticity’, ‘tradition’, and ‘heritage’, which play key roles in determining the contours of their sense of belonging.

Gisa Jähnichen (Chapter 8) highlights the forces of economic development that lie behind cultural policies in postcolonial states. Based on her observations of how minority performing arts are represented on the Vietnamese stage and in their audiovisual productions, she suggests that ‘authenticity’ is a key notion for understanding the interplay of various forces in deciding performance content and manner. Jähnichen focuses on the dynamic interaction of three different perspectives: 1) of the majority; 2) of the minority that is being represented, and 3) of other minorities. She suggests that while imposing ‘a standardizing civilisation process’, the state’s cultural policies engage minorities’ cultures as manifestations of the national heritage and Western modernity alike. Jähnichen’s analysis resembles findings in other regions of the world where minorities are instrumentalised, acting as the protagonists of the ‘national heritage’, as seen in the discourses on UNESCO’s Intangible Cultural Heritage.

In his essay on Roma musicians in Romania, Suwa Jun’ichiro (Chapter 9) is interested in connecting various theoretical reflections in philosophy and sociology with ethnomusicological fieldwork data, resulting in the coinage of the term ‘ethnic cultural capital’ (ECC), which pays homage to Pierre Bourdieu’s celebrated concept of ‘cultural capital’, and his appropriation of Erving Goffman’s concept of ‘faciality’ in order to shed a new light on the corporeality of Roma musicians in a post-socialist environment and ultimately create a musical anthropology of Romanitude.

### 4. Tourism

Tourism was once viewed negatively as a disruptive force to traditional music practices, but since the 1980s, documenting and analysing tourism’s influences has become a task for ethnomusicologists. This section is based on the observation that minority groups’ music and dance are an important tourism resource that is frequently adopted in many locations to promote the ideas of ‘authenticity’ and ‘cultural diversity’. The dynamics of the relationship between ethnography and tourism, marked by complementarity,

compromise, or conflict, illuminate the possible effects on cultural practices, musicians' employment, and the local reappraisal of music and dance traditions.

Based on his fieldwork in Morocco as well as his archival research, Yves Defrance (Chapter 10) analyses the relationship between tourism and Gnawa music making since the nineteenth century. Having surveyed the pictorial representation of Gnawa musicians during the colonisation of Africa, Defrance observes that the spectacular development of tourism since the 1990s has influenced Gnawa musicians' performance practices and their social position. Gnawa musicians' identity shift from ritual specialists to secular performers is expressed through newly invented folkloric clothes, recently added choreographic steps, and even their tendency to sing in Arabic instead of in the traditional Bambara language.

Bożena Muszkalska (Chapter 11) analyses the interaction between 'locals' and tourists, which causes changes in repertory. The 'locals' here refer to a Polish minority of about 500 people who settled in the Siberian town of Vershina about 100 years ago. Polish tourists go there with the nostalgic expectation of revisiting the past, but they unintentionally influence contemporary musical practice. She asserts that the tourists' yearning for authentic heritage helps to reinvigorate the nearly forgotten tradition but is simultaneously instrumental in the hybridisation of the musical repertoire.

## 5. Gender and Sexual Minorities

Gender has been a prominent topic in ethnomusicology for many decades (Koskoff 1987, 2014; Moisala and Diamond 2000), and it is central to the study group's objectives and concerns, recontextualised within the larger framework of marginalisation. Sexuality, on the other hand, has been one of the least researched topics in ethnomusicology (Wong 2015), and in the context of the study of music and minorities in particular, this hitherto unexplored dimension should be included in our attempt to more generally theorise the minority. While there are important differences between gender and sexuality, they also share many common features and are therefore often inseparable. For this reason, gender and sexuality are treated as one unit of inquiry, since the intersection of these two identities is often crucial in understanding the complexity of the issue.

Marko Kölbl (Chapter 12) delves into the gendered performance of lament among the Burgenland Croats, who are a minority in Austria. Lament is a genre that is often discussed in ethnomusicology as a venue for publicly mediating deep human emotions, and previous studies of the topic show that the performers of lament are primarily women (Auerbach 1987; Rosenberg 2004 at al.). Kölbl observes that the textual content and repeated performances of lament have functioned to maintain societal gender norms based on binary heteronormative concepts; however, he concludes that the less gendered norm of mourning in modern times is closely related to the disappearance of lament across the world.

Kai Aberg (Chapter 13) demonstrates that the Roma in Finland negotiate their gender roles in their musical activities, based on his textual and contextual analysis of various popular vocal genres among them. Informed by Simon Frith and Angela



McRobbie's work (2007) in combination with his own first-hand experiences as a male musician performing diverse genres of Roma music, Åberg rejects the idea of 'natural' sexuality, which is expressed through music, highlighting the role of music in constructing gender identity.

## 6. Minorities in Japan

The symposium on which this collection of essays is based was held in Japan for the first time in the history of the study group. Since a record number of Japanese scholars and others working on Japanese minorities participated, it seems appropriate to create a separate section on minorities in Japan. The chapters that comprise this section include case studies on the indigenous community (Ainu), an ethnic minority (Chinese), and what is termed here the socio-economic minority, in complement to the existing literature on the Okinawan (Roberson 2010; Terada 2011; Cho 2014, 2020), the Buraku (Cangia 2009; Terada 2008), and Zainichi Korean communities (de Ferranti 2013; Bell 2019; Koo 2019), which have already been investigated to a greater degree.

While Ainu people have been a subject of research more extensively than the other two groups presented in this section, previous studies of their performing arts have favoured historical or musicological approaches, while paying scant attention to their lived experiences of marginality, albeit with a few exceptions (Hunter 2015). Based on her fieldwork among the Ainu, Kumiko Uyeda (Chapter 14) explores individuals' roles on the premise that the power dynamics between the dominant and the dominated are often articulated by individual artists and groups. She analyses three Ainu musicians' activities and interview narratives to assess the impact of legislation on Ainu performing arts. Uyeda traces their politically-informed performances to their parents, all of whom were influential activists in the group's onerous struggle for justice and equal rights. Her study, along with Lin Wei-ya's (Chapter 7), focuses on individual community members, validating their relevance in ethnographic inquiry, especially in the light of the ongoing debate on the 'individual-collective' dyad in relation to music making (Stock 2010; Shelemay 2011; Ruskin and Rice 2012, et al.), which is essential for the representation of minority groups. Uyeda also asserts that the Ainu Cultural Promotion Act (CPA), a piece of legislation which is beneficial to the Ainu, was passed to demonstrate the modernity of a state that pays attention to multiculturalism.

Focusing on music education for children who belong to ethnic minority communities, Arisawa Shino (Chapter 15) examines the curriculum and textbook changes at overseas Chinese schools in Yokohama, Japan, since the 1950s. She finds that the changes reflect the political and social changes in the People's Republic of China; for example, the songs in support of socialist ideologies in the 1950s were replaced by revolutionary songs in the 1960s and 1970s during the Cultural Revolution, then, after the 1970s, by songs reflecting new social values, particularly those adoring China as the 'homeland'. Arisawa notes that schools' aims to strengthen children's ability to interact with the Japanese through music to which they are exposed during their formative years could be a result of an education policy shift toward raising children to be more



adaptable to the host society.

Finally, Fujita Rinko (Chapter 16) focuses on *chindonya*, the performers of a neglected form of Japanese popular entertainment, whom she regards as comprising a ‘socio-economic minority’ in modern Japanese history, given that the profession arose during the 1920s in depressed urban areas in Tokyo. Based on her analysis of their performances and repertoire, she argues that while drawing extensively from diverse musical genres, *chindonya* have developed distinctive performance styles, music idioms, and playing techniques. Despite an association with social marginalisation, middle class youth exhibited an unexpected interest in *chindonya* in the 1980s, and some became performers themselves.

We believe that the sixteen essays that are included in this volume collectively represent a major segment of the recent scholarship on music and minorities. Some new communities and groups of musicians that had not been investigated previously in the study group were brought into our discussion for the first time, broadening the scope of investigation. The volume also introduces several novel concepts into the minority discourse within the study group, such as ‘humour’, ‘ethnic cultural capital’, ‘selective tolerance’, and ‘mainstreaming’, all of which deserve further attention and analysis by virtue of their potential to enrich the study group’s narratives. The subjects and concepts proposed in this volume all seem to contribute to the study group’s ongoing efforts to



**Photo 1** Symposium participants in the entrance hall of the National Museum of Ethnology (Photo by Takemura Yoshiaki, 23 July 2014)

sophisticate and refine our understanding of music making among minority groups.

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## Notes

- 1) [www.musicandminorities.org](http://www.musicandminorities.org) (accessed: 25 May 2020)
- 2) Apart from the paper sessions, two special events were organised in conjunction with the symposium to expose the participants to the music cultures of two prominent minority communities in Japan. During the concert held on 20 July, *Over the Arirang Pass*, three distinguished groups of Zainichi Korean musicians performed together for the first time in an act that overcame conflicting political affiliations. The post-concert reception provided a rare opportunity for the symposium participants to directly interact with the musicians. A documentary film based on the concert and its main performers' activities was produced in 2018 (Ko and Terada 2018). On 22 July, the participants went on an excursion to the *Buraku* minority neighborhood in the Naniwa section of Osaka, where manufacturing *taiko* (drum) has long been one of the community's major hereditary professions. A guided tour at the Osaka Human Rights Museum was followed by a hands-on workshop on drumming courtesy of the Ikari Taiko Group, a visit to the drum manufacturer, and the local summer festival at the Naniwa Shrine, which featured live performances.
- 3) Adelaida Reyes expressed this need succinctly during the symposium's general discussion: 'We cannot just assume that the dominant group is a given. It is perhaps one of the things that we need to address at this point. Who is the majority? How do we know that it is the dominant majority? On what basis do we say "majority"?' (statement made on 23 July 2014)

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