Musical Textures of Migration: Music's Role in the Syrian Refugee Experience in Germany

Cameron Ward

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Department of Global Studies
University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

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Approved:

Dr. Michal Osterweil, Thesis Advisor

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Dr. Annegret Fauser, Thesis Advisor

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Preface

When I began this project, I wanted to answer the questions: What is the relationship between music and the Syrian refugee experience in Germany? Does music affect Syrian refugees' identities throughout their experience arriving and trying to make a home in Germany? As a musician interested in music as a social process, and a student studying tight-knit communities and the German language, literature, and culture, the question was not too far from my area of interest. Over two years ago, I read a New York Times article titled "A German Opera Spotlights the Refugee Crisis, With Refugees," and I was fascinated by the convergence of music, community building, and global perspective. I then had a German teacher from a small town in Trossingen, Germany, who had been involved in teaching integration classes during the 2013 waves of Syrian refugees to Germany. Bringing things full circle, she happened to know someone who had started a musical integration project, an "Internationaler Chor," [international choir,] to bring different groups of people together, Germans and non-Germans. I spent many afternoons talking with my German professor, learning more about the German immigration process and she helped me learn more about the musical integration initiatives that she knew about in her area where she was from. Eventually, from these experiences with my professor and my own research, I came to realize that music is often used in integrational practices from non-governmental and governmental organizations, but I had not seen how individuals themselves, without being a performer, were using music throughout their migration experience. Given the profound effect I had seen music have on individuals, I wanted to look for it among Syrians in Germany.

Prologue

Catching a ride back from work as a college freshman had made me ecstatic; sitting alone at the bus stop past 9:00 pm made me uneasy, and I was still getting used to my new community. As I happily stepped into my coworker's car hoping that eventually I could call her a friend, I wondered -- what are we going to talk about? I hardly knew her. I had sat through awkwardly silent car rides before, and I did not want her kind gesture to turn into the same experience. Once we were settled in the car, she queued up her Spotify playlist before we began our ride. Then the first chord rang, followed by soft rhythmic vocalizing "ba bah ba bah" over and over, and finally the singer officially announced their presence by declaring, "bring the beat in." It was Beyoncé's "Love On Top." I knew that was the song from the very first chord that played, and in less than 10 seconds I was pulled back to high school car rides with my best friends and trying to pick a song that everyone would agree on. I remembered going to Waffle House, everyone making sure we budgeted enough money for the jukebox. I remembered the excited moments when we would all wait for the next key change to come in and scream "you put my love on top" at the top of our lungs, even as Beyoncé began to perilously sing higher and higher, and our voices screeched and cracked. I told my coworker of these memories, and soon enough we began singing along too. Even more though, our conversation had started: tell me more about your friends, what type of music do you listen to, why do you like it, does it mean something to you, I can't help but sing along to... Before I knew it, our short car ride was over, and she had said that next time I would queue up the music.

Music was our start, something we found in common, even as our preferences in genres or songs differed as much as we did as people. It was something that started us on our journey of sharing our stories with one another. At the time though, I was none the wiser of the role it had

played in our friendship. As I have moved through life, I have begun to note the critical role of music in people's lives, becoming a source of grounding, meaning and identity when everything else is in flux. This thesis explores the role of music among Syrian refugees in Germany.

Introduction

In 2015, Matthew McNaught published the journal article "Fairouz in Exile." In it, McNaught gives his personal account of his relationship with his friend Ahmad, a refugee who had fled his home in Moadamiya, Syria, and eventually found himself in Germany. McNaught describes the prevalence of music in Ahmad's journey of settling in Germany.

Every morning after waking up in a refugee camp in Bielefeld, Germany, Ahmad would begin what McNaught called his "Fairouz ritual" (McNaught, 2017). Ahmad would make his way to the kitchen and find a YouTube compilation of Fairouz[1] morning songs on his phone and when he entered the kitchen, all of his seventeen roommates knew that it was time for Fairouz (McNaught, 2017). Eventually when Ahmad moved out of the camp in Bielefeld, McNaught described that Ahmad still spoke of and enjoyed Fairouz's music and morning coffee. Much in Ahmad's life had been variable since being forced to leave his home in Syria due to war, but Ahmad's weekly discussions with Mcnaught revealed that Fairouz in the morning was one of the only constants in his life. Talking to McNaught, Ahmad explained why Fairouz was so important to him, saying "[y]ou know how some people don't like the taste of coffee without milk?... It's like that for me. I don't like the taste of coffee without the voice of Fairouz" (McNaught, 2017). As a Lebanese singer, Fairouz was still very much relevant to Ahmad's life as he tried to make a home in Germany.

Real-life stories like that of Ahmad, as well as my own experiences with music, illustrate music's influence on building relationships and capturing an individual's identity. These stories led me to pursue this research project in which I seek to address several core questions: What is

[1] Fairouz is arguably one of the most famous singers in the Arab World.

the relationship between music and the Syrian refugee experience in Germany? Does music affect Syrian refugees' identities throughout their experience arriving and trying to make a home in Germany? Having asked these questions, I argue that because of the inherent connection between music and identity, music can be used to retain and expand identities, communicate direct and indirect ideas, and build more inclusive communities in Germany. The rest of this chapter provides background information including descriptions of the Syrian refugee experience in Germany and the role that music plays. I will also discuss the current situation in Syria and more about the tension between different models of community building, specifically, assimilation and integration.

I. Background: Making a New Home in Germany and Music's Role

In a manner, migration is a natural part of humanity — people move from one place to another often because of something as simple as getting a new job and moving. At other times, massive waves of migration are caused by war or natural disasters. However, whatever the cause, when people migrate they take their identities and all that comprise these—their past experiences, social attributes, and values— with them. No one arrives in a new nation or community as a blank slate. Consequently, nations and communities must decide how they will involve outsiders within their borders, and migrants must also engage. There are varying ways of creating communities, and questions naturally arise. What parts of an outsiders' identity will be allowed to remain? How will outsiders, if they want to, resist homogeneity and retain the identities they arrived with?

Syria and Syrian Diaspora Today

To date, 6.7 million refugees have been displaced from Syria and sought sanctuary in neighboring border countries in Europe, Northern Africa, and the Americas. At the end of 2018, Germany hosted 532,100 Syrian refugees, the fourth largest Syrian refugee population in the world and the biggest in Europe (Global Trends, 2019). The Syrian Diaspora of today is the result of the Syrian Civil War, which began in March 2011 (Syria: The Story of the Conflict, 2016). The war has involved three main actors: the Bashar Al Assad government regime, ISIS, and armed rebels, who act against both the Assad regime and ISIS (Syria: The Story of the Conflict, 2016). Due to these actors' conflicts, millions of Syrians have been forced to leave their home in Syria and search for new homes abroad.

People of the Syrian diaspora today face many of the same challenges that diasporic groups have faced in the past: finding routines and normalcy away from one's homeland, making a permanent home, maintaining and creating new identities, living with trauma and the associated physical conditions, powerlessness, finding work, continuing education, learning a new language, racism and discrimination, and isolation, etc. These are the struggles that Syrian refugees in Germany today may carry with them as they work to become members of their new community.

Arriving and the role of music

Most refugees' journey in Germany begins at a government funded "initial aid facility," or refugee camp and for several months the camps make up refugees' entire world ("How to Apply for Asylum," 2015). Oftentimes they are literally fenced in from the outside world, and in these (frequently overcrowded) camps, refugees sleep (in shared rooms of around twenty people), eat, receive needed health care, and spend the entirety of their days ("How to Apply for

Asylum," 2015). Generally, many refugees only leave the camps to take German and integration classes, which they are entitled to and obligated to take under law. The classes are aimed to prepare refugees and asylum seekers to live life in Germany. Some subjects include work, shopping, culture, history and politics, the legal system, being a parent in Germany, etc, ("Integration Courses"). While attending these classes, most refugees are in a sort of "limbo" as they wait to hear if their application for asylum will be accepted or not. Those whose applications are accepted will eventually be assigned a city or district to live in for at least one year, and during this time, refugees will have opportunities to find work, assuming that they have passed their language courses at a sufficient level (Hamann, 2015). These are large-scale integration efforts instituted by the German government at both national and state levels. This system creates a basic outline of the refugee experience in Germany.

At the same time, many local and private actors are involved in refugees making a home in Germany, including, for example, sports clubs and social groups. Interestingly though, music has also taken center stage in German integrational efforts. In the past six years, there have been several German state operas that feature all-refugee casts including some solely Syrian-refugee. The shows they perform are designed to bring attention to the plight of refugees. For example, in 2018, the Bavarian State Opera put on "*Moses*" which was cast with all refugees. Cast members stated that "the story of Moses is also my story" (Barone, 2018). Biblically, Moses was cast down the Nile riverbank by his mother in order to escape death as a baby and was found by the Pharaoh's daughter and raised as an Egyptian rather than an Israelite. Integrational choirs have also popped up all around Germany. In 2015, Berliners formed a Begegnungschor, a "Getting To Know You Choir." The choir was equally comprised of Germans and asylum seekers from Syria and Eritrea (Nicholson, 2015). The choir sang the Fairouz song "Nassam Aleyna El Hawa"

["The Breeze Upon Us"] at every rehearsal. One member stated that the love that everyone had for the song was a "very vocal sign of acceptance" (Nicholson, 2015). In another example, conservatory students in Trossingen, a small town in southern Germany, used music to help teach refugees German. Their goal was to "convey language through music and rhythm" (Drinkuth, 2015). The students used German children's songs to introduce refugees to new vocabulary and work on German pronunciation. Thus, music expanded the landscape of integrational actors at federal, state and private levels, and it is among these actors where my project lies. In addition, and on a smaller scale, I will also look at how individuals use music in their own migration process.

Assimilation v. Integration

One of the biggest challenges in many migrant situations, and certainly for Syrian refugees in Germany contemporarily, is the question of how their new communities allow both immigrants and existing residents to live together. A core debate or tension on this theme arises between conceptions of whether the goal is assimilation or integration. These processes define how immigrants will settle into their new homes and how much they must change to be a part of their new communities. A key goal in my research was to understand how migrants themselves experienced the process of becoming a part of a German society, and the role music played in this.

Essentially, integration means to bring separate entities together. The Webster Dictionary defines it as "the act or process or an instance of integrating, such as incorporation as equals into society or an organization of individuals of different groups." Key here is the idea of incorporating different parts equally. In other words, groups become more similar to each other

through the creation of a new hybrid identity. In contrast, assimilation requires one group to become more like the other. With cultural or social assimilation, one group is absorbed into another and often the minority group is expected to shed their defining cultural and social behaviors and traditions to take on characteristics of the majority (Alba, 2012, p. 54). Pointedly, the definitions of integration offered above, which requires entities to be equal in how much they change, is not always how integration occurs in real life, and consequently the discrepancy between the two is commonly discussed in integration theory.

Integration brings up the dichotomy of outsider --a migrant refugee, in the context of this thesis-- versus 'insider' or mainstream—German natives, in this instance-- and the social boundaries that create these characters (Alba, 2012, p. 44-48). If one is not an outsider, then they are a part of the "mainstream," which describes a predominant social group on the inside and often coincides with race and/or ethnicity (Alba, 2012, p. 48). In Germany, the division can refer to the white German mainstream, and the Arab migrants in Germany who exist outside of this.

Power dynamics are also often at the center of either integration or assimilation. In *Migration, Diaspora and Identity*, Ulrike M. Vieten references Georgie Wemyss, saying that "tolerance is connected to power; tolerance is principally granted by those who structurally and culturally define the rules of belonging and appropriate behavior" (Vieten, 2016, p.62).The mainstream decides the policies and social standards towards outsiders; it decides how much the outsider must assimilate or integrate in their society. Consequently, this power dynamic can leave outsiders in a vulnerable position because they are not given a prominent role in choosing how they will settle into their new community. Accordingly, as 'outsiders,' are Syrian refugees in Germany able to assert themselves in the process of making a home? Moreover, do the policies they must adhere to affect their identity?

Methods & Research Design

I collected data to answer the following research questions: What is the relationship between music and the Syrian refugee experience in Germany? How does music affect Syrian refugees' identities throughout their experience arriving and trying to make a home in Germany?

In order to provide an answer, I conducted three in-depth interviews with Syrian refugees that have resettled in Germany. My questions were aimed at learning more about Syrian identity, how it is defined and experienced in Germany, and its relation to music. While each interview was open-ended, the interview questions addressed four general categories: assimilation v. integration, multiculturalism, identity formation, and identity's relationship with music. The specific questions are included in Appendix 1.

Data

This study collected data through one-on-one, semi-structured interviews with three Syrian refugees living in Germany. To participate in the study, individuals had to be 18 or older with previous or current refugee or asylum status, denoted by the German government and currently living in Germany. Participants had spent various amounts of time living in Germany, some coming shortly after the war in Syria broke out, and others several years later. Each interview was between 45 and 60 minutes. As a researcher, I chose to have a limited number of interviews so that the thesis could do an in-depth analysis of each participant's answers. Generally, when works include more participants' data, they most often have less space to include the comprehensive experiences of participants.

As much as these interviews were conducted to gain new knowledge, they were also about creating a safe space for participants that allowed for self-expression. These questions were designed to let the participants share their knowledge and experiences, and thus guide the conversation as much as possible. I believe that the questions largely allowed for a self-directed conversation on the part of the interviewee -- answers varied from one participant to another and were described in vastly different personal contexts. In preparation for interviews, I also considered that participants may be in politically vulnerable positions stemming from their home country experiences, their immigration status in Germany, and the German population's perception of refugees, as it varies by region. Accordingly, as a researcher, I communicated with participants that they could choose to not answer any question and asked questions that focused on the individuals' time spent in Germany to avoid unnecessary focus on potentially traumatic experiences leaving Syria. I also reviewed the questions with a local organization (in Chapel Hill, NC) that works with refugees to further discuss the implications of these questions and their effects on fostering a positive environment for participants. At this, the questions were designed to let participants lead the conversation in a direction that they were comfortable with, and, at their discretion, talk more or less about Syria and their personal lives.

For this discussion to protect privacy, participant one will be identified as Afran. He identifies as a male, uses he/him pronouns, and has lived in Bavaria (a southern state of Germany) for three years. He is Kurdish, thirty years old, studying at university, and does volunteer work. Participant two, referred to as Fatima, identifies as a female and uses she/her pronouns. She has lived in Germany for five years and currently resides in southern Bavaria. Fatima is Arabic, twenty-eight and finishing her bachelor's degree in lower Bavaria. Participant three, referred to as Nasira, identifies as a female and uses she/her pronouns. She is Arabic, has

lived in Germany for six years, and is thirty-two years old. She finished her Masters degree last year, currently lives in southern Germany, and works as a pharmacist.

The design of this study is similar to the study highlighted in *Diaspora and Media in Europe: Migration, Identity, and Integration*, which aimed to "identify patterns of media consumption within the Syrian immigrant group living in Stockholm [,Sweden]" (Timmermans, 2019, p.58). The study included 10 participants and utilized "qualitative semi-structured interviews" (Timmermans, 2019, p. 58). The study further sought to compare and identify differences in participants' answers and in doing so, it articulated three overarching themes: identity, communication and community.

IV: Thesis Outline

In the second chapter, I will review relevant debates in a variety of literatures that intersect my project. In it, I discuss the function of music as a social process by highlighting music and identity. I then discuss the role of multiculturalism in creating communities by first defining multiculturalism and then looking at it in contrast to building communities via integration or assimilation. Following this, chapter three will present each interview and the argument that music can be used to retain and expand identities, communicate direct and indirect ideas, and build more inclusive communities in Germany. Chapter four concludes the discussion of these topics and by advocating for individuals to actively utilize music sharing as means to create multicultural and inclusive communities.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Introduction

The literatures engaged within this chapter are: music as a social process, multiculturalism, as well as identity and music. Each literature situates my argument within relevant scholarly discussions and makes the case for working at their intersections. Overall, I argue that because of the inherent connection between music and identity, it can be used to retain and expand identities, communicate direct and indirect ideas, and build more inclusive communities in Germany. Accordingly, music as a social process expands what music is beyond notes on a page or just a song on the radio, which is crucial given how music is regarded in this thesis. Multicultural theoretical debates address the issues in assimilation and integration practices and express alternative ways of building communities. Finally, literature at the intersection of identity and music seeks to address the crux of music as a social process and multiculturalism. Further, it addresses the ways music can and does function within communities. In chapter three, I build on these literatures to engage the material that arose in my interviews.

I. A Wider Sense of Music: Music as a Social Process

I believe that living inherently involves engaging with music. Beyond playing a violin solo or listening to a song, music exists in the pulse of someone's step, in the rhythm of a heartbeat. I utilize this perspective throughout this thesis, and further believe that it is essential to the salience of centering music in my research. However, I did not always think of music in this way. In recent years, I have embarked on the process of "rethinking music." This journey has not

only radically changed my understanding of music, but also given me terms to identify what I subconsciously knew about music from just living. The process of naming has been liberating.

The sections that follow engage with literature that "rethinks music," and show cases understanding music as more than one-dimensional sound object. These literatures cast music as an experience, a memory, an identity, a space — something that follows people in many different ways throughout life — a wider sense of music.

"Rethinking Music"

"[r]ethinking music asks us to situate our understanding of music in other experiences of music-making, the human practices of bringing music into existence through ritual and belief, act and imagination, and yes, through thought."(Philip Bohlman, 1999, pg.34)

In his contribution to the book, *Rethinking Music,* ethnomusicologist Philip Bohlman discusses thirteen different ways, ontologies, that people generally define music, and thus, his writing serves as an entry into expanding what music is in this thesis. These thirteen ontologies demonstrate music's multi-dimensionality. I will discuss four of the ontologies Bohlman lays out, which I believe are the most relevant to understanding music in the scope of this project.

(1) Bohlman sets up the dichotomy of "My Music/Your Music," meaning that one defines music by what is one's own, "my music," and what is not included in their musical collection, "your music" (Bohlman, 1999, p. 20). Here, music is the song someone listened to on their walk home from school or the playlist they listen to in the morning. Thus, it is something that is personal and belongs only to the listener. Accordingly, music can be considered an object

that is attached to someone's identity (Bohlman, 1999, p.20). This is what I will refer to in Chapter three as a “sound object”.

(2) “Our Music/Their Music” understands music as a “capacity to contribute to social and communal cohesiveness,” and as something that builds community and “distinguishes one community from another” (Bohlman, 1999, p. 20-21). Here, music is not an object, but an active social process, and it is not owned, but shared, by a group of people as “our music” (Bohlman 1999, p. 21). Music listening includes the national anthem at football games, a movement being played by an orchestra, and protesters marching down the streets singing “We Shall Overcome” during the 1960’s Civil Rights Movement. In this case, music is either a uniting force, “our music,” or creates division between the other and “their music” (Bohlman, 1999, p. 21).

(3) “Music as Language/Music Embedded in Language” describes the boundaries between music and language as “flexible, permeable, and blurred;” music is its own language and simultaneously embedded within spoken languages (Bohlman, 1999, p. 25). Music’s function as its own language is indefinite. Individuals “know what music communicates for them,” while music can also “communicate anything to anybody” (Bohlman, 1999, p. 25). Here, music is recognized as a means of communication and I believe can more commonly be understood by the phrase “when words fail, music speaks.” As my interviews revealed, this role for music was crucial.

In addition to Bohlman’s work on rethinking music, the study of music as language refers back to a long historical dialogue on music as a means of communication. Historically, the discussion of music as language and its means to communicate dates back centuries and has not only been a topic discussed by scholars, but composers as well. For example, 19th century

German composer, Mendelssohn, famously said "[w]hat the music I love expresses to me are thoughts not too indefinite for words, but rather too definite" (Mendelssohn from Bonds, 2013, p. 418). Mendelssohn found music expressive and a superior means of communication. The discussion of music as language within scholarship is also quite prevalent as it fits into the discussion of how to define music. Philip Bohlman's discussion of music as language in his "Thirteen Ontologies of Music" is only a single contemporary example of the scholarship engaging with the topic. Music's communicational patterns have been well interrogated from performer to listener, listener to composer and from composer "via the performer to the listener," but I interrogate another, markedly less discussed dichotomy in this argument: listener to listener (Samama, 2016, p. 45-8). Furthermore, I make the connection between musical communication and sharing of individuals' identities.

(4) Bohlman describes that music can be "In Time," meaning that because "[m]usic takes place in time" it can be used to define an increment of time. When music is understood in relation to time, it is a means of recalling, or recovering time, and thus, is closely related to memory (Bohlman, 1999, p.29). Moreover, understanding music "In time," means to understand that music "serves as a fundamental act of remembering" (Bohlman, 1999, p.29). Importantly here, music has the capability to take people back in time and contain memory. In the context of migration, making connections to the past, particularly a past home, is relevant.

Music can be defined and understood through many different, and even opposing, contexts. However, individuals, although perhaps subconsciously, continually walk in between these contexts. The ontologies of music discussed above are far from exhaustive but serve as a point of departure to expand what defines music in the scope of this thesis. Pointedly, this thesis

does not ask the reader to think about music, but to “rethink” what music is to themselves and humanity.

II. Multiculturalism in the Context of Creating Communities

“[w]hen we try to make culture an undisturbed space of harmony and agreement where social relations exist within cultural forms of uninterrupted accords, we subscribe to a form of social amnesia in which we forget that all knowledge is forged in histories that are played out in the field of social antagonisms” (Peter McLaren, International Journal of Educational Reform in hooks, 1994, pg.31)

Multiculturalism within Systems

In 2015, two years after the beginning of the refugee crisis, German Chancellor Angela Merkel stated that "Multiculturalism leads to parallel societies and therefore remains a ‘life lie [sham]’" (Noack, 2015). Earlier in 2010, she stated that "[o]f course the tendency had been to say, 'Let's adopt the multicultural concept and live happily side by side and be happy to be living with each other.' But this concept has failed, and failed utterly," (Noack, 2015). In conjunction, it has been argued that Merkel “favors assimilation projects that are state-led, demanding and supportive of refugees, with the aim of making them feel part of German society. And [that] she wants Germany’s Christian origins and values to remain the country’s “lead culture” ” (Karim, 2018, p.12). At this, multiculturalism, and for that matter integration and assimilation, function as a public policy in a governmental and political setting (Jupp and Clyne, 2011, pg.xii). However, they are also social processes. Therefore, the frameworks of public policy and social processes both relate to migration.

Governmental institutions, private organizations, and individuals work within an ebb and flow of integration, assimilation, and multiculturalism, according to the political environments and social moods towards outsiders. The German government, for example, shifted from enacting more multicultural immigration policies, to the rejection of it, and shifted towards, in Angela Merkel's words, "integration." As she said, "the demand for integration is one of our key tasks" (Peel, 2010). Thus, Syrian refugees today supposedly migrate to Germany in a post multicultural context that favors an "integrational" environment.

There are also larger social shifts in attitudes towards migrants that can occur across regions, entire countries, and even continentally. Germany, for example, has endured a rise in right-wing nationalist attitudes in the past decade. These personal attitudes have affected the German political environment as well. In 2013, the Alternative Future for Deutschland (AfD) party was founded, and the party is one of the most prominent right-wing nationalist and populist groups in Europe. The anti-immigration party "[f]ocuses on Islam and migration, seeing Islam as alien to German society" ("Germany's AfD," 2020). In 2017, the AfD won 94 of 709 seats in the Bundestag, the German parliament, which made it the third-largest political party ("Germany's AfD," 2020). In context, the Christian Democratic Union of Germany (CDU), a center right political party, was the first-largest political party with 181 seats, and a total of seven parties won seats in the Bundestag (Kirby, 2017). The AfD has sparked protests throughout Germany, by both those for and against the party's sentiments.

Critical v. Liberal Multiculturalism

Today, critical multiculturalism represents a prominent perspective amongst activists and scholars alike working to eliminate societal white supremacy, sexism, and homophobia in favor

of social justice. The Oxford English Dictionary defines multiculturalism as the "[p]rocess whereby the distinctive identities of the cultural groups within such a society are maintained or supported." Furthermore, critical multiculturalism seeks to support cultural groups by "[a]cknowledg[ing], question[ing], and ultimately disrupt[ing] embedded power structures" (Attias). In contrast, liberal multiculturalism is regarded from the critical perspective as "superficial," because it focuses on "surface-level inclusion of [c]ulture," and does not question societal systems that create inequalities between cultures (Attias). Critical scholars today might regard the manifestation of the "melting pot" approach to cultural diversity as liberal multiculturalism (hooks, 1994, p. 31). In *Teaching to Transgress: Education as the Practice of Freedom*, feminist and cultural theorist, bell hooks, describes critical multiculturalism as the practice of "decentering" what is dominant (hooks, 1994, p. 40). For example, one may decenter dominant racial groups and ideologies, and focus "on the issue of voice" (hooks, 1994, p. 40). She continues to describe the process in relation to students in a classroom "[W]ho speaks? Who listens? And why? Caring about whether all students fulfill their responsibility to contribute to learning in the classroom" (hooks, 1994, p. 40) This a model of critical multiculturalism that acknowledges the diverse voices of members in a given community, sees the value in them, and then actively includes them, while interrogating why their voices may not be heard.

Multiculturalism: Integration or Assimilation

Ideas of multiculturalism and critical multiculturalism have been popularized in recent years. However, the call for this process is not a new notion. Martin Luther King Jr. asserted ideas of multiculturalism in his vision of beloved community. Beloved community is a space where individuals value their neighbor as much as themselves, regardless of the multiple identities they hold. They foster an ultimate connection between people – brotherhood and

sisterhood ("The King Philosophy"). Accordingly, "racism and all forms of discrimination, bigotry and prejudice," have no place in the beloved community ("The King Philosophy"). Further, King asserted his vision of a beloved community as a means to achieve racial justice, which prompted his call to end segregation and create integrated communities.

In the context of this thesis, which discusses Syrian refugees' experience of making a new home in Germany and explores whether this process reflects assimilation and/or integration. King's definition of integration bears weight on the tension between the two because, as a leader in the 1960's Civil Rights Movement, he interacted with and proposed theories on integration. In one of his many essays during the Civil Rights Movement, King remarked:

> " [l]ike life, racial understanding is not something that we find but something that we must create. What we find when we enter these mortal plains is existence; but existence is the raw material out of which all life must be created. A productive and happy life is not something that you find; it is something that you make. And so the ability of Negroes and whites to work together, to understand each other, will not be found ready made; it must be created by the fact of contact" (King, 1986, p. 572).

Thus, King's model of integration, informed by his desire to create beloved community, was an active process. It was not simply created by saying what it was, but by Black and white people mutually working together to make a space where difference was recognized and respected. It was a model of critical multiculturalism. Accordingly, I propose that this definition of integration through attaining beloved community is the most holistic and accepting form of integration. The question becomes, however, what happens when this definition is lost in favor of other manifestations of integration? Speaking of her time as an activist fighting for racial

justice in the south, just post the Civil Rights Movement, Ruby Sales remarks on what she recognizes as a negative separation between the two saying that " the mission [as organizers] was no longer a Beloved Community, but the mission became integration" ("Ruby Sales", 2020).

Further, when bell hooks describes her experience of changing from segregated to desegregated schools, rather than being liberated, she felt stifled. Thus, the experience sounds much more like assimilation than integration. In *Teaching to Transgress: Education as the Practice of Freedom* she stated that "[w]ithin [s]egregated schools, black children [w]ere deemed exceptional, gifted, were given special care" (hooks, 1994, p. 2). While integrated schooling was about being "[b]ussed to white schools, [where] we soon learned that obedience, and not a zealous will to learn, was what was expected of us. Too much eagerness to learn could easily be seen as a threat to white authority" (hooks, 1994, p. 3). As hooks describes later in her book, this is a model of integration without a commitment to multiculturalism.

III. Convergence: Identity and Music

Identity, Community, Music, and Difference

In the 1983 book, *Imagined Communities,* Benedict Anderson asserts that a nation is an imagined community because "the members of even the smallest nation will never know most of their fellow-members, meet them, or even hear of them, yet in the minds of each lives the image of their communion" (Anderson, 1983, p.3). In the context of migration, why must one assimilate and adopt all of the cultural practices of the existing community, if the boundaries are imagined and can be changed? Migration studies frequently discuss "imagined communities," and I contribute to this discussion by investigating the concept in the context of Syrian migration

to Germany. Furthermore, I focus on the role music can play through the frameworks of assimilation, integration, and multiculturalism.

"[Music's] effectiveness may be twofold; not only does it act as a ready means for the identification of different ethnic and social groups, but it has potent emotional connotations and can be used to assert and negotiate identity in a particularly powerful manner." (Stokes, 1994, p. 48)

Identity at large can be understood at collective and/or individual levels. As a collective function, Rogers Brubaker and Frederick Cooper write that "identity denotes [s]ameness among members of a group or category" (Brubaker and Cooper, 2000, p.6). Cooper and Brubaker also offer that identity can be a "core aspect of (individual and collective) selfhoo[d]" (Brubaker and Cooper, 2000, p.6). Thus, identity can be what brings collectives together, or what a group of people create together, and it serves as means for people to define themselves as individuals.

Ethnomusicologist Martin Stokes asserts that "music is socially meaningful, not entirely but largely because it provides means by which people recognize identities and places, and the boundaries which separate them" (Stokes, 1994, p.5). Stokes's articulation of boundaries in this statement is paramount. It describes that music serves a function in determining 'who I am and where I come from' and concurrently delineates who is not a part of this shared experience. In other words, music is an identifier -- it recalls the particular place that it came from and the context that it was created in. Often these identifiers coincide with nationality, generations, race and ethnicity and even smaller social groups such as friends. It identifies who was a part of the shared experience listening to it at the time and who it is still culturally significant to in the present.

Music's connection to identity is thoroughly discussed within academic literature. Scholars have studied music's reflection of identity on both individual and shared community levels. Martin Stokes's discussion of identity and music is only a sample of this robust study. Today, music and identity has also evolved into a discussion on difference within music. For example, there are books such as *Rethinking Difference in Music Scholarship* containing essays that address gender, sexuality, race, colonialism, sameness and universality in music (Bloechel and Lowe, 2015, p. 3-4). In the Syrian refugee context, in Germany, I engage with this crux of music, identity and difference by looking at music's role in how people can maintain their individual identities within a collective identity while simultaneously recreating the collective.

I also engage with reenactment in music, which has been increasingly studied in the past two decades. However, I connect it to the very personal perspective of reenactment in people's daily lives. This differs from perspectives of reenactment today that look at the large-scale implications of musical reenactment. For example in her contribution to *Performing Commemoration: Musical Reenactment and the Politics of Trauma,* Vanessa Agnew discusses large scale reenactment (protest, museums) related to war, genocide and refugees experiences, and argues "against musical reenactment as a useful tool for advancing historical knowledge but in favor, specifically, of nonrealist, nonrepresentational forms of reenactment as powerful means of interrogating and commemorating the traumatic past in relation to a postwitness present" (Agnew, 2020, p.169.) In contrast, I am concerned with how individuals' reenact their own past events that they have already lived, their traditions, and how these reenactments impact on their identity. By doing so, I will begin to understand musical reenactment in individuals lives and specific impacts of reenactment on Syrian refugees in Germany.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I have discussed music as a social process, multiculturalism in the context of community building, and music and identity. These literatures interact with the findings from the three interviews with Syrian refugees' living in Germany that are discussed in chapter three. These literatures provide ways of understanding what participants articulate in their interviews and establish how the knowledge these interviews offer will contribute to academic discussions at large.

Chapter 3: Argument

Introduction

This chapter discusses the major themes that I discovered through my interviews with three Syrian refugees, identified by the pseudonyms Fatima, Nasira, and Afran. The three major themes that emerged from the interviews include: identity, communication and community. These themes both confirmed and enhanced notions of rethinking music and music's connection to individual and group identity. The interviews also show iterations of community and community building through an assimilative, integrational, or multicultural lens. Connecting the interview themes to relevant literature, I argue that because of the inherent connection between music and identity, music can be used to retain and expand identities, communicate direct and indirect ideas, and build more inclusive communities in Germany.

Identity, communication, and community were consistent points that each interview circled back to, and, at times, they even proved to be inextricably intertwined. These themes emerged based on the frequency that the terms were brought up by participants themselves and how much time we spent discussing them. These interviews were semi-structured and designed to create a safe space for participants to express themselves. With this in mind, as the researcher, I wanted to honor the topics that were most relevant for participants and provided direct, personal insights for improving the process of making a home in Germany.

This chapter proceeds by describing each theme and the ways they emerged in the context of the interviews. Throughout the chapter, I focus on music as both a sound object and reenactment in the Syrian refugee experience in Germany. It then shows that music is also a useful tool of communication and how it can communicate one's Syrian identity. Lastly, this

chapter explores the boundaries between assimilation and integration in Germany and how the processes challenge people's identities and perception of what defines a community.

I. Identity

Perhaps the main theme each conversation kept coming back to was identity. As each person described how they settled in Germany, their identities informed the process of how they were treated by Germans and how they saw their new community. These interviews revealed that music and identity are inextricably linked — music represents the static and evolving elements of each individual's identity.

For individuals, both reenactment (the acting out of past practices or events) and objects that reflect culture are integral aspects of retaining identity. This is illustrated in Nasira's and Fatima's ways of remaining close to their Syrian culture by maintaining traditions and objects similar to their home culture. However, reenactment and the objects tied to it are often performed in group settings: making a meal with family or friends, engaging in conversation with people who allow one to discuss a topic they would have in the past, and being with people who have the shared experience of watching a particular television show or listening to the same music. Nasira had some family members in Germany when she arrived, and Fatima arrived with her mother and sister. While many Syrians today migrate to Germany to be with their family members, many still arrive alone. Thus, in the larger context of Syrians living in Germany, how does one still reenact traditions when they are in Germany without people from their past? What traditions can be reenacted solitarily? Can music be a part of this reenactment and/or a useful object in reflecting Syrian culture?

Nasira

At first when I asked Nasira what music she listened to, she did not have much to say, unlike the other interviewees. Further differing from them, she said that she did not feel the music she listened to represented herself or that her music preferences communicated her identity. In my previous interviews, I had found that participants specifically felt that music did represent them, and was used as a method of self-expression, and was a way to relate to others around them. It seemed that music was much less directly impactful and played a less active role in Nasira's life. Yet, as our conversation ended, Nasira on her own, discovered more about herself and her relationship with music when I asked her if music helped her remain close to her culture. Consequently, this crucial discovery deepened the scope of understanding music in this project.

Nasira: No [pause]... Maybe sometimes mornings, we have a traditio[n] that we listen to the same Musiker [musician], ah maybe ja [yes], maybe yes. It remind me to my culture, contact with my culture.

CW: What's the artist?

Nasira: Fairouz

CW: Okay!

Nasira: It's famous, very famous [in the] mornings

CW: Yeah, so you do that every morning?

Nasira: Yeah, every morning.

CW: Every morning?

Nasira: [laughing] Yeah, I like it. I like it. Sometimes no, but most of my days yeah.

CW: Is it, is it just something that like, you never thought about? So you kept doing it. So you did it in Syria and you kept doing it in Germany too?'

Nasira: Yeah, really I don't think about it, but your question, it give me idea why I did it [laughs].

CW: Yeah! Well--

Nasira: I do it without thinking about why I do it, [but] it makes me remember me and my country. Yeah exactly, because every morning in Syria I hear it, this musician. With friends, at the post, everywhere in Syria. Mornings it is this singer.

Nasira surprised herself when she realized that she listens to the Lebanese artist Fairouz every morning; it is an unconscious tradition that she brought with her from Syria to Germany. Her experiences reminded me of Ahmad's narrative, which was shared by Mathew McNaught and discussed at the beginning of this thesis. Ahmad drank coffee and listened to Fairouz every morning, and it was explained that his "Fairouz ritual" was one of the things that remained the same for Ahmad throughout his migration experiences. Nasira shows how music unconsciously exists within her migration journey. Moreover, Ahmad took this a step further and showed music as reenactment and a sound object was used consciously in the process of making homes abroad for individuals from a refugee and migrant background.

Music is both an object and reenactment tool that can be actively used to maintain identity and is innately embedded within people's identities. Nasira's listening to Fairouz in the morning is a reenactment of her culture in Syria — waking up every morning and being

immersed in Fariouz's music. Similarly, Fairouz's music is a sound object that Nasira had in Syria and brought to Germany, which is now used to reenact the tradition of listening to Fairouz in the mornings. Pointedly, these Fairouz songs were embedded in Nasira's behavior and had gone unnoticed in the years since she migrated to Germany. However, as Nasira identified, upon thinking about it, the music made her feel like herself and connected her to Syria. For Nasira, Fariouz's music unearths a part of herself that remains Syrian and a part that is a Syrian living in Germany and a part of German culture.

When I asked Fatima and Afran questions about music and identity, unlike Nasira, they each had strong responses indicating that music was critical in their lives. As opposed to Nasira whose experiences with Fairouz's music as a sound object highlighted musical reenactment, Fatima's and Afran's responses solidified the importance of music as a sound object in migrant and refugee contexts.

Afran

Utilizing music as an object, Afran identifies that music has a role in maintaining his connection with his home culture

CW: Do you ever, I don't know, listen to something, or do a certain thing that might remind you of home?

Afran: Yes, sometimes music. So it's known that Kurdish music is beautiful and a lot of times when I'm listening to it it reminds me of home. In that way I remember. Also some smells you know? Some scents. Do you know there is a tree called Russian Olive.

CW: Okay

Afran: So we had them there, in April they would be blossoming, and there is this kind of smell. When I smell that thing it just reminds me of home, like if I'm there.

CW: Yeah, that makes sense. That makes a lot of sense.

Afran: But music comes first.

After Afran described that he used music to remind himself of home, I wanted to further see if music, like the smell of the Russian Olive, also brought back specific memories.

Afran: Specific memories, yes. There is a Kurdish artist, he is really lets say old, who is like in his 70's and so his name is Mohamed Shekho. So every time I listen to him it reminds me of my childhood because all the time we would be having the salesmen, who would be coming to the village and they used to play music just to inform the villagers that they were there. There was a specific one [salesman] who would be coming on a weekly basis and he would be playing the same artist [Shekho], uhh [laughs] all the time when I'm listen to it just reminds me of that moments

CW: Sounds like it makes you laugh when you hear it, or chuckle. Gives you a little bit of happiness.

Afran: Yeah, exactly! [Both laugh]

Afran uses music as an object to remind himself of his home culture -- being Kurdish and living in Syria. Pointedly, as a sound object, music serves as an access point for him to remember the past. Therefore, by using music as a sound object to connect to his past, he is reaffirming his history as part of his present identity.

Fatima

Like Afran, Fatima indicated that music connected her to her home culture. However, she also spoke with decisiveness about the role of music in her life and more specifically how she used music as a tool.

Fatima: Absolutely. Absolutey, yeah. I have always listened to English music, like American, even French. I enjoy it alot, but Arabic music, it's something else. And in the past few years there was actually some Syrian music, like uh rap and techno— new bands, new rappers. So the topics they talk about, it's heartbreaking and it's just a way for us to face the reality. Face the fact that we don't live there anymore, and we have to make something else ourselves. So music is always a tool. Always has been, always will be.

In a migrant context, the act of listening to music can be cathartic and connect individuals to their home culture. Unlike Nasira's perspective, which presented music's indirect and seemingly compulsive connection with identity, Fatima illustrates the active use of music as a tool that helps one maintain their identity. Here, music becomes a resource to maintain and express one's identity. This is a distinction of great salience in how music can be used in the process of Syrian refugees' experience arriving and making a home in Germany. Music can be used as an object for migrants to remember who they are and where they come from in a multicultural context. Further, this understanding of music speaks to Stokes's discussion of identity. He describes that "immigrant groups in large multi-cultural cities such as New York often cling tenaciously to their traditional music -they maintain group identity in a multiethnic society (Stokes, 1994, p.47). Fatima's use of music affirms this statement and also takes it a step farther because accessing music to maintain identity does not have to be a passive action. Rather,

it can be a deliberate step in maintaining a connection with one's identity. In the migration process, music can be a profoundly grounding and expressive object and reenactment

When I asked Fatima if she felt that she had remained close to her Syrian identity, she said that she had and presented several integral points.

Fatima: Yeah. Uh, it's most likely because I live with my mom. So I didn't really have the chance to live the other life. I still eat Syrian food, I still watch like Arabic or American series and films. So yeah, I'm more attached to my Syrianness as to me being a German.

Fatima explained that living with her mom allowed her to remain in touch with Syrian culture. Pointedly, her mom was able to retain objects that reflected or were a part of Syrian culture, including Syrian food, Arabic and American TV shows and films. Likewise, when I asked Nasira about the ways she retained or remained close to her culture, she said that she stays in touch with her family and visits her family members who also live in Germany. When Nasira visits them, she is also exposed to objects and actions that reflect Syrian culture: cooking, food, watching the same news channel they would in Syria, and having conversations about Syria and the US. She remarked that this time spent with her family is just as if she was in Syria.

In answering my question about remaining close to her Syrian identity, Fatima also brought up a two-fold point. First, why did she have to be either Syrian or German? Congruently, she disagreed with the perceived goal of German integration to make newcomers German. This pointed disagreement with the goal of German integration is relevant to the goal of understanding the Syrian refugee experience. It also indicates that identity is both fixed and fluid. One cannot change where they come from and the impact that place has on their identity

formation, but one can grow into and become a part of other communities. Discussing people's personal music preferences, Martin Stokes stated that "[a] moment's reflection on our own musical practices brings home the sheer profusion of identities and selves that we possess" (Stokes, 1994, p. 4). Here, Stokes communicates that people possess multiple identities in an intersectional approach. Thus, should migrants shed the identities they arrived with to become a part of the Germany community? People innately have, as Stokes describes, multiple "selves," and accordingly, the German scenario is a matter of accepting these multiple selves.

In connection with music being used as a tool to retain identity, Afran turned one of the questions that I asked on its head and pointed out that music can expand one's identity.

CW: Do you ever experience music as something that pulls you away from your culture?

Afran: Actually that question is so important. I think, yes. I think music is just like literature, and it makes us more close to one another. Uh like for instance when I was listening to the western music it also encouraged me to go to study English literature. In that way like first I was, I felt like okay it would be cool if you can understand all of the western music that you're listening to. Like some kind of songs that I couldn't understand I was like if I knew English then I would have been able to understand it. It pushed me to study English actually… And I think music also is not only something that amuses you or entertains you, I think it's more also something that would be changing your views also on other cultures, like it would make you closer to them. Like for instance, first when I listened to the Magic Flute of Mozart, because it was so beautiful I wanted to know like what is behind the story of the Queen of the Night, what's the story of Tamino. Then when I went to check and I find the story which is really amazing. In that way, music, that music [The

> *Magic Flute,] has affected me. It impacted me. It made me also see the value of that story.*

When I posed the question asking if music pulled Afran away from his identity, I understood it to have a negative context. However, Afran expressed that music was a way for him to understand more about and become interested in German culture. At this, music had "pulled him away" from culture in a good way. Afran also illustrates that becoming interested in German music did not mean that he had to give up the music he listened to in Syria. It is not a matter of replacing traditional Kurdish music with western classical music. Rather, it is a matter of adding to his collection of music— adding to the cultures that he is able to embrace and identify with. It is adding to his multiple selves.

Music is responsible for cementing identity because it illustrates boundaries, but like community, the boundaries are flexible. Afran's use of music affirms its capability to expand and evolve someone's identity. Music creates "boundaries" because it is associated with specific identities, places, shared experiences and ethnicities (Stokes, 1994, p.5). Moreover, if one physically crosses a 'border' from one place to another, they are likely introduced to a new culture and society. Once they have crossed this border, they are in the best position to learn about this society and even take an interest in it. Once one crosses a musical boundary, they are also in a better place to understand a culture or individual's identity. Mozart's opera *Die Zauberflöte* "*The Magic Flute,*" was an integral part of Afran growing an appreciation for German culture and more interested in the German language itself. Although Mozart was Austrian, in his book *A History of Music in Western Music Culture*, Mark Bonds explains that "some numbers from Die Zauberflöte, however, became so popular [originally performed in 1790] that to this day many Germans believe they are folk songs and are surprised to discover

they were actually written by Mozart" (Bonds, 2013, p. 377). Afran investigated and tapped into a salient part of German society, Western classical music, and used it as a means to learn about Germany. He did this individually, through his own listening. What remains, however, is how Germans might learn about Afran and who he is. Syria has its own musical story, which is millennia old, classical, and contemporary, and speaks to the nation's identity. Afran also described how music is a way of getting to know him and of communicating. However, I wonder how many Germans have asked him what sort of music he listens to and who his favorite artists are.

II. Communication

Communication presented itself as an integral part of settling in Germany. The literal language barrier was discussed, as each participant noted immense difficulty with it when first moving to Germany. However, each of them is now in a more privileged position because they have become fluent in the German language. This fluency affects one ease of life and the opportunities that one can pursue, for example higher education, which each interviewed has pursued in Germany. At this, communication brought up themes that did not describe communicating for survival or need, but rather commination in the context of making meaningful connections between people. The conversations revealed music as language, as discussed by Bohlman. The discussions explored nuances of indirect and direct styles of communication, including the role music plays. It differed from the identity and community aspects of our conversations in the sense that it showed how music can actually *communicate* identities and emotions.

Afran

When I asked Afran if he felt like someone who understood his music preferences would know him better, he said that he thought so, and reflected on relationships with his friends.

Afran: I think so. Yes [laughs]

CW: [Laughs] You think so. Can you explain a little bit more?

Afran: Like for instance let's say, I have some friends who I realized when I'm sharing some music with them, we think we know each other more. Like, it becomes like a culture, you know, like I know my Italian friend likes more center wave music, and I know another one likes a different kind of music, which may be Mozart or some classics, others would be it— I think it sometimes is a kind of communication tool. Uh, sharing music with them, I find it like a kind of communication. Sometimes we say"are you feeling happy?" okay listen to this, and I would say "wow, that one I haven't heard of, let me check it out, check the artist, other playlist." It just becomes like a way of communication…

Afran: Just sometimes you find that you understand others through music. It's a way of communicating with them.

In this last line, particularly, when he says *"sometimes you find that you understand others through music. It's a way of communicating with them."*Afran very clearly describes music as a tool of communication and touches on two dimensions of musical communication. In a more literal way, he articulates that music itself has meaning — happy, sad, angry, etc., feelings to express, a story to tell, or a statement to make. In his own life, he uses this knowledge to better connect with his friends by sharing a song that matches their mood, and they do the same for him. He also identifies an intangible aspect of music that sharing your music with someone is to

share a piece of yourself when he says, "*I have some friends who I realized when I'm sharing some music with them, we think we know each other more. Like, it becomes like a cultur[e.]*" Music to him and his friends is a part of their identity, and by sharing it, they get to know each other more.

By connecting certain music types with the distinct identities of his friends, Afran accesses the "my music" and "your music" dichotomy from Bohlman's research (Bohlman, 1999, pg.20). This approach to viewing music is possessive because it requires claiming that something is your own. Moreover, music that has been claimed by someone as reflective of their identity can subsequently be shared in a multicultural setting. Accordingly, when individuals share their music with one another, they do not only share the music but also, indirectly share who they are. Music as a sound object can be shared with others as a means of communication beyond what is directly contained in the sound itself.

Fatima

Relatedly, I asked Fatima if she listened to different music when she relocated to Germany. She said that she had and described that it was largely because she was in a different part of her life. As a teenager, Fatima listened to melancholy music about love stories but now, listens to songs that relate to her more recent experiences, including the revolution in Syria, who she is as a person, and empowerment. Accordingly, she utilized music as a means of understanding and communicating within herself by exploring the connections between her emotions and experiences

Fatima: Now it's more serious. Now I listen to songs that have actual value. Stuff about human beings, who you are as a person, stuff about the revolutions we've seen, we've witnessed

in the last ten years, like empowerment. Stuff [songs] that when I hear, I feel powerful. And in such a critical time, that's exactly what you need. If you can't produce that power from inside, you're gonna have to reach out and take it from anywhere else. And music has done that.

The music Fatima listens to is a recounting of her experiences in life, a compilation. In the statement above, she points out the war in Syria as an event that has guided her music listening, and that she uses music to induce and exude specific feelings, such as empowerment. Fatima's discussion illustrates music's intimate tie to emotions, experiences, and self-expression. Music is a way of communicating beyond one's own words, or possibly, the emotions that one does not want to outwardly display or discuss. This contributes to a long-form dialogue on music as its own language (Bohlman, 1999, p. 25). At this, I asked more about Fatima's emotional connection to the song she mentioned earlier, the Childish Gambino song "This Is America."

CW: When you listen to it [Childish Gambino's "This Is America"]is there a certain feeling you get specifically, or something you're thinking about a lot?

Fatima: Not really, it depends on the situation and I chose the music I listen to according to what I am feeling in this moment. Like if sometimes I was frustrated or sad or I needed to cry and I didn't find it in me to actually like cry and just let it out, I would play some sad songs, some sad music. Because I need help, whatever I'm feeling needs to get out, uhm I'm not just going to keep it all inside … I got to a place where I can use music to help me reach what I'm actually feeling.

Fatima discusses having strong emotional connections to music, and that she uses it as a tool to express her emotions. Further, Fatima uses music to express emotions that at times she

cannot express on her own. She specifically denoted this when speaking about sadness, saying that "*Like if sometimes I was frustrated or sad or I needed to cry and I didn't find it in me to actually like cry and just let it out, I would play some sad songs, some sad music. Because I need help, whatever I'm feeling needs to get out.*" The emotional connection that Fatima has to music makes the potential notion of sharing it with others all the more powerful. When I asked her if she feels that someone who understands her music preferences knows her better than someone who does not, she replied simply: "[o]f course. No discussion, of course." This instant response was no surprise because if Fatima so closely ties music to her past experiences, emotions, and identity, then sharing her music with people would consequently be sharing those aspects of herself. However, she continued on, and truly captured the concept of music as a language, from one listener to another.

Fatima: Of course. No discussion, of course…Sharing that part, like music is really such a huge part of our lives. I mean you wake up you put something to hear, you drive you choose something to hear, you do your sports: it's huge. It's a huge part of our lives, so sharing that care with someone would absolutely make them special and even closer to you. Because you know that when I'm listening to a [Arabic] folklore song for example, and they know the song, and they like the song and they understand the song, there is some kind of instant connection that you don't have to talk about and discuss. It's just there.

In a multicultural setting, music allows individuals to share their backgrounds, core values, and experiences. As Syrian refugees living in Germany, Afran and Fatima indicated that sharing music means they are communicating their past experiences, current frustrations, and culture. In contrast, Nasira did not think music communicated much about herself but, interestingly found that her reenactment of Fairouz's music did actually say much about her identity and past

experiences. There is an intimacy that comes from sharing “my music” and your music” because it communicates personal elements (Bohlman, 1999, p.20). Additionally, communication through sharing music is based on listening, rather than interjecting — it is an effort to try to find a deeper understanding. In fact, if people, like Afran and his friends, did not take the time to listen to music that was given to them, then what would be the point of sharing it? Accordingly, this musical communication offers an interesting perspective: in order to understand and be understood, people must listen.

III. Community

The conversation around identity and communication culminated in ideas of community. Fatima, Afran, and Nasira each have rich identities and backgrounds, which music allows them to express and communicate. However, does German society allow them to communicate who they are? Community was a two-fold topic in the interviews. Each individual had to find or make their communities. They also each had to fit into the existing communities and learn where they functioned within the predefined space. Pointedly, these discussions illuminated that community can uplift, as well as constrict individuals.

Fatima

When I asked Fatima to characterize her experience of making a new home in Germany, she had much to say and began to answer many of the questions I had without even being asked. She spoke of her integration and the process’s connection with identity and community.

Fatima: … It is also required that you, as newcomer, are gonna have to do the entire... effort.

CW: uhm hmm

Fatima: To ya know, like do the right thing, uhm do what the society and the community expects you to do, do what uhm, the law expects you to do, and that's fair enough. But, there's a side to it I think that also always gets forgotten, it's the acceptance of this new community [of people], of me. Do they accept me? — as a Syrian, as a Muslim, as an Arab, as newcomer, as a foreigner, as a refugee. Does this society accept me? So uhm, besides Germany is tough. Uhm, there are very high standards for them and rules for the people that you cannot just pass on. You're gonna have to do it otherwise you're not welcome. Now, it's— I'm not trying to generalize, that experience, but it was there.

CW: uhm hmm

Fatima: "So, yeah, like I don't think it would be that easy or I would feel like Germany was home, maybe in the next five years when I really get in to the society, into the work market, into knowing a lot of Germans, cause till now, I've only now started to make German friends. I couldn't do that before. So it's not that easy. "

The excerpt above is only a portion of Fatima's answer to my first question, "how would you characterize your experience of making a new home in Germany?" Pointedly, Fatima had much to say; a single question warranted a response that lasted nearly 5 minutes and encompassed many aspects of her migration experience. With regards to the idea of community, her response drew out three major points. (1) First, Fatima felt that she needed to fulfill expectations set by the German society in order to become a part of her community. She explained that if someone does not follow the rules or live up to these standards, then they are not welcome. (2) Second, Fatima communicated that following these standards and rules was "fair enough" and did not dispute

them, but she is still unsure whether her community accepts her. From Fatima's perspective, adhering to the established rules, socially and legally, was what she could do, but naturally, she could not change the fact that she is Syrian, Arabic, or Muslim. Fatima could not change the very make-up of who she is and the identities that she was born into, which inhibited her from becoming "German" enough to gain acceptance. This presents an inquiry into how, and to what degree, a person can, and should, change when migrating. (3) Finally, she articulates that the expectations for acceptance from community members are inflexible. Even after five years, Germany still does not feel like home to Fatima. Importantly, Fatima points to less recognized barriers that keep people from becoming members of a community: lack of opportunity to interact with those who are already members of the community, understanding social standards, and the ability to enter the workforce. These three points draw out the tensions between outsiders and existing residents in Germany, and thus offer an important perspective that I will return to.

Nasira

When I asked Nasira about the highs and lows of making her home in Germany, she had plenty of both. She enjoyed receiving an internationally recognized education, meeting people of different cultures, access to technology, her job, going to the movies, and the overall lifestyle. Like Afran and Fatima, she was grateful to be in Germany. However, she explained that there is a distance between herself and Germans.

Nasira: The bad things, I have a strange feeling. I come from a country whose people feel more. Here the people are practical, they have no feeling, they have really really no feeling, the most of them. I could not say everyone, but the most of them. The work and education they are too hard… They make everything with rules. Everything with rules. I learn to

take the rules, uhmm, seriously, but sometimes I don't like it. It's very hard to take everything seriously.

Nasira: It's more fun to make it spontaneously, but here no. Like uh, your meeting friend, you should take appointment for a few days. I don't like it. I don't like it. Or when we spend time in the night I should take it from this hour to this hour. That's very hard. That's very hard. Yeah, rules I don't like it, it's a very strange feeling, it's very hard. And the people say [to] me that I not Germany or German.

Nasira: That I am not German. They look, uhm it's every time, it's there. That the people look at me as a stranger, not that I am for long time [living here]. Also, I have a good education, also I have a good job, but the people still see me as stranger. That I could not stay here.

CW: So it's random people, if you like meet them, they just assume that you're not living there?

Nasira: Yeah, exactly.

Cam: Wow.

Nasira: Just a visitor.

Nasira has more frequently been able to make connections with Arabic people as opposed to Germans. The exact reason for the distance she feels from Germans was hard for her to specifically identify. Later in our discussion, I learned that language is sometimes a factor. Because German is Nasira's third language, sometimes it is more taxing for her to carry on conversation in German and thus limit the quantity of German conversations she actively seeks

out. However, Nasira also speaks to larger societal and cultural differences that affect people's attitudes. She described that, in her perspective, a rigidity of social rules to follow makes it harder for her to become close with Germans. Pointedly, Fatima discussed struggling with social rules as well. Nasira also brought up the key fact that people look at her as a visitor, rather than a permanent resident. When people see her, she senses that they see a non-German who does not permanently belong. To this point, I gathered that Nasira does not necessarily want to become exactly like the Germans, but rather accepted differences and all, as a member of the community who is meant to be there.

Fatima's perspective of migration experience in Germany and Nasria's experiences of always being seen as a "visitor" in Germany presents some of the issues that arise when a largely homogenous community is introduced to outsiders. These issues stem from difficulties reconciling personal identities with community identities. Because of the historical tendency for outsiders to become marginalized in homogenous communities, I wondered if anyone had ever asked about and provided Fatima with a safe space to discuss her settlement into Germany before. The idea that those questions, considering her own opinions about the expectation of immigrating in Germany, may have never been asked highlights the potential of conforming as a universally acceptable goal. At this, is the community making space for migrant's identities and voices in society? Is there an "interest in hearing their voices [and a]ccepting the decentering of the West globally" (hooks, 1994 p.40)?

In my interpretation, Fatima's response implies that no, the space she has lived in–her community–has not created much room for her individuality. This theme was crystalized when Fatima questioned if her new community accepted her as Syrian, Muslim, Arab, a refugee–each of the identities that she holds, which are not traditionally German. Further, her willingness, or

perhaps need, to express herself supports the idea that refugees and migrants at large may require more opportunities and safe spaces to express individual feelings about settling. Moreover, Fatima explained that as a newcomer, it was up to her to change–to make the "effort." However, if the burden to fit into the society is placed entirely on Fatima as the migrant, then this process indicates an experience that is assimilation like. As assimilation expects one group of people to shed their identity in order to be absorbed into the dominant social or cultural or racial group, it brings with it the consequences of denying some people's identities in favor of others. Accordingly, the question becomes, how might a more accepting and malleable space be created? Moreover, there is tension between belonging and acceptance. One cannot feel that they belong somewhere if they are not accepted.

In Germany, maintaining a concept of community that is built on the national identity ignores the fluidity of its globalized migrational patterns, and accordingly, limits who can belong in Germany. Nasira's thoughts and experiences illustrate that migrants sense the existence of a construct that defines a particular way to be German, both physically and socially. If one adheres to and fits within these standards, then one is considered a part of the German community and can belong. Pointedly, the ethnic and racial make-up of Germany is increasingly diverse. In the years since 2013, Syrians make-up the third largest immigrant group in Germany (Hindy, 2019). Unlike previous waves of immigrants in Germany, Syrians have been evenly dispersed throughout the German states by the government (Hindy, 2019). Accordingly, the make-up of German communities, particularly in urban areas and western states, are full of diverse cultures, social behaviors, and physical appearances. Germans communities are far from static. In *The Handbook of Diasporas, Media, and Culture*, Roza Tsagarousianou and Jessica Retis write that in a globalized world, "[c]ontemporary ethnoscapes reconfigure beyond recognition traditional

ethnic and local notions of community as the notions of culture and community have shifted from the more static geography of the locality to the fluid topography of the transnational landscapes [anthropologist Arjun] Appadurai identifies" (Tsagarousianou and Retis, 2019, p. 4) In other words, the concept of community is no longer entirely place-based, even if people still imagine it this way. This statement does not mean to ignore indigenous and ancestral connections to particular places, but today, these connections do not affect how many relate to the world, particularly those in industrialized nations.

From this point, one might consider if what it means to be German must be redefined. This is a sensitive topic, specifically considering Germany's xenophobic, racist and nationalist past that climaxed in the Third Reich and affects how Germany as a society functions today. However, I believe that the answer to this question is rooted in multiculturalism. While people may want to maintain one's cultural identity, expecting entire different communities of people to discard their own disavows the importance of having a cultural identity to begin with. These tensions are particularly magnified when attempts to subvert cultural identities exist on large national or supranational scales.

Therefore, I posit that Germans can exist within a German national identity that encapsulates and includes more than 'Germanness.' In turn, Syrians, Turks, Italians, Poles, Nigerians, can exist within a German national identity as it is redefined and becomes culturally diverse. This altered imagination of the German community creates room for acceptance, including acceptance of those who traditionally do not look like everyone else and are culturally seen as an "ausländer," a "foreigner." In this definition, someone does not have to be traditionally German to belong in Germany. Furthermore, Germany might feel like home so much sooner for refugees and migrants settling there, if they are permitted to retain more of their

social norms and culture within German society – if the door was open for them to enter society as they are.

Interested in further discerning what identities were acceptable in Germany, I asked Nasira if she felt like Germany wanted her to be German, or if Germany was okay with her having both German aspects and Syrian aspects. She responded in her normal upbeat manner, but there was nothing upbeat about what she had to say -- it was rather gut wrenching.

Nasira: No. Germany wants me to be German, like the German people. They want that really, but sometimes I fight it. I am satisfied to keep my peace."

CW: What's something you would fight against, and resist? What's a specific thing?

Nasira: That I keep my scarf-- I will be acceptable with my scarf when I swim, when I go outside, when I work

Nasira and I went on to discuss the beauty of hijabs, but the conversation wrapped back around to the discrimination she had faced in her community. Nasria had earlier stated that some of the customers at her job refused to work with her at times and that her hijab was "100 percent" a part of the reason some customers treated her this way. This knowledge made me think back to my discussion with Fatima, who noted that the physical aspect that made her stand out in Germany was her curly hair and that she had not been in any overtly racist situations. However, she noted that she knew many men and women who wear hijabs, who had overtly racist experiences in Germany.

Pointedly, this discrimination that Nasria faces is not only a part of German and European society but, societies globally, who have strict notions of who belongs in their

community and who does not. Nasria's experience is the reason to seek out ideas for reforming communities and migration processes to be more malleable and open-natured. Perhaps, this means shifting the focus from assimilation to multiculturalism or involving multiculturalism within integration. The struggle here remains, however: how might one undo the prejudice and racism that they have learned? This struggle of course is well studied and thought about and been acted upon in many different ways. A niche of these solutions does include though, maximizing meaningful interactions between people so that they might see each other as brother and sister, and form a new community, *a beloved community* ("The King Philosophy"). In more depth, Nasira explained that at the beginning of working at her job, people were distrustful towards her, but as they got to know her they began to open up. Consequently, I posit that communities and the individuals within them need ways to get to know one another and let them share who they are. Accordingly, because of the aforementioned, inherent connection between identity, music, and communication, perhaps they need more music.

Before concluding, I wanted to share one more poignant exchange with Afran that in some ways addresses all of the themes, as well as the premise of my entire thesis.

Afran

When I began the interview with Afran, I asked him if he had been able to find community in Germany. He excitedly told me that for two years he was a part of a mixed choir of Germans and non-Germans, and had had a fantastic experience where he was able to make lasting connections with people. I wondered what connected them, was it the act of performing together or something between the lines that created such strong bonds? Afran's description of his time in the choir illustrated that it was more so about the communication that the sharing the

same music between them fostered, and how this communication enabled them to create community.

*Afran: ...It was an amazing experienc*e. *Your topic is on music, actually, music was one of the links that made that [making connections and friends] possible.*

CW: Can you talk more about your experiences in the choir? Like exactly what made it, such a great experience?

Afran: … They had an idea, why don't we also make a choir, so that we can sing together, you know, to have more communication between us. It worked. [W]e made a choir for two years there. And it was a good point, that in that way we could communicate, use the language you know. And it was also the songs used, they were mixed English and German...

CW: So it was really just this bonding experience for you?

Afran: Yeah, it was. Yeah, actually it's something that's not forgettable. I'm not gonna forget it, forever.

Music was the communication between them, it was the reason that they formed the choir. Just performing the music together did not create their bond. There is a power in performing together, singing, or playing the same note at the same time, but performance does not intrinsically create lasting connections. Someone can perform in an orchestra one time, and never see the people that they created music with ever again. Someone can perform in a choir and not know the people in the other sections. There has to be something between performance that bonds people, there must be an element between one another: sharing music and

communicating with it--using it as a bridge to have conversations. This perhaps, is a most pointed example of what integrational programs that involve music must strive to do, and consequently interrogate. Does the program create space for people to actually share music, to communicate with music? For people to share who they are within the community that you strive to create?

Conclusion

In this chapter, I have shown how three young Syrians experience and express their connection to music and making a new home in Germany. These interviews reinforce the inherent connection between music and identity and demonstrate that it can be used to retain and expand identities, communicate direct and indirect ideas, and build more inclusive communities in Germany. They also reveal the limitations of assimilation and integration, but in turn, uncover how music affects and is used by individual Syrian refugees in the process of creating a new home in Germany. This is in contrast to the more documented use of music by government and non-governmental actors with the migration process in Germany. Further, the interviews begin a discussion around how music sharing, from one listen to another, might contribute to building multicultural communities.

Chapter 4: Conclusion

Through three separate interviews with Syrian refugees' living in Germany, I found that because of the inherent connection between music and identity, music can be used to retain and expand identities, communicate direct and indirect ideas, and build more inclusive communities in Germany. To make my argument, I first engaged three relevant literatures on these topics. The first highlighted music as a social process, and noted the understanding of music as an object and music as language. In contrast with integration and assimilation, I then reviewed literature on multiculturalism. A crucial point of this review was the understanding that critical multiculturalism can exist with integration, and accordingly inform how integration occurs. I then discussed the intersection of music and identity which revealed that music can denote identity. I then detailed the findings of three one-on-one semi-structured interviews, which revealed three important themes within music's relationship with the Syrian refugee experience in Germany. These themes were identity, communication and community. Further, the interviews reinforced the inherent connection between music and identity and demonstrate that it can be used to retain and expand identities, communicate direct and indirect ideas and, build more inclusive communities in Germany. The findings begin a discussion around how music sharing, from one listen to another, can contribute to building multicultural communities.

Final Cadence: From onset to possible future engagement

I discovered that Germany's integrational system reflects some problematic forms of assimilation, rather than being a true model of integration. Furthermore, I learned that German society, in general, expects outsiders, in this case Syrian refugees, to assimilate into the German culture. However, should Syrian refugees' completely change, when societal standards and

communications can change to be more inclusive and multicultural? Why not get to know migrants and value what they bring to their new community? Why not listen to the new music that they bring with them? This thesis establishes the necessity for establishing multicultural community building processes, and there are tools, i.e. music, to create these more inclusive and empathetic practices. Accordingly, more efforts must be made to get to know one's neighbors, to understand them, value them, and accept them within communities. If done effectively, then these tools can be used to create an environment of safety, dependability, and trust. At this, there is no need to wait for the government to start this effort or a non-profit to start a new initiative. It is instead up to individuals to start a conversation and get to know one another. People must ask, what is your favorite song? What are you listening to? It is up to individuals to share and create space to listen to music with one another. The most impactful actors in the effort to build a community, are those who actually comprise it; among these people is where direct change happens, and accordingly, among these people is where change must come from. This does not mean however, that music sharing from listener to listener cannot be purposefully leveraged to improve governmental and non-governmental programs related to the migrant experience. Quite the opposite, music sharing might redirect the conversation back towards the lesser heard voice of migrants. The purposeful use of music sharing between listeners should be enacted in musical immigration projects to create safe spaces that are based in *listening*. With the knowledge this research offers, I hope that individuals feel empowered to make their own communities more inclusive through the everyday act of listening to music

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