Chapter 19

The role of music in the integration of cultural minorities

Richard Parncutt and Angelika Dorfer

Abstract

Social, cultural and political integration involves multiple interactions between migrant minorities and the indigenous majority. Measures of integration include frequency of contact, feeling of belonging, and familiarity with and mutual acceptance of other cultural groups. Intercultural exchange and the construction of new cultural identities can both promote and hinder integration.

The literature on integration addresses language skills, education, occupation, income, (un)employment, and social capital. What is the role of culture, including music, in cultural integration? Twenty-four participants of a musicology course unit interviewed 54 ‘new Austrians’ from Albania, China, Egypt (Copts), Iraq (Kurds), Italy, Nigeria, and Serbia, as well as 20 people born in Austria. They spoke about music in their everyday lives, any music they perform, their cultural identity and social contacts, the music, customs and traditions of their cultural group in Graz, their favourite CDs, and the relationship between music and integration. These were formulated on the basis of a qualitative content analysis of the transcriptions. We also explored quantitative relationships between variables such as duration of residence within the European Union, the perceived importance of music, and self-rated degree of integration.

This chapter was inspired by John Sloboda’s research in two separate areas—music psychology and international politics. We bring them together to address the role of music in the integration of cultural minorities in modern cities. John’s early research in music psychology focused on abstract cognitive processes. He later addressed issues of musical meaning and function, and the musical concerns and everyday lives of real
musicians and music listeners. While the present contribution focuses on an everyday function of music, it is directly inspired by John’s political activities within the Oxford Research Group and the success with which he has divided his time and energy between ‘pure’ research and social/political concerns (cf. Chapter 2).

The analysis by Abbott, Rogers, and Sloboda (2007) of the main problems that face the human race today can also explain why cities are becoming increasingly multicultural. Cultural diversity inevitably leads to intercultural conflict, because different cultures have different values, ways of thinking and ways of going about things, or because differences in language and cultures of communication lead to misunderstandings. Thus, integration is becoming an increasingly important social and political issue.

Our study has implications for both music psychology and international politics. In music psychology, a clarification of the roles of music in cultural integration can feed into research on musical identities (Cook, 1998; Frith, 1996; Hargreaves, Miell, & MacDonald, 2002; Müller, Glogner, Rhein, & Heim, 2002) and the positive psychology of music in everyday life (Bakker, 2003; DeNora, 2000; Kreutz, Bongard, Rohrmann, Hodapp, & Grebe, 2004; Laukka, 2006; North, Hargreaves, & Hargreaves, 2004; Sloboda, 2005; Sloboda & O’Neill, 2001; Sloboda, O’Neill, & Ivaldi, 2001). Regarding international politics, strategies for intercultural conflict resolution can have both local and international implications. Domestic procedures for conflict resolution can be applied to international conflicts—for example, democratic countries are more able to reconcile competing values and interests and more likely to accept international compromise solutions (Dixon, 1993; Gleditsch, 2002). In the USA, improved communication between Jewish and Arab communities and improved Arab integration (McCarus, 1994) can influence US foreign policy and promote conflict resolution in the Middle East. International conflict resolution can be promoted or hindered by cultural or musical projects; a controversial example is the West-Eastern Divan Orchestra, which its conductor Daniel Barenboim regarded as a ‘utopian republic’ (Willson, 2009).

**Global historical context**

Cities in most countries, rich and poor, are becoming more culturally diverse and experiencing the advantages and disadvantages of that development. Cultural diversity expands the palette of cultural activities that a city offers, promotes economic productivity (Ottaviano & Peri, 2006), and boosts the leisure and tourism industry (Shaw, Bagwell, & Karmowska, 2004). But intercultural conflict can also increase public support for far-right political parties that exacerbate racist and xenophobic attitudes, challenge the rights of foreigners (e.g. to work or participate in democratic procedures), and strive to curb immigration and asylum (Lubbers, Gijsberts, & Scheepers, 2002). Immigrants often live in neighbourhoods with poor health and educational services and high rates of unemployment, poverty and crime, which further hinders their integration (Kazemipur & Halli, 2002). Since the trend towards greater cultural diversity in modern cities shows no signs of abating, any approach to addressing the problems and raising awareness of the benefits is worthy of consideration.

Migration is a constant feature of humankind (cf. Park, 1928) that has prevented the emergence of genetically relatively homogenous groups (‘races’; Owens & King, 1999).
and has become more prevalent and rapid in recent centuries (Wakeley, 1999). But modern multicultural cities are also a consequence of increased intercultural communication and mobility: their culturally diverse citizens communicate with and visit their international friends, relatives, and colleagues increasingly easily and often. As multidirectional cross-border flows and transnational networks become stronger, urban multiculturalism is increasingly linked to economic and cultural globalization (Castles, 2006; Hall & Williams, 2002).

Technological progress in communications and transport has enhanced the international mobility of workers and their families (Stalker, 2000). But migration is also driven by international crises and associated climate change, competition for limited resources, poverty, and militarization (cf. Abbott et al., 2007). Climate change is increasing the incidence of storms and famines; these primarily affect poorer countries (Van Aalst, 2006) and generate environmental refugees. Environmental problems of all kinds, from earthquakes to nuclear pollution, can provoke migration (Hunter, 2005). The poverty rate in rich nations is increasing (Kazemipur & Halli, 2002), and the gap between rich and poor nations has widened, generating economic refugees. Most countries are getting richer, but some poor countries are stagnating, and rich countries are getting richer faster than the poorer countries (Seshanna & Decornez, 2003). Reasons include the failure of countries and international markets to tax income and profits fairly (Webb, 2004) and the failure of richer countries to invest 0.7% of their gross national product in international development and poverty reduction (Sachs, 2005). Regarding militarization, international and civil wars and coups produce refugees of violence (cf. Barnett & Adger, 2007; Reuveny, 2007). Sixty years after the universal declaration of human rights, fundamental rights are still regularly violated, generating political refugees.

These problems reflect a long-term mismatch between technological and psychosocial progress. Historical indicators of psychosocial progress include the French revolution, the abolition of slavery in most countries, and voting rights for women (Sachs, 2005). Nevertheless, ‘the human traits that lead to war, environmental disaster, and famine have not improved during recorded history. Our technological advances have increased exponentially over a few centuries, but our intercommunity and interracial skills have improved little’ (Shearman, 2002, p. 1468). Evolution has not prepared human beings for problems of planetary dimensions; if we have barely experienced global warming personally, we find it difficult to imagine the ultimate consequences. Moreover, humans tend to go into denial when presented with enormous problems (Cohen, 2001), such as the millions of children and adults who die of hunger each year (Shetty, 2006; Sloboda, 2005).

Since the causes of migration are both complex and massive, the associated problems will grow steadily in coming decades. Cities will be increasingly challenged to address the problems and to perceive and take advantage of the benefits.

Integration, assimilation, acculturation

Cultural minorities that are not consistently discriminated against or persecuted tend to prefer forms of integration in which different cultures live side by side, maintaining
and developing their identity (Van Oudenhoven, Prins, & Buunk, 1998). The identities of both majority and minorities are modified, extended, and enriched by interaction with other cultures (transculturality: Welsch, 1999). New cultural orientations can emerge when intergroup interactions lead to changes in traditions, behaviours, and preferences. But all parties typically retain and value aspects of their original identity (Kuran & Sandholm, 2007).

The implicit definition of ‘integration’ depends on the speaker’s political agenda, cultural background, and personal experience. While members of majority cultures tend to think of integration as the adaptation of minority groups to a stable majority, members of minority groups are more interested in maintaining minority cultures, which they do not see as contrary to adaptation (Verkuyten & Thijs, 2002). Centre-right governments tend to regard immigrants as responsible for problems associated with migration, expect them to adapt to local conditions, and require them to attend language courses and pass citizenship tests; centre-left governments may instead regard integration as an opportunity to enrich culture and quality of life. But exceptions are frequent: the left may respond to xenophobic tendencies among their supporters, while the right may recognize the economic benefits of cultural diversity.

The present approach is biased towards centre-left and liberal-green politics. We consider integration to involve all interactions among all cultural groups, including the majority. All such groups may be either indigenous or international; for example, the majority culture in Australian cities is originally of British origin, and indigenous Australians have become one of a large number of cultural minorities. Minorities can be regarded as ‘indigenous’ if they have lived in the same area for a long time; indigenous communities in modern Austria include Jews, Roma, and speakers of Slovenian, Croat, Hungarian, Italian, and Czech (Hemetek, 2001).

Integration can be social or individual. Individual integration or acculturation (Ward, Bochner, & Furnham, 2001) can involve language skill acquisition, employment and income, feeling at home, frequency of contact with other groups (meetings, phone calls, events, number of ‘foreign’ friends and acquaintances), and everyday independence and efficacy (public transport, shopping, cultural activities, contact with authorities). The integration of a social group involves acceptance by other groups, lack of prejudice, and frequency of contact as measured, for example, by rate of intermarriage. It also involves structural integration: representation of minorities in professions, public service and politics, and the incidence, visibility, and stability of institutions such as government and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) that genuinely promote integration. Minorities tend to be regarded by outsiders as homogenous and by insiders as heterogeneous (examples from China and former Yugoslavia are presented by Folkestad, 2002); integration involves feeling at home not only within one’s cultural group (in a foreign setting), but also in a wider multi-, inter-, and transcultural setting.

In an increasingly globalized world, familiar categories such as locals and immigrants, integration and assimilation, and settlers and guest workers are becoming blurred. Enculturation (original culture) and acculturation (new culture) cannot always be clearly separated: migrant children simultaneously absorb two different cultures, and while they may be better able to absorb their ‘new’ local culture than their parents, familiarity with their ‘old’ culture can enhance their self-esteem and
ability to integrate (Auernheimer, 1995). Migrants increasingly have multiple identi-
ties and their communities have transnational character (Castles, 2006). Consider for
example a Turkish woman living in Graz with two children. Her complex identity
includes at least the following elements: Turkish, Muslim, woman, mother, Graz resi-
dent. If she is in regular contact by telephone and email with friends and family in
Turkey, and occasionally visits Turkey or receives Turkish visitors, her ‘community’ is
international. Today, the term ‘international migrant’ can be split into several catego-
ries or prototypes: *immigrants* (who integrate into a recipient society), *re-immigrants*
(who maintain strong links to their society of origin), *diaspora-immigrants* (who
maintain strong ties to a well-defined transnational community), and *transmigrants*,
who are ‘characterized by their durable social, cultural, and economic localization and
integration in new and pluri-local Transnational Social Spaces’ (Pries, 1998, abstract).
Transmigrants have not been uprooted from their original culture; instead, they are
world citizens in a globalized economy (cf. Schiller, Basch, & Szanton Blanc, 1997).
While the blurring of boundaries may make the conceptualization of integration
difficult, it is also positive evidence that integration is occurring.

**Integration** implies equal rights for settled and mobile cultures. It is often contrasted
with *assimilation*, in which minorities are expected to give up their culture (Van
Oudenhoven *et al.*, 1998) and *hybridization* into a *melting pot*, in which majority and
minorities merge to form a new cultural synergy (Zank, 1998). But since every migrant
brings salient, stable habits, memories and constructions of value and identity to a
new cultural context, no one is completely assimilated. Besides, migrants often build
homes away from home (e.g. Chinatowns) that maintain their identity and culture.
African Americans share a strong sense or ethnic identity after centuries of suppres-
sion, assimilation, and marginalization (Oyserman, Gant, & Ager, 1995).

**Promoting integration**

Assuming that integration is the solution—if not the panacea—that modern multicul-
tural cities need and strive for, how can it best be promoted? In general, one can either
increase the incidence or salience of positive factors, or decrease the incidence or sali-
ence of negative factors. Positive factors include any collective activity that promotes
positive intergroup contact (e.g. sport); negative factors, any kind of discrimination,
xenophobia or racism. Social and cultural integration can also be promoted by chann-
elling the self-interest of stakeholders (economic relationships among groups), by
altruistic projects and activities (NGOs), or combinations (altruistic projects that
provide paid work for NGOs). Since all such factors can contribute positively to inte-
gration, and social systems are complex and difficult to monitor or model, the combi-
nation of different strategies may be greater than the sum of the parts, due to
unforeseeable interactions between the positive effects of different strategies and the
unforeseeable emergence of new benefits (cf. Mitleton-Kelly, 2003). The best strategy
may not, therefore, be to favour one approach at the expense of others, but to promote
a diversity of approaches.

What influences integration? Existing literature addresses the role of language
skills (Greenberg, Macías, Rhodes, & Chan, 2001); education, occupation and income
Music and integration

Art and music may play an important subsidiary role in integration once existential problems are solved (cf. Maslow’s 1943 hierarchy of human needs and motivation). Culture includes shared meanings and behaviours that are variously expressed. Cultures construct different realities and hidden assumptions. Differences are least reconcilable when embedded in fundamentalist political, economic, and religious systems. Thus, intercultural conflicts require attention to and acknowledgement of cultural detail (Marsella, 2005). Culture can also contribute directly and simply to integration: in everyday social and political settings, foreign artists tend to be accepted when they offer something that locals do not (or cannot), and are not seen as competing for resources (such as employment), but rather creating new resources; the same may apply to foreign sportspeople (cf. Nagel, 1995).

The following everyday example highlights the complexity of music’s role in integration. The hypothetical Turkish woman in Graz mentioned above may have limited personal contacts—little more than her husband and two children. Her knowledge of the German language is limited and it is difficult for her to attend German classes. Sometimes she listens to recordings of Turkish music and feels sad and nostalgic. Does this music (or this behaviour) promote or hinder her integration?

Music ‘plays an important role in the negotiation, construction and maintenance of identities’ (MacDonald, Hargreaves, & Miell, 2009, p. 463). From internationally dominant musical cultures such as Germany (Applegate & Potter, 2002; Folkestad, 2002) to suppressed indigenous cultures such as the aboriginal people of Australia (Gibson, 1998), cultures define themselves through music; ‘it may be that the awareness of a common national musical identity independent of social, religious or ethnic background is more prevalent and stronger in countries that have fought for freedom throughout history than in countries which have lived in peace for a long time’.
PERSONAL BACKGROUND

(Folkestad, 2002, p. 155). Greek Cypriot primary school children are exposed to music that carries contradictory ideological messages; they develop ‘fluid and often insecure, ambiguous and contradictory national musical identities’ (Pieridou-Skoutella, 2007).

According to Cook (1998, p. 4–5), ‘music ... functions as a symbol of national or regional identity: émigré communities sometimes clung tenaciously to their traditional music in order to preserve their identity in a foreign country. . . . In today’s world, deciding what music to listen to is a significant part of deciding and announcing to people not just who you “want to be” ... but who you are. Thus, music not only reflects identities—it also constructs them.

But self-identity through music does not always promote integration. Although rap music has strengthened the identity of many black Americans, exposure to violent rap can also promote stereotyping of black people (by both white and black people themselves), increasing the probability that black people will be considered violent and unintelligent (Johnson, Trawalter, & Dovidio, 2000). Moreover, identities are never clear-cut, and they seldom correspond clearly to nation-states. Frith (1996) argues ‘first, that identity is mobile, a process not a thing, a becoming not a being; second, that our experience of music—of music making and music listening—is best understood as an experience of this self-in-process’ (p. 109).

Several recent empirical studies have addressed the integrative role of culture and music. Sousa, Neto, and Mullet (2005) found that including Cape Verdean songs among songs learned by Portuguese school children reduced black–white stereotyping. In a study of multicultural Stockholm choirs, Pawlig (2003) observed that while relatively few choirs consciously promoted cultural integration, they nevertheless had important integrative functions: they were accessible for immigrants and enabled them to make social contacts, learn about Swedish culture and language, and become socially active and visible. Siegert (2008) studied the role of maqam music in the lives and identities of Turkish Germans, and concluded that music promotes integration on a personal level (helping individuals to feel at home in a foreign culture, creating a continuum between the past and the present, maintaining and developing personality and individuality), a social or intersubjective level (helping people to develop authentic relationships within and between heterogeneous cultural groups, to overcome prejudice and to open up to outside influences), and a universal level (spirituality and the feeling of establishing a connection between soul and cosmos). Bradley (2006) analysed racialized discourses within multicultural programmes of music education and considered different motivations for engaging in multiculturalism in music education, identifying decolonization as a crucial catalyst for substantive change.

Personal background

This is a preliminary, qualitative study to explore issues and ideas about the role of music of integration. Our approach and interpretations depend on various historical, political, academic, and personal contexts. The study was originally motivated by the first author’s political and academic interests and biases. Since these influenced the study from conception, planning, execution, analysis right through to the final conclusions, they will be described in some detail in the first person.
Academically, I am interested in the future development of music psychology, both for its own sake and as a subdiscipline of musicology (Parncutt, 2007, 2008). I agree with Sloboda (2005) that music psychology should more often and more directly address issues of social importance and relevance. To achieve that, music psychology needs a diverse palette of epistemologies and research methods. The discipline is still dominated by empirical cognitive psychology, which like any other epistemology is limited in its scope of application and validity. Of all presentations at the International Conference on Music Perception and Cognition in Sapporo, Japan, in 2008, 75% were reports of empirical and data-oriented studies; only 25% were theoretical studies, reviews, demonstrations, or presentations on research/teaching methods, software development, or music analysis (Parncutt, 2008). Music research can and should aim for a better balance between the humanities and sciences.

As a researcher I have lived in several different countries (Australia, Germany, France, Sweden, Canada, UK) and observed—from the position of an educated, white male—many different forms of racism and xenophobia. I moved from the UK to Austria in 1998 to take up a professorship in systematic musicology at the University of Graz. During my first year, I witnessed a national election campaign in which openly racist or xenophobic public statements were commonplace, which motivated me to contact relevant Graz NGOs and interculturality researchers. Both groups felt powerless to influence the campaign and its negative social effects. I saw this as an opportunity to strengthen the political role of universities and interculturality researchers. Various projects ensued, including documentation of interculturality research in diverse disciplines, a multidisciplinary series of lectures about racism and xenophobia, a project to help the Austrian media avoid racism, and an awareness-raising campaign with catchy, foreigner-friendly slogans.1

The data for the present study were collected by students in a master’s level seminar. I saw that as a logical and legitimate way to combine my political goals and activities with my music psychology research and teaching. The seminar was politically neutral and no attempt was made to document the political preferences of the students.

The second author of this study was a student on that course. She reports: I grew up in Graz. As a child (aged 6–13), I spent several school holidays travelling in Turkey, Indonesia, Thailand, Egypt, and Uganda (Africa) with my parents. During these trips, which I generally enjoyed, my parents and I made many contacts with local people. I have since then been fascinated by culture and interculturality in the sense of different lifestyles and attitudes. I spent one year studying in Italy. I also spent five semesters working in the Student Union of the University of Graz in the area of international relations, which primarily involved supporting foreign students. In my musicology studies, I was interested in the social and psychological effects of music, which motivated me to take part in this study. Since the problem of integration and the possible role(s) of music are evidently quite complex, I think that it is important to develop ways to individually consider the different aspects and not to over-simplify.

Method

What is the role of music in integration, and how can the role of music in integration be investigated? In this exploratory, qualitative study, we focused on the experiences
and opinions of culturally diverse residents of a medium-sized city (Graz, Austria; population 300,000). We wanted to know not only what music people hear and play, and where and when they do that, but also why and how they do that. We aimed not to test hypotheses, but to generate them.²

Graz is an interesting location for such a study. The city has a long history of multiculturalism and multilingualism as a central location in the Austro-Hungarian Empire. The extreme racism of Hitler’s Third Reich casts a long shadow, and since 1945, Austrians have been alternately addressing and avoiding its consequences and implications (Albrich, 1994). Many who were exposed to Nazi racist propaganda are still alive, and echoes of the past still resonate in the policies of extreme-right political parties. The city recovered politically and economically from the Second World War in a relatively isolated corner of western Europe close to the Iron Curtain. Because Austria was recognized by the Allies as a victim of Nazi aggression, this half-truth was taught to Austrian children in post-war schools, and Austria pursued de-Nazification less seriously and thoroughly than Germany. Moreover, popular support for the dispossession, deportation, and destruction of Jews had been greater in Vienna than in comparable German cities (Tálos, Hanisch, & Neubauer, 2000, pp. 237–259, 767–794). The decade following the fall of communism in 1990 saw a sharp increase in migration and cultural diversity due to the new freedom of movement between the East and West, the refugees generated by conflicts within nearby ex-Yugoslavia, and refugees from more distant conflicts in Africa and Asia. Populist far-right politicians took advantage of the resultant conflicts and xenophobia and in 2000 the Freedom Patry (FPÖ) joined the federal government in a coalition with the centre-right People’s Party (ÖVP) (Wodak & Pelinka, 2002). The relationship between the FPÖ and Hitler’s National Socialism (Riedlsberger, 2002) was discussed in the European Union, culminating in several months of sanctions that Austrians on both the left and the right considered unfair, reviving anti-European sentiments. Meanwhile, cultural diversity in Graz was steadily increasing and many new NGOs were being established. These NGOs now appear to be the main driving force behind the steady (if slow) progress that is being made towards cultural integration on different levels.

Our approach to the question of music in integration differs in fundamental ways from typical ethnomusicological approaches such as Hemetek (2001). Ethnomusicologists often get involved in the musical activities of foreign culture for an extended period, getting to know its members and gaining their trust (Nettl, 1983). We value and respect this approach but did not adopt it. First, we did not aim to document the music of each group. Instead we asked about its integrative role, and the social and political implications for all minorities and the whole community. To address those issues, we considered and compared a range of different cultures. Second, our study was confined to a university semester. Our student interviewers had only a few weeks to try to get a preliminary insider view of their cultural group and its music. They briefly presented their findings during class before the interviews began. Similarly, our approach also differs from typical approaches in empirical cognitive psychology. Multicultural communities cannot be experimentally manipulated to study cause–effect relationships. Correlations are possible, but did not, in our case, yield significant results (Dorfer, 2009).
Participants

The interviewers were 28 musicology students enrolled in a master’s level seminar at the University of Graz in 2006. They had been studying for an average of 2.5 full-time equivalent years and their mean age was 25.6 years. Sixteen were female and 12 were male. All were Austrian citizens and had grown up in Austria; their ethnicity was relatively uniform.

The respondents were Graz residents from seven different migrant groups. They were not randomly selected, nor were they necessarily representative of Graz minorities or even of the minorities that they represented. It is therefore dangerous to attempt to generalize on the basis of our data, and generally not meaningful to count the number or proportion of respondents who answered certain questions in certain ways. The opinions expressed by our participants were primarily personal opinions.

The respondents were found by contacting migrant organizations and snowballing. They satisfied the following criteria: residence in Graz, reasonable fluency in German or English, and identification with one of seven specific cultural groups. Of 55 respondents, 14 were excluded from analysis due to communication difficulties (as reported by interviewers in a confidential post-questionnaire) or missing data. In the following, we consider the remaining 41 interviews.

The 41 respondents were associated with seven different countries or cultures: Albania (6 people), China (4), Egypt (Copts; 7), Iraq (Kurds; 5), Italy (9), Nigeria (5), and Serbia (5). Twenty-two were female and 19 were male. They were aged 17–53 years (mean age 30), and had spent between 0.2 and 23 years in the European Union (mean 8 years). Two had grown up in Austria in immigrant families. Further information about the respondents is presented in Table 19.1.

Procedure

At the first seminar session, the students were informed about the main aims and methods of the project. They were then asked to identify cultural groups in Graz with which they had contact or whose music interested them. On that basis, they were divided into seven groups of four members, each of which was assigned to a minority group.

In subsequent weekly sessions, the method of the study was developed. The first author presented a draft interview guideline that was inspired by Höllinger (2004) and Mayring (2002). It included tips on how to contact potential respondents, arrange an interview, put the respondent at ease, encourage the respondent to speak at length without biasing the content, make a sound recording, note the most important points immediately following the interview, and transcribe the interview. It also recommended ways of avoiding tendencies to make socially acceptable statements, answer questions in the affirmative, and invent arbitrary explanations to avoid seeming uninformed. The students commented on the draft and the first author revised it.

Ethical issues were considered in detail. The students discussed intercultural gender issues and were asked to favour same-sex interviews (women interviewed by women, men by men). They discussed possible effects of perceived differences in class or status between interviewer and respondent, and were asked to present themselves not as musical experts, but as individuals who were interested to learn from a specific
### Table 19.1 The respondents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Respondent number</th>
<th>Group*</th>
<th>Self-reported identities and corresponding belongingness ratings†</th>
<th>Sex</th>
<th>Age (years)</th>
<th>Years of European residence</th>
<th>Degree of integration‡</th>
<th>Years of regular active music§</th>
<th>Education¶</th>
<th>Occupation**</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Ch</td>
<td>Chinese 7</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Ch</td>
<td>Chinese 7, European 1</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Ch</td>
<td>Austrian 6, Chinese 6</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>9</td>
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<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
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<td>Ch</td>
<td>Chinese 7, Austrian 6, Religion 1–2</td>
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<td>2.7</td>
<td>24</td>
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<td>Al</td>
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<td>F</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>5</td>
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<td>1</td>
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<td>2.5</td>
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(Continued)
Table 19.1 (continued) The respondents

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<th>Respondent number</th>
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**Mean**

|   |   |   |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|---|---|
|   | 30 | 7.9 | 3.6 | 9.8 |

*Ch, China; EC, Egyptian Copt; IK, Iranian Kurd, etc.
†1 = I feel I belong very little ... 7 = very much.
‡1 = not at all .... 5 = very much.
§Practice or performance.
¶1 = high school; 2 = matriculation; 3 = university degree.
**0 = training or on leave; 1 = working; 2 = both.
M, male; F, female.
cultural group in Graz about their daily lives and their music. Before the interview, potential respondents received a one-page summary of the main points about the study, including the aims and general direction, reasons for participating, the main things that we wanted, and data security. The time and place of the interview was decided by the respondent and interviewer together; the interviewers had been reminded to be sensitive to issues of privacy, neutrality, and the likelihood of disturbance. The interview began with discussion of the one-page summary. The interviewers checked that participants understood their rights including data confidentiality and then asked for permission to make a sound recording (which was denied in one case).

Interviews took place in a variety of locations, including cafés, university rooms, and private homes. All the respondents were asked to bring three personal favourite CDs (or similar files on hard disc) to the interview (not necessarily music from the respondent’s cultural group). Each session began with small talk, after which the recording equipment was checked. The interviews were semi-structured: the interviewers referred to a list of main issues, each of which was divided into several questions. The interviewers were instructed to cover all the main issues and some of the questions for each in any order. The respondents generally did not read the questions themselves. They were encouraged to speak as long as they wished about topics that interested them. If they got side-tracked, the interviewers were instructed to gently redirect the conversation.

Immediately following an interview, the interviewer completed a confidential form to evaluate the ability of the interviewer and the respondent to understand each other (including the effect of any language barrier), the respondent’s talkativeness and involvement, the atmosphere (relaxed?, mutual acceptance/liking of interviewer and respondent?), the interviewer’s performance (self-evaluation against listed criteria), and disturbances (interruptions, presence of third persons).

Transcriptions of the interviews were prepared by the interviewers and were constructed entirely from words used by the respondents. Grammar was corrected, dialectic variants were transcribed into high German or English, and repetitions were removed. We asked the interviewers to reproduce the respondent’s intentions as closely as possible and implicitly accepted interviewers as co-constructors of meaning (Oliver, Serovich, & Mason, 2005). We decided against natural transcriptions that include pauses and their duration, gestures, emphases, facial expressions, stutters, lexically meaningless or superfluous tokens (aha, yeah, mm), and incomprehensible speech. We were primarily interested in the shared perceptions and intended meanings of respondents’ statements—not in the specific ways in which that content was communicated (conversation analysis).

In the present report, most quotations have been translated by the first author from German into English. The translations are intended to render the essential original meaning and intention in natural English, and tend to be shorter than the originals.

Analysis

The basis for our analysis was the transcripts prepared by the students. Our primary methods of analysis were observer impression, qualitative content analysis, and
hermeneutic formulation of hypotheses (cf. Mayring, 2002; Rennie, 2000). The quotations in this report were chosen for relevance (for any specific question, as well as the general question of the role of music in integration) and clarity (comprehensibility and concision), as well as memorability, plausibility and realism. We attempted to balance statements from all seven cultural groups, and from women and men. The number of different respondents who expressed a similar idea was not a criterion for selection; while quantitative studies focus on frequently occurring observations (such as the spontaneous expression of a given idea by different participants in different contexts), qualitative approaches often gain valuable information from isolated, interesting statements. The hermeneutic formulation of hypotheses was inspired by grounded theory, but our analysis was less detailed than that recommended by Glaser and Strauss (1967 and later publications). We combined top-down (or inductive) and bottom-up (or deductive) processes, creatively formulating/revising hypotheses and comparing them with the transcriptions. 

Results

The following results are structured according to the written interview guide.

Music in everyday life

How often do you listen to the radio? In what situation? Which stations? Do you prefer music or talking? Do you attend concerts? Listen to CDs? Do you play music or sing? Can you recall a very emotional musical experience in your life?

Consistent with the literature on music in everyday life, the respondents reported diverse musical habits. Some had little time to listen to music, while others listened to the radio whenever they could. The participants who often listened attentively to music, or listened with a specific intention, included students of classical music, a jazz singer, a DJ for electronic music, and a (non-Austrian) wind player in traditional South Tyrol brass ensembles. Two participants were musically active in the Copt community and taught children Copt music.

Musical style preferences varied considerably. Intriguingly, Musikantenstadl (a TV show featuring a mixture of traditional, folk and popular music) featured in the selection by a Coptic male (Respondent 28):

I don’t understand it completely, but it is folklore and we Copts feel closer to folklore than modern music.

Musikantenstadl is not archetypical Austrian music: it is well known and clearly part of Austrian culture, but many Austrians do not like it.

The respondent as musician

Do you play a musical instrument? Do you have one at home? Description of instrument? Years of practice? Playing situations? Do you play music of your cultural group? Do you pass this musical knowledge to others?

Twenty-one of the 41 respondents reported playing a musical instrument. For many participants, their musical practice had changed with their change of location. Nine reported playing mainly music of their own culture (‘authentic’ traditional, original
popular or mixtures of the two), 10 reported playing mainly Western music (classical, pop, jazz, or Austrian traditional), and five reported playing a mixture of both. Respondent 45 (Nigerian, male) commented:

I never played drums at home in Nigeria and played no instrument at all. Here in Graz, I found out that my work, anti-racist projects with children, needs this music and so I started to teach myself this music. So you could say I am self-taught.

Another Nigerian man (Respondent 44) reported the opposite:

I haven’t played for a long time. In Africa I always played.

Respondent 7 (Chinese, female) was studying operatic voice at Graz’s music university. She reported:

In my home country, I learned both these traditional Chinese instruments and we often made music in our family. That is normal for us. I like the music of my culture, but I like singing European classical music and I also like to play music of Mozart or Beethoven on the piano. I can’t really decide.

A Coptic woman (Respondent 31) reported singing Coptic music in church services and in religion classes with school children, whom she taught the most important hymns. A Serbian man (Respondent 54) played Serbian music in a wedding band. An Albanian woman (Respondent 9) reported learning to play Western classical piano when she was a child. A Kurdish man (Respondent 40) sang Carinthian traditional choral music.7

Cultural identity

Which cultural groups do you belong to? How strongly? Is there a club for your group(s) in Graz? How much contact do you have with this or other groups? With the local majority? Do you feel at home in Graz? Would you like to return to your home country? The reported identities are summarized in Table 19.1. They reveal interesting differences between reported self-identities and the labels of groups to which respondents were assigned. On the basis of Table 19.1 and the respondents’ statements about feeling at home and in contact with other people (in any group including the majority), three independent raters (the second author, a fellow student, and a psychologist) estimated the degree of integration of each respondent on a 5-point scale. Mean ratings are shown in Table 19.1. This tentative and exploratory procedure suggests that our sample was relatively well integrated (the mean was 3.6 on a 5-point scale), but degrees of integration covered a wide range (e.g. seven people were rated as entirely integrated on scale point 5).

Events, ceremonies, traditions

How do you spend your free time? Describe the events and customs of your group in Graz. What roles does music play? Do members of other cultural groups (including the majority) take part? Questions of this kind were asked twice: for the respondent’s cultural group and for other cultural groups in Graz.
Respondent 10 (Albanian, female) reported:

We eat and drink. It is rather informal. But you can talk about problems at university or financial problems. We also organize parties; for example for Albania's national holiday... With loud Albanian music. We go to an Albanian pub, so that we are alone, because we are loud. If you feel homesick and haven't been home for a long time, that's nice.

Respondent 47 (Nigerian, male) enthused:

We have our Independence Day, and everybody gets together to organize it. ... We do that in Nigeria and we do it here, too... I play with my band or other groups; with a lot of dancing, eating and drinking... And these are big parties and we also celebrate in Graz... No matter where they are—every Igbo celebrates—no matter where on earth he is at that moment [laughs]. That is our culture. Here in Austria many Austrians have tried it and they all liked it. Yes, we celebrate it in Linz, Innsbruck, Vienna, Graz, and so on, wherever there are Igbos [laughs]. Everywhere in the world. Last year and we will also celebrate it next year. Come and see! I invite you to come.

Respondent 40 (a Kurdish man) claimed:

I always organized picnics and invited other people, so that they met each other and then they said: Hey, that was wonderful. We see you and your culture differently now...

The interviewers assigned to the Kurdish community experienced its openness and generosity directly when they were invited to a picnic and an evening party.

Respondents varied in the roles and importance they assigned to the traditions of their cultural group in Graz. Respondent 24 (Italian, male) pointed out that 'when you are in a different country, your own culture becomes more interesting and important'.

Respondent 10 (Albanian, female) said:

Young people in Albania seem to avoid their traditional music. But when they are away from home, they want that you send them CDs with traditional music... I have experienced that myself. ... That is because of homesickness.

Respondent 19 (an Italian woman) stated:

At the beginning, when I came to Graz, I spoke a lot to Italians, but now I try not to do that, because we only speak Italian then and I want to learn German.

Respondent 10 (Albanian, female) pointed out that:

We are all students and don't have time to do traditional things... When I am home, then I enjoy these traditional things. But in Graz I don't miss these traditions.

Respondent 28 (a Coptic man) said:

We celebrate, but it doesn't have the same feeling as at home. Because at home is more about family and food: for us, tradition has a lot to do with eating.

These comments confirm that the new situation in which migrants find themselves causes them to change their personal and cultural orientation and to question and
redefine their identity. The new environment offers less comfort and security, so some tend to look for comfort and security in their old familiar traditions.

How do migrants in Graz perceive Austrian culture? Respondent 22 (Italian, female):

I think that Austrians listen to a lot of classical music ... That’s a big tradition in Austria and Germany. I think that people here listen to more classical music than in Italy.

Respondent 15 (Albanian, female) said:

I have the feeling that in Austria traditional music is less important and so it is not important for integration. In Albania, music is more important. If you know the music, you know the country.

Personal favourite CDs

Respondents had been asked to bring three personal favourite CDs. Here, we asked for details including the importance of the music for them; when, where, and with whom they listened to it, and cultural associations. Five respondents brought three CDs from their minority culture (traditional, popular, or both). Eight respondents brought only Western music (pop, classical, jazz). Four did not bring any recordings. The remaining 24 respondents presented a mixture of music from different cultures. Six included music from other non-Western cultures; for example the favourites of Respondent 21 (Italian, female) were Red Hot Chilli Peppers (US/international pop/rock), Pink Floyd (UK/international pop/rock) and Pjatmizza (Russian pop). Some respondents explained that their favourite non-Western music was similar to the music of their own culture; for others, the music reminded them of a trip abroad. These data are consistent with concepts of multiple identity and blurred cultural boundaries.

Music of the respondent’s cultural group

What music do you listen to mainly—both generally and with people from your cultural group? How often? What happened last time? What music is typical for your culture? What is special about it? What role does it play in your life? Do you dislike some of it? It is political? Do you feel free to enjoy it? Does it help you feel at home?

Various opinions were expressed about the music of respondents’ own cultural groups. Respondent 7 (Chinese, female) explained:

We have very many different instruments and directions in our traditional music ... we are all very proud of our music ... it is very beautiful.

But for Respondent 6 (Chinese, male), who had lived in Graz for nine years since arriving at age 10,

music is mainly for entertainment and relaxation. Chinese music has no meaning for me and I don’t listen to it.

Respondents offered contrasting opinions about the social function of music, both generally and in the specific case of integration. The Nigerian respondents tended to
see music (including their own) as a human universal that promotes peaceful coexistence. Respondent 45 (male) remarked:

There is a saying that I read in a book and it says that music is the food of love, and we simply need that.

Respondent 44 (male) observed that:

For example, if you play some music outside that is good for singing and dancing, everyone will sing, play music, and dance, regardless of where the people come from, from America, Great Britain, Africa, Asia, Europe—they sing and play the music together. It brings people together.

The Copts that we interviewed regarded their music as private—important for their religion and cultural identity. Respondent 31 (female) said:

Music is an essential part of the church services. The songs reinforce the meaning of the service. ... No belief is possible without Coptic music. Very important.

This respondent did not regard music as playing any role at all in cultural integration. When asked if her music helped her to feel at home in Graz, she replied: ‘No. I feel at home in the Graz Coptic community, but that has nothing to do with Graz itself’.

Our Serbian, Albanian, and Italian interviewees tended to regard music as important for cultural identity, but stressed that practical considerations such as employment and language are more important for integration. The different approaches of the different groups were partly based on differing levels of cultural self-organization, which was relatively high for Kurds and Copts and relatively low for Chinese, Albanians, and Italians.

The role of music in the integration of Graz’s Serbian minority presents an interesting example of blurred boundaries and complex cultural interactions. Before and during the First and Second World Wars, German literature (e.g. the satirical magazine *Simplicissimus*) presented Serbs as underdeveloped, uncivilized, dirty, and violent (Jörg Becker, 2009). Prejudice was reinforced in the 1990s by events in ex-Yugoslavia.

In a recent telephone survey (Sozialwissenschaftliche Studiengesellschaft, 2005), 1002 Viennese residents were asked how much Czechs, Hungarians, Sudeten-Germans, Croats, Slovaks, Serbs, and Poles had enriched Austrian culture since the fall of the Austro-Hungarian empire in 1918; Serbs received the highest number of ‘not at all’ responses (44%), followed by Poles (33%), and Slovaks (32%). Today, many young Austrians frequent nightclubs where Serbian and ‘remixed Balkan’ jazz and rock is played, and travel abroad to hear Serbian music—for example to the biggest brass orchestra festival on the Balkan peninsula, *Dragacevski sabor trubaca*, held every year in Guca in central Serbia. The festival lasts several days, attracts up to 300 000 visitors and presents up to 50 big bands. Many of the brass orchestras in Serbia are staffed entirely by Roma, although the Roma have long been the target of systematic discrimination (Wippermann, 1997).

Many other musical and cultural contacts between Austria and neighbouring countries appear to promote integration and undermine old stereotypes and prejudices.
Current examples include the Szeged Open-Air Festival in Hungary and the Bosnian Rock musician and film music composer Goran Bregović. More relevant for older Austrians is the Slovenian folk band Die Oberkrainer that describes itself as ‘Slovenia’s music export no. 1’ and ‘musical ambassadors of Slovenia’.

**Music and integration**

What is the role of music in your relationships with other cultural groups in Graz? How many traditional Austrians know your music? What happens when they listen to it? What does ‘integration’ mean for you? Does music contribute to integration—for you personally? Of the various events, projects and institutions that you have experienced in Graz, which promote integration? What role does music play? How could music be used to promote integration? These leading questions, which were deliberately posed near the end of the interview, produced the most interesting responses.

Responses were generally consistent with the assumption that the music of one’s culture helps one to feel at home. If such feelings encourage intercultural interaction within Graz, we may regard them as a measure of integration. Four respondents indicated that the music of their own culture makes them feel good, four that it is an important part of their life and cultural identity, three that it made them less homesick, and two that it helps them connect to other people. One respondent (10, Albania) reported getting homesick when listening to music of her own culture, and two thought that there was no connection between music and feeling at home. Two suggested that feeling at home depends more on friends and other factors than on music.

**Cultural association**

Several respondents mentioned associations between the music of a culture and other knowledge about that culture. Respondent 36 (Kurdish, female) said that:

The music reminds me of the Kurd’s situation, their suffering, the beauty of the country.

Others claimed that the music of a culture tells you something about the people. Respondent 36 (Kurdish, female) said:

You see the cultures of other people and know why some speak loudly and others quietly. The music helps you to understand that.

Respondent 47 (Nigerian, male) stated:

Music makes people from other cultures get to know us. Because music is very interesting. Then they say: the Igbos have nice music. Music brings us together—people know more about our culture—they speak well of us.

Respondent 12 (Albanian, female) said:

Music tells you something about mindsets. We experience foreign cultures from a politically weakened viewpoint. With music you get to know someone differently—not like in conversation. You hear the music and straight away you have an impression of how the Albanians are, for example. That is the quite different from reading about Albanians in a
newspaper and I think it would be good if there were more concerts here in Graz. Not especially for Albanians, but rather for the Austrians. Because based on my husband’s experience with a Greek restaurant I can say that Austrians like Greek music very much. More Austrians than Greeks come to the restaurant when Greek music is performed.

Associations between music and other aspects of culture can evidently reduce prejudice. Respondent 40 (Kurdish, male):

Generally—there is always prejudice, but with music you can somehow succeed in deflecting these prejudices, because many people for example think that the Kurds … are just Turkish mountain people and nomads. In fact we have a people with a rich culture and we show through our music and culture that we are not nomads but owners and carriers of culture. Yes. We have beautiful voices, beautiful songs, beautiful music and beautiful events.

Some respondents thought that unfamiliar music is difficult to understand and sometimes is not appreciated. Respondent 53 (Serbian, female) said:

Many … people don’t quite understand our music. At my last birthday the Austrians reacted quite differently to our music than we did.

Respondent 22 (Italian, female) stated:

I lived for 20 years in Southern Italy and I know the culture, I know the people. But for a foreigner it is difficult. He can have ideas but he can’t understand them properly. Perhaps after a while. … The music of Naples is well known among Austrians, but they don’t know the meaning of the songs. That is normal. I don’t think I would know the meaning of a traditional Austrian song, either. There are limits.

Respondent 26 (a Coptic man) questioned dominant discourse about the link between music and culture by suggesting that any music can be associated with any culture. He recalled that:

The music in Austria reminds me of my adolescence in Egypt, e.g. ABBA, Boney M, Bee Gees, Tina Charles … I have them all on CD.

Language

Is music a universal language that helps foreign cultures to communicate with each other across language barriers? Recent literature in ethnomusicology and music psychology is contradictory. Ethnomusicologists (e.g. Nettl, 1983) have traditionally emphasized the difficulty of understanding the music of foreign cultures without first immersing oneself in those cultures (becoming an ‘insider’). More recently, music psychologists have documented an apparently universal ability to recognize basic emotions in the music of foreign cultures (Balkwill, Thompson, & Matsunaga, 2004). Meanwhile, globalization is increasing the rate and prevalence of intercultural communication (Nercessian, 2002).

Several respondents expressed the view that music is easier to understand across cultures than language. Respondent 28 (Coptic, male) stated:

I think music is very important, because music is a world language. Everyone can understand it.
Respondent 4 (Chinese), when asked whether she listens to music or news on the radio, replied:

Of course I mainly listen to music. In Austria I also sometimes listen to the news, but unfortunately I understand very little.

Respondent 26 (Coptic, male) commented:

I can’t speak Italian but I like to listen to Italian music. I can’t speak Turkish but I can listen to Turkish music.

That music functions as a language can be more true for active musicians, for whom playing together can create a strong bond. Respondent 7 (Chinese, female) said:

Music is generally very important, because you can communicate even if you don’t understand the language. I play a lot of music with student colleagues and we often speak English because we come from different countries and when we play music it doesn’t matter because we understand each other. ... You communicate and everyone understands and knows what the other person is thinking. ... Very many students at the music university are not from Austria but they still get along very well and do lots of projects. I think that is very good.

Respondent 24 (a male Italian jazz singer) commented at length on the relationship between music, language and integration:

Then we can get along well. Because the music is happening, we have a topic of conversation, the song that we play, improvise, and if it is good, then have had a super dialogue, without words—a musical dialogue ... And if they both feel good about the topic, as is often the case in our music, a strong connection can emerge ... If we speak a common language, then we understand each other, like in a relationship. In this case music is the common language and we both go to the concert ... because both of us love that music and because that is our language. ... But to have a relationship after that, music is not so important any more. Only in the beginning, to make the contact. After that I need other strategies to feel okay and to feel good as a Grazer. So that you can get something out of me, so I can be an enrichment for you and you for me.

Emotion

If music promotes integration, what is the role of emotion? Several respondents perceived music of their own culture to be particularly emotional. Respondent 11 (Albanian, female) commented:

There are so many songs in Albanian that could make me cry because the words are so sad.

Respondent 25 (Kurdish, male) said:

We are Kurds and we dance to our music, although it is very sad music. If you listen to the words, they are mostly sad and that connects us to our memories. There are some songs, when I hear them, for example about freedom fighters, I start to cry. I only like old music—I don’t like modern music at all. I live with my music in the past and not in the future.
Music can be especially emotional if linked with specific personal or historical
events. Respondent 24 (Italian, male), remembering the annexation of South Tyrol by
Italy after the First World War, commented:

You know, the Italians came and said: you are no longer allowed to play your own
music, you are no longer allowed to speak German. That made the bond with the
music much stronger. Of course old people get emotional when they hear that. An exam-
ple: If someone dies and the musicians play *Ich hatte einen Kameraden*, you can look
around and everyone over 60 will go red and cry profusely. ... And among us young
people, you can have a look, no-one cries at all. That is because the connection is not
so strong.

The emotion evoked by music of one’s own culture is often nostalgic and evokes
feelings of homesickness. That, it seems, can affect integration either positively or
negatively. Respondent 10 (Albanian, female) said:

I avoid listening to Albanian music when I have not been home for a while because it
makes me homesick.

In reply to the question ‘How important is the music of your cultural group for
you?’, Respondent 46 (Nigerian, male) replied:

I prefer my own traditional music. This music is the best.

Apart from this isolated comment, no other respondent, including those who
experienced their own music as particularly emotional, suggested that the music of
their culture might be somehow inherently superior. Perhaps the migration experi-
ence had taught them that the emotional effect of music depends strongly on cultural
background. Another possible explanation is that they, like much of the world, believe
that Western high culture is somehow inherently superior to other forms of culture
(Judith Becker, 1986). It might have been interesting to ask respondents for their
views on this issue, given its relevance for the general question of the role of music in
integration.

**Context dependence**

In general, both migrants and locals were interested in more intercultural exchange,
but migrants more often expressed the need to promote their own culture. Music can
be more important for migrants who identify with it than for their friends and family
back home. Respondent 10 (Albanian, female) commented:

The young people in Albania seem to avoid folk music. But when they are away from
home they want you to send them CDs of folk music.

But not all migrants considered the music of their own culture to be particularly
important or emotional. Respondent 2 (Chinese, female), who was studying Western
classical music at Graz’s music university, said:

Classical music is very emotional, I often get goose bumps ... pop music is emotional if the
text goes well.
Any music? Any culture?

If integration is about feeling good in a new situation, and any music can help people feel good, can any music (own or foreign) promote integration? Respondent 9 (Albanian, female) said:

I feel better when I listen to music. But that is true not only for Albanian music but for any music that I like.

Respondent 2 (Chinese, female) commented:

I sing along with songs from American musicals and lose myself in the music to forget my homesickness.

Respondent 55 (Serbian, male) said:

Sure, music brings people together. It is easier to celebrate together, to dance, and to talk.

Because Western popular and classical music increasingly dominates world music, it can also have an integrative function. Respondent 18 (Italian, male) said:

I especially think that concerts can attract people from all cultures. Some artists are famous and loved all over the world.

International music weakens national identification with traditional music, while creating new communities. When asked which cultural groups she identified with or felt she belonged to, Respondent 9 (Albanian, female) replied:

I like classical music, but there are so many other nationalities that listen to this music.

Younger people tend to feel musical globalization more strongly. Respondent 15 (Albanian, female) said:

As for music, I think that globalization has had a big effect. Music is now the same for all young people. It doesn’t matter whether I live in Austria or Albania, I can listen to the same music.

Respondent 19 (Italian, female) commented:

I like for example classical music, but there are so many other nationalities/nations that listen to this music.

Perhaps integration may be promoted by any aspect of culture; it is not clear whether music is more important or plays a special role. Respondent 33 (Coptic, male) said:

Maybe people can understand our food more easily than our music. Many people have come to look at our church because it is so beautiful.

Contact with other groups

Many respondents’ comments can be regarded as variations on the contact thesis, according to which contact between cultural groups leads to better communication and hence less conflict and prejudice. Allport (1954) theorized that contact is only beneficial among groups that have equal status, share social norms, and engage in
cooperative activities with common goals that involve personal interaction. But some empirical studies (e.g. Wagner, van Dick, Pettigrew, & Christ, 2003) are consistent with contact promoting integration even if Allport’s conditions are not met. People may be attracted to musical events, music may be a reason to create networks and clubs, or music may simply be a topic of conversation. But the music of foreign cultures can also be marketed as a exotica, reinforcing racial stereotypes, promoting artistic superficiality, and exploiting economically weaker cultures (Hutnyk, 2000).

Respondent 53 (Serbian, female) commented:

If you are familiar with something, you can understand it better and you are more open to it. Respondent 48 (Nigerian, male) said:

But there are hardly any social events without music. Music can relax a tense atmosphere.

Respondent 55 (Serbian, male) stated:

Sure, music brings people together. It is easier to celebrate, dance and talk together.

Respondent 14 (Albanian, female) commented:

I met a lot of people through the Salsa dance course. Many students, and older people who are working. I like these people more, because we have something in common. Apart from that I have met many people in Graz who are not so relaxed. In the course there are people whose temperament is similar to mine.

Respondent 45 (Nigerian, male) reflected:

Salsa and samba are in fashion at the moment and people come to learn these dances. In that way they meet new people ... We go to children in schools and kindergartens and try to familiarize them with the music of Africa. In that way we counter racism. The music is a way to reach the children. ... We have to make it clear to those who are in a position to do something that integration means much more than head scarves and language skills. You have to bring people together and music is a good way to do that—as is food.

Curiosity

Music can make people curious about another culture and motivate them to get to know the people and the culture. Referring to a concert of Albanian traditional music on Graz’s main square, Respondent 12 (Albanian, female) recalled:

The people stopped to look and were interested. Where do they come from? Oh, that’s what it’s like in Albania! ... Aha, Albania is real and Albanians live right here among us in Graz.

Respondent 40 (Kurdish, male) said:

I think that without music I would have no need to get to know other cultures.

Acceptance

Integration is promoted by the feeling that others like one’s own music—and suppressed by the feeling that others do not like one’s own music. Respondent 21 (Italian, female) commented:
I met some Austrians who knew the Italian music and I was so impressed. I was so happy. We sang together.

Respondent 41 (Kurdish, male) said:

We want the others to get to know our culture and music.

Conversely, non-acceptance of music may be unavoidable. Respondent 32 (Coptic, female) reflected:

The people here accept other kinds of music, but our music is very difficult, rhythmically etc.—it is only for prayer. It helps you meditate. Austria is a land of music and I think they would just find our music boring.

Identity

The music of one’s own cultural group can function as a strong reminder of that culture, triggering nostalgic feelings and in that way strengthening cultural identity.

Respondent 47 (Nigerian, male) said:

African music is important for me. The music leads as it were ‘back to the roots’. ... Back to my country and my culture. Traditional music takes me back to my ‘real’ identity.

Respondent 44 (Nigerian, male) also said:

That piece is not really one of my favourites. I like it because I am very proud of the place where I come from. As I already said, the music gives me meaning. ... It brings my thoughts back home.

Project evaluation

We want to understand the role of music in integration and on that basis to develop new integration strategies. Are those appropriate aims? Are interviews of this kind an appropriate method? Do you have any suggestions or criticism?

Our respondents’ practical proposals for using music to promote integration in Graz included the following: public events including different aspects of each culture (various respondents), an entertaining multicultural concert for children (Respondent 9: Albanian, female); a multicultural weekend with folklore, football, music ... (Respondent 26: Coptic, male); financial support for performance of own music (various respondents), and media reports on specific cultures as well as associated economics and politics (Respondent 12: Albanian, female).

When asked whether an Albanian group playing in Graz’s main square and other such events can promote integration, Respondent 12 (Albanian, female) replied:

Yes, if it happens more often. The government should invest more public money in such projects. When that happened, Graz was cultural capital of Europe in 2003 and more money was available for events like that. It was very nice that attention was paid to my own country.

Asked if she had concrete ideas about what such an event should be like and how it should be organized, Respondent 7 (Albanian, female) remarked:
There are pubs that are run by Albanians. If the managers got support from the city of Graz, it would be easier to stage such events, because if you invite singers from Albania that costs money. It's very hard to finance everything yourself.

Respondent 10 ( Albanian, female) stressed that more money was needed to pay musicians.

We cannot afford musicians for our cultural events. We used to invite folk groups as soon as we heard about them. That stopped a few years ago.

Respondent 35 (Kurdish, male) commented:

Live music is so expensive that no small group in Graz can afford it. It used to be different ... before 1991, we got support from all sides, from the SPÖ the main centre-left political party, the Greens, from the Province of Styria, and Caritas a catholic charity organization.

We could put on big events, but now nothing works. If we ask for help now, they say we should go to our embassy and when they give us 100 or 200 Euros, that is nothing.

Why the emphasis on money? Perhaps our respondents regarded our study as an opportunity to lobby for financial support. Several independently suggested that governments could promote integration by financially supporting the performance and promotion of minority musics.

Conclusions

One consequence of globalization is the increasing importance of cultural integration. Our data suggest that integration is best achieved by combining a range of different approaches. Musical integration is one of those possibilities. Our study highlights intercultural differences regarding the perceived role of music in integration. For example, the Nigerians whom we interviewed regarded music as an integration-enhancing universal language, whereas the Copts had little desire to present their music to other groups.

Bergh (2007), in a retrospective study on the long-term effect of an intercultural school music programme, concluded that music can only positively affect integration if participants (in both minorities and the majority) contribute actively to music making or to the organization of events. The findings of the present study are consistent with that finding, which has important implications for the public funding of minority musics. The long-term positive impact on integration may be greater if public money is used to support active music making within minority groups rather than multicultural concerts for passive general consumption. Governments would invite proposals and a multicultural expert committee would evaluate them and financially reward minorities with the most original, creative, promising ideas (given that conformity can be problematic; H. S. Becker, 1982) and the strongest motivation.

A weakness of our study was the limited training of the student interviewers. Additional training in interviewing techniques and intercultural competence would have been beneficial. The social and cultural distance between interviewers and respondents may have biased our conclusions. Important thoughts may not have been articulated if they conflicted with unspoken rules of social interaction. One of the
interviewers in each student group should have been a member of the corresponding
cultural group, fluent in its main language or dialect. An interviewer with appropriate
training should have performed post-interviews with selected respondents.
Can the results of a study in Graz be generalized to other cities that are larger or
smaller or situated in different national and cultural contexts? Yes and no. Many of the
sentiments expressed by our participants could have been expressed anywhere. But
Graz may be atypical in its combination of social openness and political closure.
Migrants feel relatively well integrated and free to publicly express their culture, but
many non-migrants still harbour strong, deep resentments against migrants and
multiculturalism—as reflected by the continuing success of far-right politics.

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Notes
1 Further information in German on these political activities can be found on the internet
homepage of the Forum for Applied Interculturality Research.
2 For a more detailed report in German, see Dorfer (2009).
3 The large number of interviewers is both a strength (diversity) and a weakness (lack of
control).
4 As part of a larger investigation, we also interviewed 28 people who self-identified as Austrians
and had grown up in Austria. Their data are not considered here.
5 We realized later that this may have created difficulties for older participants who listened to
cassette tapes or vinyl records, or those who heard their favourite music on audiovisual media
such as VHS or DVD.
6 We assumed that the respondents expressed their opinions spontaneously and honestly, and
we did not analyse for Hawthorne effects.
7 Carinthia (Kärnten) is a province of Austria not far from Graz, whose traditional choral style
is well known in other provinces. Carinthia is also a traditional stronghold of the far-right
FPÖ. The popularity of the FPÖ in Carinthia is based in part on German-speaking intolerance
of the Slovenian-speaking minority.
8 This question aimed to strengthen the connection between respondents’ comments and real
music. It also maintained interest by varying the interview format.
9 The authenticity of such statements is questionable given that similar sentiments are
promoted by the ‘world music’ industry.
10 Presumably, these results would have been similar in Graz and Vienna. They would have been
influenced by geographical distance (distant countries make less contribution to culture).

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