

ABSTRACT

The question of musical knowledge applied to folk music is always challenging. While folk music normally does not have great artistic or academic aspirations and its theory and praxis are often little documented, its musicians and public still possess the necessary (implicit) knowledge to be able to produce and consume their music.

When we consider Turkish folk music, it appears to be an example of academically approached, conservatory-institutionalised and state-supported folk music. The reason for all this attention is the fact that, according to the official republican ideology, traditional Turkish folk music has been considered as the only genuine musical expression of Turkish national culture. Notwithstanding the political applications and biased views of the music, and the inevitable musical adaptations, standardisation and narrowing-down, this preferential treatment has unarguably also benefitted the advancement of knowledge construction about the music.

In the diaspora on the other hand, Turkish folk music lacks all this official attention and support. Thus, it will be probably impossible to maintain the level and pace of the knowledge construction existing in Turkey. Besides, when living abroad, Turkish musicians and their public are likely to adopt a new attitude towards their native music. Particular emotional motives will presumably affect the meanings they put on the music, and cause their priorities to shift and intentions to change.

In this paper, 'musical knowledge' about the Turkish folk music repertoire performed among the Turkish immigrant communities in the Belgian city of Ghent will be examined. Turkish folk musicians will be interviewed and observed in search of their explicit or implicit knowledge related to different fields, such as music theory (scale/melody and metrical/rhythmical organization, tuning systems,...), performance practice (style and interpretation: ornamentations, variations, phrasings, dynamics, tempo changes,...), musical forms and genres, functions and meanings, geographical and temporal situation, etc. Dependable written sources about Turkish folk music, as well as recordings of authentic performances by traditional Turkish folk musicians will constitute the reference sources. The obtained information will be processed in order to compose a structured 'map' of concrete diasporic musical knowledge about Turkish folk music.

The following step could be the placement of this 'map' over the existing educational situations (either formal or informal) within the Turkish immigrant communities in Ghent. Thus could be investigated which aspects of musical knowledge are being transferred and which are not. Interesting questions could be: which aspects are deliberately omitted, which ones are forgotten, and to which ones is paid either more or less attention. Looking for explanations of these findings could possibly reveal either difficulties manifesting in the construction and transfer of musical knowledge, or underlying hierarchies in appreciation of the knowledge aspects.

As a pendant to the diasporic research, an analysis of the existing or desired knowledge about Turkish folk music at the conservatories in Turkey could be performed. It could be expected that a large amount of structured musical knowledge is in course of being built up and transferred within these institutions. The outcome of the analysis would be the composition of a matrix of 'knowable' and 'teachable' aspects of Turkish folk music. When the mapped out knowledge aspects of the immigrant musicians would be compared to this more comprehensive matrix, guidelines for future development and professionalizing of the education in Turkish music in the diaspora could emerge. While it is likely to find important hiatuses in the existing knowledge of the immigrant musicians, these musicians' ways of dealing with their homeland folk music could in turn possibly serve as a guide for functional adaptations of the proposed knowledge matrix.