An ICMPC-ESCOM 2021 Workshop on
Cross-Cultural and Anti-Colonial/Imperial Research

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Abstract

This paper is a written account of the ICMPC-ESCOM 2021 workshop “Cross-Cultural and Decolonized Research,” and an opportunity to dig deeper into some of the topics that were discussed over the course of organizing and presenting the workshop. The paper is divided into three sections: 1) why we organized the workshop, and our reflections on it; 2) a summary of the responses to five questions we posed to experts in cross-cultural and anti-colonial/imperial research, prefaced by a discussion of how we chose who we wanted to approach; and 3) our reflections on future steps music science can take to engage cross-cultural and anti-colonial/imperial research ethically.

Positionality

We will begin by introducing ourselves, as we feel it is important for us to contextualize where we are coming from when writing about cross-cultural and anti-colonial/imperial work.

Sarah is a white, cis-queer settler woman working as a postdoctoral fellow in the Cognitive Aging and Auditory Neuroscience Lab with Dr. Benjamin Zendel at Memorial University of Newfoundland and Labrador (MUNL), whose main campus is housed on the ancestral homelands of the Beothuk and the unceded and unsurrendered lands of the Mi'kmaq. Memorial also has a campus in Labrador, the portion of the province which occupies the traditional homelands of the Inuit of Nunatsiavut and NunatuKavut and Innu of Nitassinan. She works in a Faculty of Medicine and has previously trained in a School of Music (MUN, B. Mus. Hon. '13), a Department of Psychology (Goldsmiths University of London, MSc Music Mind and Brain, '14) and a School of Electronic Engineering and Computer Science (Queen Mary University of London, '18) under the supervision of Prof. Tim Steeves, Prof. Lauren Stewart and Dr. Marcus Pearce, respectively. She considers herself political and an activist, and is an active member of the Social Justice Cooperative of Newfoundland and Labrador, the Zero Waste Action Team, the Coalition for a Green New Deal and the activist x anti-capitalist book club. She has come across the idea of anti-colonial/imperial research recently, and her existing work has focused exclusively on Western tonal music and WEIRD university participants^{1,2}.

¹ This is a lot of information, but I feel it is all relevant. I tell you the specific scientific fields I have studied and worked in and who I have done it with, which imply particular approaches, paradigms and theories; I tell you my current Land relations because all work comes from a place; I tell you about my activism and relationship to the essay topics to give you an idea of where I am coming from and where I may be deficient in my knowledge and/or experience. – Sarah

² Our use of footnotes is inspired by Max Liboiron's book *Pollution is Colonialism* (Liboiron, 2021), who uses them to enact nuance, politics, gratitude and recognition; a methodology of relations "within a text, through a text". Though I have not had the chance to meet or work with Max, I have a huge admiration for their work. It changes my thinking, my work and my writing in concrete ways, even as I read. – Sarah

Elizabeth is a white woman from rural southwestern Colorado, on Lands that were traditionally shared by the Ute, Cheyenne, Arapaho, Apache, Shoshone, Comanche, Kiowa, and Navajo tribes, and that presently abut the Ute Mountain and Southern Ute Reservations. She earned her B.M. and B.S. at the University of Nevada, Reno, graduating with an honors thesis that sought to investigate whether low-level acoustic properties are sufficient to distinguish music, language, and environmental sound -- regardless of culture or place. The work prompted thorough discussions and criticisms from her three supervisors, the neuroscientist Dr. Michael Webster, the linguist Dr. Ian Clayton, and the ethnomusicologist Dr. Ruth Meadows. All of their insights fundamentally shaped her interdisciplinary perspective on music-science research, which she is carrying forward as a doctoral student in Psychology, Neuroscience and Behaviour at McMaster University under the direction of Dr. Steven Brown. Her current work investigates the acoustic properties of traditional songs from around the world, with the aim of building a cognitive theory of pitch schematics (such as scales) that emphasizes the roles of human physiology *and* cultural transmission. She believes that cross-cultural music research is necessary to challenge the field's historic Western centrality, as many attendees of ICMPC-ESCOM 2021 readily acknowledged. However, she also wishes to recognize and broadcast the inherent challenges, both ethical and technical, of such work. When it comes to anti-colonial/imperial music research, she situates herself as both "part of the problems" *and* as someone looking to collaboratively and continuously discuss and tackle "the problems."

Wyatt is a Métis man from Calgary, Alberta, Treaty #7 territory. He is currently a PhD student at the University of Alberta in the Faculty of Native Studies. The University of Alberta is located in Treaty #6 territory and is part of the Métis homeland. Wyatt studied psychology and anthropology during his undergraduate degree program at the University of Victoria, on the territories of the WSÁNEĆ and

ləkʷəŋən peoples, and interdisciplinary studies during his Masters within the Faculty of Native Studies and the Department of Educational Psychology at the University of Alberta. His current research examines ableism as it functions to further marginalize Indigenous people, families, and communities in Canada. Outside of his academic work Wyatt is a fiddle player, has helped create experiential learning opportunities at Métis Crossing in Alberta, acted as a committee member on the Dean of Social Sciences' Advisory Committee on Indigenous Initiatives at the University of Victoria for two years, and worked with several different community organizations providing cultural programming for Indigenous and non-Indigenous youth. Though not a music scientist, Wyatt was brought on to the present research project to help organize and facilitate the workshop given his knowledge and experiences with Indigenous and decolonial research.

The workshop

The collaborative workshop at ICMPC-ESCOM-2021 aimed to broadcast and brainstorm solutions to the present issues facing cross-cultural music science as a community. We hoped for researchers from various backgrounds to openly discuss how to best conduct cross-cultural music research, and to collectively examine the harms (both unintentional and intentional) that have been (and could continue to be) perpetrated by the dominant scientific framework.

At the start of our research journey, we were especially interested in the potential of “decolonizing” research in the relatively young field of music science—hence our title for the workshop³. However,

³ Why did we use the incorrect label? Truthfully, we did not fully consider or understand the distinction until after the workshop abstract was submitted. Upon learning better, we chose to maintain the original title as: 1) it is a popular phrase in cross-cultural music research that would indicate the workshop's general intent; 2) it is a *misused* phrase in our discipline and academic research more generally (Tuck & Yang 2012), so its inclusion allowed us to discuss the important specificity of “decolonial” work and separate it from broader anti-colonial and anti-imperial projects; and 3) it provided a chance for us to be vulnerable and humble, and show that we are still learning, too, and not trying to hide our mistakes. By publicizing this mis-step, we hoped to emphasize that cross-cultural and anti-colonial/imperialist work is messy and complex. Our discipline is in transition, and this

Wyatt and the other academics we were in conversation with quickly pointed out that our use of the term “decolonization” was inaccurate, and played into a larger issues which decolonial studies has identified as a “settler [moves] to innocence” (Tuck & Yang, 2012, p.9). As stated by Tuck & Yang (2012), decolonization is not a metaphor. It exclusively refers to returning Lands⁴, Land stewardship, and resources to Indigenous peoples, and acknowledging Indigenous communities as sovereign entities. Work that does not directly support efforts to repatriate Land and Land-stewardship to Indigenous peoples — including this workshop and the associated paper (under review) — is not decolonial work. A better description might be “anti-colonial/imperial”⁵ work, or intentional and self-critical cross-cultural work. It has become vogue in the work of academics to label their research as “decolonial,” especially when applying for grants, but in doing so researchers often co-opt and blunt the true meaning of the term, feeding into the very colonial processes with which their research ostensibly contends (Tuck and Yang, 2012). Colonialism is fundamentally about Land, specifically, Land theft; therefore, decolonization and the anti-colonial project must also be rooted in Land, specifically, Land back and Land relations. In short, therefore, we ultimately changed the title of this paper to focus on the more-accurate terms of cross-cultural and anti-colonial approaches. While anti-colonialism may not directly return Land to Indigenous stewardship, thinking about the relationship researchers have with the Land and the work we do as visitors on the Land is critical to the anti-colonial project.

paper and our workshop demonstrate this transition in many ways. We hope that by demonstrating our own learning process, we can help to foster a more general attitude in our discipline to acknowledge past failures, learn from them, and take the necessary steps to address these failures for the future of our work as researchers and as a discipline. Throughout this paper, including the title, we instead used “anti-colonial/imperial.”

⁴ Following Liboiron (2021), Land is capitalized when referring to “a spiritually infused place grounded in interconnected and interdependent relationships” (p.6, n19). Without capitalization, land refers to a geographic space, a colonial conception of land as a thing that is universal and that can be owned and taken from.

⁵ This phrase recognizes that, though imperialism and colonialism are very often found together, they ultimately describe different phenomena; the differentiation can be thought of as the requirement of “settlement,” where colonial power relations require some form of settlement while imperial relations do not.

We intended to hold a panel discussion to promote dialogue, but due to time and technological constraints, we instead reached out to roughly a dozen researchers (either identified during our own reading or recommended to us) and asked them to respond to the following five questions:

1. Introduce yourself and your experience with cross-cultural research or decolonizing approaches to research, as relevant.
2. What are the 3 most important questions researchers should ask themselves before embarking on cross-cultural research?
3. What are your top 3 recommendations for doing ethical cross-cultural research?
4. What methods and/or approaches do you recommend for doing ethical cross-cultural research?
5. Imagine that 20 years from now decolonized/ethical cross-cultural research is the norm: what does that look like?

We collated their responses into a presentation, which was given during the 40-minute live workshop time slot at ICMPC-ESCOM 2021.

Process for selecting speakers

As organizers, we carefully considered who we would invite to “speak” at the workshop. It would only be one short conversation⁶, so representing everyone with a stake in progressing cross-cultural music research was impossible. Still, we were exercising power over whose voices would be included and whose voices would be excluded. With this in mind, we first considered the potential speaker’s ethnicity and field of research expertise.

⁶ Hopefully of many...

Any conversation about redressing the harms of colonization must center the voices of those it disproportionately affects, namely racialized and Indigenous peoples. However, these conversations require unpaid time and emotional labour, and speakers can easily become tokenized in the course of “representing” these populations to educate their White peers. We therefore sent invitations to researchers with expertise in various fields regardless of their ethnic identity, and allowed the individuals to decide for themselves whether or not to lend their labour⁷. In the end, the group we selected for the workshop was diverse in many regards, and we centered racialized and Indigenous voices in our reading list instead, where we promote many books, articles, podcasts, and blogs already existing on this topic.

In considering the research field of our speakers, we firstly wanted to hear from music scientists currently working cross-culturally. However, the field of music science has not yet developed a rich body of discourse on the ethical and methodological considerations of cross-cultural or anti-colonial/imperial research. As such, we also wanted to hear from figures in other disciplines, especially anthropology and ethnomusicology, that have more experience with conducting and critiquing cross-cultural work. Anthropologists and ethnomusicologists are as imperfect as music scientists. There are many problems with the standard practices of these fields that a long history of cross-cultural research and critical scientific theory has only perpetuated, not solved. These disciplines are also grappling with a paradigm shift towards anti-colonialism, anti-imperialism and anti-racism, and don't have all the

⁷ It is worth noting that we were asking for unpaid labour from all of our speakers, including those who were white, early career researchers, students or retired. Choosing a “diverse” panel is ultimately a token game. In this sense, we were lucky that we ended up with a virtual format that enabled us to collect more responses, with less effort required from the speakers. We are grateful for all of the responses we received. If you have your own thoughts on these five questions, we would like to hear from you too. -Elizabeth

answers either. However, they do have a head start, and we can learn from them⁸. Therefore, we decided to invite people from both inside the field of music science, to get an idea of the current attitudes, and also outside the field, especially in anthropology and ethnomusicology.

Summarized responses to our questions

Question 1 - Introduce yourself and your experience with cross-cultural research or decolonizing approaches to research, as relevant.

This question was meant to 1) introduce the institutional expertise of our speakers, 2) briefly show their experience with the type of work we are writing about, and 3) situate each of their responses in a certain context of identity and location. We have taken direct quotes whenever possible, to accurately convey the positional information provided by each individual.

Patrick Savage is “an Associate Professor at Keio University and the director of the CompMusic Lab for comparative and computational musicology. [He has] led or assisted in several cross-cultural projects, including assembling and analyzing databases of musical and other forms of cultural diversity (Savage et al., 2015; Whitehouse et al., 2021; Wood et al., 2021).”

Hideo Daikoku is “a graduate student at Patrick Savage’s Comparative and Computational Musicology lab in Keio University Japan, where [he studies] topics on diversity in Indian music and finding patterns in cross-cultural perception of music similarity. [He comes] from a cross-cultural household, as [his] mother is Indian, [his] father is Japanese and [he has] spent [his] life moving between the two countries and around a few others. As somebody deeply interested in the musical styles of India,

⁸ We also believe that it is generally important for scientists to engage with researchers outside of their own field, with academics in the humanities, and with knowledge-keepers outside of academia. These interdisciplinary relationships allow us to learn together, for the betterment of all our fields and our broader communities.

Japan and their relation to the west, [he is] invested in investigating our unique perceptual priors, evidence for independent invention and global trends in how people perceive and produce music.”

Shantala Hegde works as a “Clinical Neuropsychologist and faculty member in the department of Clinical Psychology at the National Institute of Mental Health and Neurosciences, Bengaluru, India.”

She identifies as “a clinician-researcher and [her] area of research interest is music and cognitive neuroscience,” where she carries out cross-cultural studies when the opportunity arises. She has worked on musical acculturation with Jamshed Bharucha and Meagan Curtis. She has also worked on emotion perception with David Huron, Ohio State University and Parag Chordia, Georgia Tech University in 2010. She believes there is a need for cross-cultural research in music science to better understand both musical universals and unique aspects of different musical cultures.

Ellen Waterman is “a white cis-gender woman and a settler Canadian musician with a tenured position (research chair) at Carleton University which occupies the traditional, unceded territory of the Algonquin nations. [She is] also the founder/director of a new research centre on Music, Sound, and Society in Canada. The goal of the MSSC is to explore the complex and diverse roles that music and sonic arts play in shaping Canadian society. The Centre is committed to community engaged scholarship and research-creation for social transformation. [She has] been participating in research aimed at decolonizing music and sound studies for some years now. For [her] that means working in interdisciplinary research spaces, such as the International Institute for Critical Studies in Improvisation. [She has] done research with colleagues in ecological biology, Indigenous studies, law, disability studies, and many other disciplinary ‘homes’.”

Psyche Loui leads the Music, Imaging and Neural Dynamics (MIND) Lab at Northeastern University. She has “done very little cross-cultural research in the traditional sense, but growing up in a colony

(Hong Kong was a colony of the UK until 1997) [she has] always been aware that different cultures bring differently rich backgrounds to music.” Her dissertation used “a new musical system, that is relatively free from culturally imbued associations, and looking at how the learning might unfold over the course of exposure to that system” (Loui, 2007; Loui & Wessel, 2008). Recently, she has “collaborated with colleagues across 11 different countries to conduct a survey in six different languages to understand the effects of music on well-being.” Her lab has also started “asking individual participants to suggest and bring in their own musical stimuli,” which often depends on the cultural (and subcultural) identities of each participant. As she explains, “If we are asking questions about how music affects the mind and the brain, then it makes sense that different minds and different brains are affected by different forms of music.”

Sylvia Moore is “an Assistant Professor at Memorial University where she is jointly appointed to the School of Arctic and Subarctic Studies, and the Faculty of Education. [She is] from the Mi’kmaq region of Kespukwiti, more commonly known as southwest Nova Scotia. [She] currently live[s] and works on the traditional homelands of the Innu and Inuit in Labrador. [Her] work is done in relationship with Indigenous Peoples and in relationship with place. [She approaches] research by working with and for Indigenous communities on their research interests and priorities related to decolonizing education, teaching and learning in the K-12 system, and Indigenous identity and wellbeing.”

Lee Veeraraghavan is an ethnomusicologist whose “dissertation fieldwork took place in British Columbia, where she was mostly based out of Vancouver, but spent several stints in the north of the province between 2012 and 2015. She was working with radical environmentalists resisting pipeline development, and alongside—for? The prepositions can become a little murky when engaging in immersive fieldwork; and how activists think of what they do is somewhat different from how activist

ethnographers think about it (see Khasnabish & Haiven, 2015)—Indigenous communities reoccupying their traditional unceded Land to prevent the development of potentially catastrophic energy infrastructure. Her research focuses on settler colonial hearing practices that make extractivism possible in Canada. These range from political hearing processes for pipelines to more aesthetic/pedagogical interventions, such as soundwalking and ear cleaning as developed by R. Murray Schafer. She is at pains to point out that her responses to our prompts come out of an ethnography gone wrong, which explains the tone but also some of the considerations that might seem odd.

Both Veeraraghavan and Wyatt Schiefelbein pointed out the misuse of the term “decolonial” for this workshop. Veeraraghavan offered some further insights about the nuances of coining her work, or anyone’s academic research, as cross-cultural or decolonial. She said:

“I don’t think of my work analyzing the dispositifs of the Canadian liberal settler colony as cross-cultural because as a Canadian settler, albeit a non-white one, I am a product of this country’s institutions, including cultural ones. The work I have done alongside Indigenous communities is cross-cultural though, because it is concerned with threats posed by Canadian institutions to Indigenous cultures (i.e., economic projects in the “national interest” that threaten the nature with which culture is interwoven). [...] I don’t consider my research, or indeed any research, decolonial, because decolonization is not yet a concrete, agreed-upon political program—especially not within the university. I see a widespread and unfortunate tendency to elide the desires of the researcher with the actual effects of the research. Terms like “decolonization” have undergone a kind of semiotic inflation over the last few years,

and researchers who indulge this tendency risk slipping into delusion. Colonization is maintained by a power structure enforced by repressive state apparatuses, and confronting that power means risking harm—even unto death. I like to say, rudely for maximum impact, “If you are going to call your work decolonial, at least have the decency to get the shit kicked out of you by the cops first.” This is not to denigrate all the excellent work that outlines the precise ways in which colonialism is maintained, but it is wishful thinking to call it decolonial. Moreover, doing so conflates intellectual projects with political ones, which ends up obfuscating more than it illuminates.”⁹

Question 2 - What are the 3 most important questions researchers should ask themselves before embarking on cross-cultural research?

For this and the following responses, we have summarized and synthesized answers from our speakers. This approach aims to provide a more concise overview for the reader where direct quotations are less essential.

One overarching answer to this question was, as Savage said, that researchers must ask themselves “*who benefits*” from the research they want to conduct. This response was echoed by Waterman, who asked if the research would be “reciprocal,” and by Moore, who asked if it would “reflect the needs and priorities of Indigenous communities.”

In a similar vein, Daikoku asked, “What [would the research] mean in the context of the local practices and customs?” This question pokes at the difference between etic and emic knowledge (see Helfrich,

⁹ The reader will notice that we quote Lee at length. Although we try to paraphrase, summarize and keep quotes short as much as possible, Lee’s words are so precise and eloquent that it would not do her words justice to reproduce them in part. Thank you, Lee, for your provocative and important challenges.

1999 for a discussion of etic vs emic knowledge in cross-cultural psychology). From the research question through to the results and their interpretation, what would the research project look like from an “insider” cultural perspective? More generally, what would the actual course of the project signify and affect within the community?

These musings lead to another question that must be asked *before* embarking on the project: how can the communities be “actively involved” (Daikoku) in the process and “guide” (Moore) the research?

Hegde emphasized that before embarking on any cross-cultural project researchers should find collaborators from within the community of interest. Waterman went a step further, stating that these collaborators should be people with whom the researcher can foster a good and usually long-term, or at least mutually beneficial, relationship. Savage put this idea very succinctly by stating that “all stakeholders should be invested in both the planning and execution of the work.”¹⁰

Another thread of responses brought up self-reflective questions a researcher should ask themselves.

Waterman encouraged researchers to ask themselves why it should be *them* doing this research.

Hegde reminded researchers to reflect on their ability to minimize their own cultural biases, and whether they are only doing the project for the sake of adding a cross-cultural study to their CV.

Veeraraghavan proposed a few other blunt self-evaluations: “Are you prepared to accept others’ evaluation of your purpose in the research? Do you have a psychological attachment to being seen as an ally?” She also invoked some practical issues researchers should face head-on. “Do you have the support—institutional and social—necessary to do your project, and your chosen community justice,” including the political work tangential to but outside of that project? Loui also encouraged researchers

¹⁰ We would add to Dr. Savage’s response: all stakeholders should be invested *as equally as possible*, and *beyond* the execution of the experiment itself, as discussed later. Personally, we also find the label of “stakeholder” to be potentially problematic, especially when applied to communities that have historically, or presently, faced *disinvestment*.

to assess the practicality of their proposition: are they actually capable of “engag[ing] potential collaboration from stakeholders [...] that respect cultural differences?”

Building from these responses, we’d like to offer a few more important questions that researchers should ask themselves before embarking on cross-cultural, and especially anti-colonial/imperial, research.

First of all, researchers must ask if they and their research project will have the support of their IRB, their university or institution, and their government or granting institution. If not, will they be able to receive equal support from somewhere else? Recall that this “support” includes everything from monetary to emotional assistance, and should not be taken lightly. Cross-cultural projects require significant time and investment to build organically with community partners, and can run into unwieldy difficulties both political and technical. As such, true support is absolutely necessary to conduct sound work, maximize the benefits of their project, and minimize the harm and challenges for the researcher and their collaborators. By saying “true” support, we also remind the researcher to remain thoughtful, and even critical, towards the support they *are* offered. Are all their sponsors interested in the research for the same reasons they are? Will they be understanding of the often unpredictable nature of cross-cultural and community-based research? Will they be generous and respectful to both the researcher *and* their community collaborators? And if not, again, does the researcher *actually* have their support for the project? Where and how much should the researcher be willing to compromise with them?

Question 3 - What are your top 3 recommendations for doing ethical cross-cultural research?

Our respondents offered a range of valuable recommendations for cross-cultural research, which we have summarized into three main themes: 1) work *with* communities; 2) practice humility and openness, and 3) refer to existing ethical frameworks and recommendations.

Savage and Loui recommended referring to the best existing recommendations (e.g. Savage, Jacoby and Margulis et al., forthcoming). We would additionally suggest searching for recommendations outside of the field of music science, especially recommendations by critical approaches to empirical research (e.g. feminist, queer, Indigenous).

Daikoku recommended actively involving communities and participants in the research design and questions, providing meaningful compensation (i.e. coauthorship, money, etc.) and being open to “learn[ing] from communities rather than us[ing] them to confirm hypotheses. [...] The observer is a student, not a teacher.” Waterman also included giving back in her top three recommendations, whether in the form of a long-term relationship, direct compensation, or something else. Similarly, Veeraraghavan stressed that the research question should be of “material interest” to the community; that is, would the study actually be “in their interest”, or is it just that “someone will ... find it interesting?” On the topic of community involvement, Waterman further recommended that researchers “listen humbly and be prepared to revise your plans or withdraw if they don’t want you there.” She said researchers must be “open and transparent about your research goals and objectives,” and ensure that they are compatible with those of your participants.

Hegde recommended that researchers should “avoid any sort of inherent bias” about one’s own cultural superiority. She also recommended that researchers use local terminology as much as possible, and to blend the investigative methodologies of different cultures. Loui echoed the need to “recognize that your own culture is likely not the norm,” and also recommended thoughtful community

collaboration. Moore recommended collaborating with Indigenous communities specifically, getting “Indigenous community feedback on the data, analysis and all knowledge dissemination,” and at least in Canada, to “know and use Chapter 9 of the Tri-Council Policy Statement” (Canadian Institutes of Health Research, Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada, and Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada, 2014). Outside of Canada, analogous Indigenous ethics guidelines should also be referenced; these include Te Ara Tika in New Zealand (Hudson et al., n.d.), and Ethical conduct in research with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples and communities (National Health and Medical Research Council, 2018) in Australia, for example.

Veeraraghavan offered some creative recommendations, including 1) “securing funding, maintaining outside friendships and getting a therapist”; 2) not avoiding conflict, but “steer[ing] away from manipulative behaviour when you see it in yourself and others”; and 3) “not seek[ing] to represent or amplify marginalized voices as the goal of your research.” Echoing Waterman, Veeraraghavan encouraged “[scrupulous honesty] about what you are doing, why, and what you actually think.” She added, “When [it is] done with courtesy, humility and self-respect, arguing your corner is not intrinsically overbearing, colonial, patriarchal or white. Quite the opposite, it is necessary for others to come to know you, a full person in your own right. [It is] only colonial, patriarchal, etc. if you don’t take dissenting opinions into account and adjust accordingly.” These adjustments will almost definitely cost the researcher opportunity, time, and money, which as Veeraraghavan notes, “is [not] your fault, but it is still your responsibility.” Finally, in relation to her third recommendation, Veeraraghavan added that “the project should be conceived after time, experience, and considerable thought, to make it possible for the community to advance its own interests. Our interlocutors can speak for themselves and should

be free to work out the best way to do so absent a researcher bumbling around amplifying select voices, which can unintentionally promote division. This is especially important when working with Indigenous communities.”

Question 4 - What methods and/or approaches do you recommend for doing ethical cross-cultural research?

This question resulted in responses which we have grouped into five major categories. To help put these themes in the context of “ethical research methodology,” Veeraraghavan notes that because unjust systems are *systemic* by nature, there are really “no clean hands” in research. She points out that ethical cross-cultural research is not an exercise in doing no harm, but rather necessitates the “balancing of contradictory forces, even as one acts anyway.” There is no “methodological silver bullet” (Veeraraghavan) and it is difficult to say exactly what methods will work, because the methods used will depend on the community you are working with (Hegde, Loui).

That being said, our respondents offered the following broad suggestions:

1. Cross-cultural research must be accessible to all potential participants and assistants,
2. Participation must rely on prior, informed, and continuous consent, especially in contexts where academic research is not a norm,
3. Storytelling and narrative methods may be used in place of, or in addition to, quantitative methods,
4. Consider anthropological methods, such as participant observation, and
5. Research should always be conducted “with, and for,” never “on,” participants.

Daikoku suggested a few ways to make research more accessible, including making experiments compatible with phone operating systems where computers may not be available and learning how internet caches operate. However, this assumes a level of technological availability and literacy that is already inaccessible to most. Making research accessible will often mean teaching certain skills and providing certain resources to the communities, in an ongoing and community-directed manner.

Of course, prior to commencing *any* project a researcher must thoroughly examine their protocol to guarantee that they will have prior, informed, and continuous consent of the participants. This is a multifaceted issue in cross-cultural research. First, researchers must tackle the difficult task of conveying their instructions and concepts across cultural boundaries. They must also guarantee that the participants understand the exact procedures and outcomes that they're consenting to, *and* the fact that they can withdraw the consent at any point. The researcher must also empower participants to *freely* continue or withdraw their consent by minimizing any implicit power differentials and offering fair material compensation *regardless* of whether the study is completed.

These methodological issues of language and cultural barriers, unfamiliar tasks, and subtle coercion are already difficult to navigate. However, prior, informed, and *continuous*¹¹ consent is not merely a methodological concern. The researcher must consider how it applies to the entire research trajectory, from inception to publication and beyond, which often intersects with the prior issue of technological accessibility. What will the data look like, where will it be stored, and will the researcher have permission to have, store, and share that data in the various ways they intend? Will the data directly or indirectly identify anyone in the community? (This is an important consideration in small communities,

¹¹ This is not how institutional ethics typically operates. For most, if not all, IRBs, once the participant has signed the consent form, that is the end of the consent process. By contrast, continuous consent is relational and key to ongoing ethical research (for example, see Ball & Janyst, 2008, p. 42).

where information that might normally be non-identifying is identifying by default.) Will the community be updated about the analysis, results and interpretation of the data? Can the researcher guarantee that the community will have ownership, control, access, and/or possession of the data? The issue of prior, informed, and continuous consent will arise throughout the life of the research project, sometimes to perpetuity, so all of these issues should be carefully considered before embarking.

There are also issues of conceptual accessibility. Will the community have input or control over how the study is interpreted, disseminated, and discussed? Will they be involved in the science communication surrounding the project, and in making the results accessible to people from other cultures? What are the potential harms or repercussions that publishing the results could have, both in the academic field and amongst the general public? Is the knowledge gained from obtaining or sharing those results *worth* the potential repercussions, and how does one decide that?

Moore points out that in Indigenous contexts, storytelling and narrative methods closely align with organic knowledge production and dissemination in participant's communities and are widely considered the most appropriate methods where this knowledge needs to remain in its original context and intent. These methods may not only have greater explanatory power in Indigenous contexts, but may be the most useful and accessible for science communication. In general, we believe that psychological researchers should not be hesitant to embrace a variety of qualitative methods, from narrative and storytelling methods to self-reflections and even old-school observation. Our reading list¹² has several resources for thinking about approaches to qualitative methodologies in Indigenous contexts.

¹² <https://tinyurl.com/jxx5zc5n>

Other methodological ideas can be drawn from the discipline of anthropology which, though historically problematic, has theorised the ethical dimensions of cross-cultural research since its inception. Anthropological research, some of which is cited in our reading list, may provide researchers with a foundation from which to build cross-cultural research methodologies in their own discipline.

Ultimately, we believe that ethical cross-cultural research, especially with marginalized populations, boils down to the need to recognize both a) the importance of treating participants respectfully as co-producers of knowledge, and b) the positive and negative consequences of knowledge production in the field. To this latter point, it may be important for researchers to consider the “why” of their intended process, and critically evaluate it according to the benefits and harms it could cause others: asking the question “is this research important enough to cause others harm” is a very important way to evaluate potential research.

When we say that participants should be fairly compensated for their time and knowledge, we also mean that researchers should value participant knowledge during the project design itself.

Participatory research designs (Fine & Torre, 2019; Kidd & Kral, 2005; Klocker, 2012) encourage this kind of co-productive knowledge and ensure the study is not only approved by, but relevant to the participants. They also improve the relevancy of the results themselves by requiring an initial exploration and discussion of cultural nuances that may otherwise be unfamiliar to the researcher and could result in misunderstandings. Most importantly, such collaboration ensures that the “ethics” procedures of the study are determined by the community and participants themselves, and not solely by the academy or individual researchers or teams.

We have provided academic and governmental research policies. We have referenced papers by cross-cultural music scientists. We have gathered and presented recommendations from experts and are even here attempting to put forward basic guidelines. These may all offer a starting point for researchers. However, the standard of appropriate conduct should ultimately be derived from the research question as created with the community, not unilaterally decided by the researchers or their institutions.

Question 5 - Imagine that 20 years from now decolonized/ethical cross-cultural research is the norm: what does that look like?

We ask this question because we believe that actively imagining our futures is a crucial step for creating the future we want¹³. We have also taken direct quotes from these responses, to preserve the unique character of these imagined worlds as much as possible.

Savage imagines a world where there is “[d]iverse representation at all levels of ICMPC and other societies. We will no longer have to make an extra effort to seek out and recruit members of under-represented groups because they will be all around us as valued members of our research community.”

Hegde similarly imagines “a richer and vibrant research group [...] with an equal representation of researchers from around the globe,” and that “theories of understanding musical structure/grammar would look beyond Western music/traditions.” In a similar vein, Loui imagines that “[t]he most obvious outcome is that it would probably become the norm that the research is done in collaborative teams that include different cultures and different fields of study.”

¹³ Sarah came across this idea in her activist & anti-capitalist book club, as expressed by incredible authors and activists like Robin D.G. Kelley, Mariame Kaba and Angela Davis (Davis, 2011; Kaba & Murakawa, 2021; Kelley, 2002).

Here, we point out that there is a difference between a diversity of individuals within a framework (i.e. dominant science) and a diversity of frameworks themselves. The former may benefit institutions while amounting to little more than assimilation, while the latter is generally lauded as the better anti-colonial/imperial goal. Diversity through assimilation is good for dominant science, and the image of scientists who support it, and is also related to its historically imperialist nature. The dominant scientific epistemology assumes that empiricism is the only “correct” way to do science, and part of its goal is to teach more and more people to do science “properly.” As Liboiron writes in *Pollution is Colonialism*, “Western science has long been identified as a practice that assumes mastery over Nature, reproduces the doctrine of discovery, revels in exploration and appropriation of Indigenous Land, and is invested in a rigorous self-portraiture (Daston, 2006) in which valid scientific knowledge is created only by proper European subjects (Seth, 2009)” (Liboiron, 2021; p.20).

In the realm of academia, we also assume that the position of researcher, or tenured professor, or society President, is an aspirational position that represents one’s “success” at science. Therefore, when more people of colour or young marginalized researchers obtain those positions, it is a cause for celebration, both for them and for us. This worldview is not necessarily wrong. The danger is in its limitations; there are other ways of doing science, there are other methods of knowledge creation, and there are other positions of value and paths of success. *Only* exporting our Western institutional hierarchy to an increasing portion of the globe (or, importing increasing proportions of global citizens into our framework) without *also* valuing, citing, and learning from other frameworks is imperialist, not inclusive.

To this point, Waterman imagines a world in which “[t]he academy is not the gate-keeper/holder of knowledge. Cultural expertise and organic intellectuals are recognized and respected. Research

projects develop through respectful and reciprocal partnerships based in community. The credit and benefit of research is equitably shared. Participation in research is far more inclusive and diverse, including a broad range of physical– and neuro-diverse people from all backgrounds.”

Daikoku imagines that “academic diversity, diversity in thought, and a non-WEIRD (Western, Educated, Industrial, Rich, and Democratic) understanding on how we perceive things would likely correct, if not reverse previous findings” that he finds lacking today. As such, he encourages critical conversations around ethical cross-cultural and anti-colonial/imperial research to continue.

However, these relatively benign and understandable responses were not the only approaches to imagining the future of a decolonized research program. Veeraraghavan asked point-blank, “Do you have a job in the decolonized university?” She pointed out that, given the exclusive nature of ethics discussion in disciplines such as psychology so far, the thoughts of those excluded are not currently known, and an imagined future where they are *no longer* excluded may call for a very fundamental upheaval of academia itself.

She asks another thought-provoking question:

“How do you know that you are treating another person - any other person - ethically?”

Of course, there are established schools of thought, but they were tested through historical acts of exclusion, and today it is uncertain that those who were excluded view them as valid, to say nothing of ethical. This is not to say that they are unethical, simply that we do not know, it is still being slugged out, and the historically excluded haven’t exactly had their fair shake at disputation. It is possible that we lack (or

cannot see) the inner compass necessary to know whether we are behaving ethically or not—a frightening thought.

In the spirit of rejecting cowardly hedging, I'll venture a path forward. One paradox my question implies is that in order to treat someone ethically who is different from me—potentially with less power than me—I must be able to see their difference (whether indexed as “culture” or “Indigeneity” or something else) as a manifestation of our sameness. The corollary is that, when it comes to ethical treatment, my identical twin is just as Other as someone from another race or culture (or species!): all can be mistreated by me. Can I apply the metrics I would use to evaluate my conduct toward my twin to those who are on the surface more different; and vice versa?”

She continues the logic of these ethical questions with a concrete example:

“How [are] graduate students, adjuncts, people from poor backgrounds, women, staff, contracted workers for the university, and racial and sexual minorities treated in the academy? Do I treat the above ethically? I try, but the problems are structural. This doesn't let me off the hook, though. After all, I can do ethical cross-cultural research until I am blue in the face and it won't stop the university that pays me a middle-class income from exploiting adjuncts for poverty wages. If I throw my hands up and accept that situation, surely I must then question my capacity to determine an ethical course of action in other spheres? What compromises am I choosing, what wagers am I making, as I try to work toward change while making my way forward regardless? Of course we all pick our battles, but it is interesting to me that we are often more

interested – materially – in treating Others ethically, as we should, than extending that same treatment to our colleagues and graduate students. The answers to the questions above don't offer a solution, but they illuminate the terrain, and I hope that the act of thinking them through induces in the questioner a stance that is up to the tremendous task with which we are faced."

When we asked for Moore's vision of the future, she answered in a similar vein:

"The changes that need to be made are not only the protocols and ethics of research but the way that we conceptualize and teach about research and knowledge. The notion of what knowledge is, how it is accessed, and what is considered scholarly work all need to be questioned in order to bring Indigenous science into the academy along with the current dominance of western worldviews of science. This idea of respecting both ways of knowing comes from Two-Eyed Seeing, a concept developed by Mi'kmaw Elder Dr. Albert Marshall [(Bartlett et al., 2012)]."

In addition, Moore advocates that Indigenous methodologies should be introduced to more graduate programs in order to further such a vision. She also pointed out that "20 years is only one generation, and that is a short time to decolonize research. In Indigenous cultures, we make decisions based on looking 7 generations ahead. Colonization has been going on for over 500 years. In that time, science has researched Indigenous Peoples to death (both literally and figuratively; e.g. Smith, 2013)."

Clearly, music science has a lot of work to do, and it's going to take time. But that doesn't mean we can't begin, and accelerate, our efforts now. Our primary recommendation, if we had to pick one, is to do more community-based work. Working *with* communities instead of working *on* communities

would address many of the issues we, and the previous two papers we cite, discuss. These include the challenges of defining music and culture, conducting ethical research, designing appropriate paradigms, asking relevant questions, and achieving diverse, inclusive, and anti-colonial/imperial work.

Optimistically, there are many ways to do anti-colonial/imperial work, which means there is a lot of work to be inspired by. For example, we felt inspired by the Keynote lecture at ICMPC-ESCOM 2021, where Dr. Katie-Rose Sanfilippo presented her work on the effect of a Community Health Intervention through Musical Engagement (CHIME) on perinatal mental health in Gambia (Sanfilippo, 2021; Sanfilippo et al., 2020). Some key takeaways from her talk, in the context of this paper, are that her team 1) involved the community at all levels of study design, implementation and dissemination; 2) offered material gain to the local communities through improved mental health in perinatal women; and 3) responded to local needs as they arose, including the need to involve fathers in the pregnancy. It is encouraging to see such great work already happening; music scientists only need to continue down this path together.

Where do we go from here?

There is a lot to digest in this paper, hopefully including some challenges to the fundamental ways we are taught to conceive of science and research. These are not easy or comfortable conversations to have, but we must continue to have them. Call the framework of empirical scientific research what you will -- whether imperialist, cisheteropatriarchal, racial capitalist, or none of the above, it has still undeniably benefited White people and abused racialized and Indigenous peoples, “researching them to death - both literally and figuratively” (Moore). To right this wrong, research must center the voices of those who have been the most harmed. Though it’s difficult to believe that the oppressor alone

(White/assimilated people) would ever free the people it oppresses (racialized/Indigenous peoples) of its own accord (Freire, 1970; Lorde, 2015), oppressors¹⁴ can still become powerful allies if they are willing to do the work. What exactly does that work look like? Unfortunately, there is no one-size-fits-all solution. The best long-standing solutions that provide the greatest benefit to the greatest number of people only can, and hopefully will, emerge organically from democratic discussion, trial and error, and active community- and relationship-building. We'd still like to provide a few early suggestions for allies to start their work.

First, read. (Or watch, or listen; whichever medium works best for you, substitute it throughout the following section). Read alone or read with others. Read critical theory. Read feminist critique of positivist science. Read racialized women's critique of positivist science. Read Indigenous critiques of science. We've put together a reading list of recommended sources¹⁵. Our reference list is also a good place to start if you're looking for more material. We've made a point to ensure that at least 51% of our reference list's first authors are women and/or racialized or Indigenous peoples, practicing citational politics (Ahmed, 2013; Mott & Cockayne, 2017).

Second, engage others with your reading. Bring critical materials to your journal/book/reading club/group and discuss. Raise critiques whenever you see an opportunity: with colleagues, in your lab and/or department, in your institutions and organizations. You may be viewed as overly critical, or adversarial, or as a problem maker¹⁶ -- certainly, we may be viewed this way in this paper. The point is

¹⁴ This is not to say that every White person is individually an oppressor - they are not. We're referring here to global power structures, where White people are placed in oppressive positions of power and perpetuate, often unconsciously, the oppressive system that put them there.

¹⁵ <https://tinyurl.com/jxx5zc5n>

¹⁶ I personally like the term "feminist killjoy" (Ahmed, 2013) and take on this role with enthusiasm (most of the time) in many academic contexts I am currently involved in; journal clubs are one example. - Sarah

still to challenge the ideas and assumptions you've been taught, and to encourage the same in others.

Third, senior researchers have a critical role to play in making the changes required for future generations to engage in ethical cross-cultural research, and to ultimately decolonize scientific research practices. They (as hiring committee members, as journal editors, as grant writers, as board members, even just as PIs), are the gatekeepers of academia. They hold a lot of power.

Undergraduate, graduate, and postdoctoral students are often required to work on timelines that inadvertently restrict the kind of community-oriented and collaborative work that we advocate for here.

Senior researchers can help change that by having these discussions with their students and exploring the options for more flexible or long-term positions. While themselves in a senior position of relative stability, especially tenure, professors have the time to make and maintain community connections for their students to expand upon and enrich. They have the freedom to build and experiment with different research practices into their labs, to welcome different worldviews and frameworks into their practices, and to cultivate diversity instead of assimilation. They have the platform and mandate to voice their discontent with institutional abuse and advocate for better practices when they see the need. In short, they hold a great deal of the potential for change. In collaboration with passionate young scientists and community partners, researchers have the power to change the lens of dominant science, if only they so choose. The only question is, do we as music scientists so choose?

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