

Sustaining the assemblage: How migrant musicians cultivate and negotiate their musicianship

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ABSTRACT

Musicians who migrate to another country often make sizeable and interesting contributions to the music scene(s) of their new host country. However, little attention has been paid to their individual strategies for developing a sustainable music career in the new country. The present paper explores what types of actions that migrant musicians in Norway undertake in order to sustain a career in music. Data were collected throughout a study of over one year in duration that involved interviews with musicians and organisers, participant observation of relevant events, as well as a complimentary ethnographic study of the wider music world of migrant musicians in the Oslo area. In this paper, I will discuss two cases that highlight a fairly common use of musical collaborations for acquiring additional resources in different musical fields. The discussion will demonstrate how these resources were assembled together with existing resources, into the overall musicianship of my research participants. Two core categories of actions that appear to be important for sustaining the careers of migrant musicians are defined, namely, cultivation and negotiation activities. This paper draws primarily on sociological theoretical frameworks such as aesthetic flexibility, expanded notions of musicianship, and crafting of the self. In applying these frameworks, this paper explores why these types of actions seem to be necessary for musicians with a migrant background. Are these frameworks crucial to gain new opportunities in new musical fields? Do such opportunities help migrant musicians to build and sustain their music careers?

Keywords: migrant musicians, musicianship, collaboration, assemblage

1. Introduction

The demographic changes that a country experiences as a result of migration are also reflected in local music worlds; migrants with various music backgrounds and skills will, quite naturally, contribute in a variety of fields in their host countries. This is also the case in Norway, where migrant musicians (that is, musicians who have at least one of their parents who has migrated, or the musicians themselves have migrated) are often highly visible within different music arenas. However, few studies exist that pertain to their efforts to explore ways into desirable musical fields that are relevant to their careers in the new country. A postdoctoral project examining the professional development of migrant musicians, part of a larger “Musical Gentrification and Socio-cultural Diversity” project, was undertaken to examine this issue.

An ethnographic study, working at the micro-sociological level, was undertaken to investigate the music worlds of migrant musicians, who were currently resident or had recently been resident within the Oslo area. In this study, most research participants were first-generation migrants who had arrived in Norway as adults and often had a music-related background in their country of origin. Some research participants were full-time musicians, and others were semi-professional musicians. From the collected data, I examined the challenges and opportunities that those musicians encountered when they entered, and moved between, different musical fields. I also explored which entrepreneurial skills were necessary to (re)start and sustain careers in Norway and what types of actions were important in this process.

To illustrate and discuss prospects and problems in the career trajectory of migrant musicians, I will focus on two cases from the twelve musicians I interviewed and whose career paths I followed. These two cases are Resa, an Iranian male musician, and Jorge, a Brazilian male musician. After discussing the theoretical framework that I used for my analysis in section 2 and the research methods in section 3, I am devoting section 4 to a detailed discussion of the data that I collected from Resa and Jorge. This discussion examines how opportunities for musical collaborations became a springboard to cultivate and negotiate their musicianship in different musical fields. These musicians were different in terms of music background, music styles, and ambitions. But, the collaborative approach helped them both to sustain their music careers over time. As a part of this, actions such as aesthetic flexibility and careful crafting of the self appeared to be crucial factors, not only to sustain their careers, but also to maintain a better sense of self in the new country.

2. Theoretical framework: Sociological approaches to music

In order to understand the actions and the purposes that migrant musicians engage in to sustain their music careers, there needs to be a theoretical framework that will help in examining the multi-layered patchwork that constitutes those music careers. Here, I will use different overlapping elements that are primarily from music sociology.

2.1 Social spaces of music making

Most of my research participants built their music careers through participation in festivals, performing at venues in Oslo, applying for funding for such activities, and attending teaching institutions (although not all research participants engaged in all of these activities). To describe the social spaces of music making such as these, notions of the field (a social arena for the development of, and competition over, different forms of capital) of Bourdieu (1985) are highly relevant. However, we need to go beyond Bourdieu's rather deterministic view on the role of music in social relations and territories; the music making of my informants emerged from more complex and messy endeavours using a variety of (musical) materials that were connected to the musicians' practices (Prior, 2014: 3). The term "musical fields" is therefore used in this paper to denote a wide range of musicking (Small, 1998) arenas where music functions as an animated force to provide discursive affordances in the development of musicians' career paths.

Multiple, connected musical fields can best be understood by applying the idea of "art worlds" as described by Becker (1992), which are networks that promote certain art forms and produce specific art events that emerge and form separate art worlds over time. Thus, the musical field(s) inhabited by musicians should not be seen as isolated entities, but instead they should be understood as being loosely connected through the paths that are developed as the actors move between multiple musical fields. This can be defined as "music worlds", extending the notion of "art worlds" (Crossley & Bottero, 2015a).

Like Becker, I will examine the roles of people's collective actions, but without losing sight of potential conflict and power issues in and out of the musical fields. To do so, it is important to move beyond the social determination of music practices that Becker (1992) emphasised how participation in art worlds is guided by the social conventions and collective beliefs of the participants in these art worlds. Instead,

one needs to carefully investigate how migrant musicians increase, or decrease, their social mobility by assembling resources while interacting with a wide variety of social factors. This is best done by following the paths of musicians at the micro level. It is also important to look at how someone's overall biography can be a resource or an obstacle (Hesmondhalgh, 2013) in pursuit of a music career in a new country.

2.2 Expanding taste

One important element to examine in order to understand my research participants' social mobility in relation to social factors is aesthetic preferences, in other words, taste in music. After Bourdieu theorised the role of one's taste in forming hierarchies, this perspective has been developed further to examine social stratification in which different social variables (gender, occupation, ethnicity, etc.) are overlapping. For instance, Bennett et al. (2008: 259) discussed how having "good taste" continues to create, mark and consolidate social divisions. An example of embracing "good taste" has been discussed by Peterson (1992), using the term "cultural omnivore". This describes people who inhabit higher status positions in society and amend their aesthetic references to cover a wide range of musical genres, including genres that may previously have been considered "low art". This is seen as a way to distinguish oneself as an elite through an inclusive musical taste (Peterson & Kern, 1996). The omnivore concept also shows that, unlike Bourdieu's more fixed view on the variety of taste within fields, in musical fields there is more aesthetic dynamism. This implies that different types of actor can enter a musical field over time and these actors may place different values on the activities in a particular musical field (Crossley & Bottero, 2015b: 4). Such "incoming" actors can represent new resources, for instance, as an audience or a funder, that migrant musicians wish to compete over. This represents a form of "musical gentrification" (Dyndahl et al., 2014: 53), which implies that "musics that originally hold lower social, cultural and aesthetic status become objects of interest and investment from cultural operators who possess higher status".

It must be stressed here that I do not wish to imply that migrants, by default, belong to a lower class, whether they be real classes or classes on paper (Bourdieu, 1984), than ethnic Norwegians. Rather, I use gentrification as a concept that denotes how music from groups with less power and less influence than other groups, for instance, in terms of access to audiences or funding resources, are adopted, accepted and assimilated by those more powerful groups.

When musicians migrate to another country, they may have to adjust the musical expressions that are related to their musical traditions in order to fit into new musical fields within the new country. This “fitting in” can also be regarded as a form of “gentrification” from the inside as it seeks to attract relevant audiences, collaborative partners, and funding bodies. Such aesthetic renegotiations are at the same time a marketing strategy that is initiated by the musicians themselves in order to succeed in the new country. The gentrification of a particular music genre (Holt, 2013) and a musician’s aesthetic re-configuration are both processes, and they are also gradual changes. The strategies in such aesthetic processes have to be investigated at the micro level, “rather than dismissing them as weapons of bourgeois power or manifestations of deep social forces” as Prior (2015: 354) has noted.

In the field of music sociology, taste has been explored as a fluid and transformable entity that opens up one’s possibilities for action (e.g., Hennion, 2007; DeNora, 2013; Hara, 2013). Regev (2013), for instance, described fluidity of taste as actors having an “aesthetic cosmopolitan body”. This, he suggests, is “a body that articulates its local identity by incorporating elements from alien culture” (Regev, 2013: 176). This view of taste as a fluid process is useful in exploring actors’ aesthetic reconfiguration that happens both in and out of musical fields. Hence, we can perceive of taste as a lubricating device for connecting different musical fields and connecting with other actors in those musical fields.

2.3 Musicianship as assemblage

When we think about the social mobility of migrant musicians in their host country, musicians’ skills and experience are (obviously) the key resource and the starting point of any actions they undertake. The concept of *musicianship* will be applied in this paper to discuss my research participants’ overall expertise as musicians. The concept is often used to describe the attributes of their musical skills and abilities, both acquired (e.g., jamming) and innate (e.g., perfect pitch). Expanding the concept, which is rather narrowly reduced to the mere development of musical skills, Jorgensen (2003: 198) suggests a more holistic idea that should include “thinking, being and acting as a musician” and argues that such musicianship is a “perennial and pervasive goal of music education practice”. Based on a similar perspective, Ellefsen (2014: 11–12) suggests that:

Learning musicianship might be understood as learning how to ‘be’ in the fields of music in a broader sense, in terms of moral standards and rules of

conduct, discursive repertoires and schemes of interpretation, associated subject positions and modes of action.

Actions related to the development of musicianship are, therefore, more pervasive than just rehearsing how to play an instrument, and can also be embedded in everyday life where it represents tacit knowledge and implicit learning. It is also important to consider that music is not a passive object here, but rather it is an active ingredient that “gets into” these actions and their “being”. DeNora (2000), for instance, discusses how music is a ubiquitous resource for the active crafting of the self.

For migrant musicians who face the challenges of adapting to a new environment, music may also provide “a key resource for the production of autobiography and the narrative thread of the self” (DeNora, 2000: 158), as Karlsen (2013) explored with reference to immigrant students and “homeland” music. In other words, music can mediate the seemingly fixed realities; the social environments the musicians live in and work with, as well as the presentation and perception of their identities in a new country.

If we put forward the notion that music itself is an active resource within the actions that musicians might undertake to sustain their careers, the Actor-Network Theory, particularly the idea of assemblage, provides some useful insights into how this might be done. DeNora (2007: 278), when applying this concept to music, suggested that:

...people, whether singly or in groups, draw together music and other materials in ways that provide mutual frames and that augment the ways in which those musics and materials seem ‘fit’ for the purpose. These practices of arrangement or, in Bruno Latour’s term, assemblage (2005) are what empower music/materials in ways that come to have power over actors.

In other words, music can function as an actor that is used to compose an assemblage within the music world(s) by mediating the connection between the migrant musicians and other entities, which are also actors, because “anything that does modify a state of affairs by making a difference is an actor” (Latour, 2005: 71).

In summary, musicianship can be seen as a music-driven assemblage that can continuously transform and adjust its own form to help the musicians “be” in a musical field. Using this perspective avoids falling into the trap of assuming that musicians only possess static skills that are separate from the rest of their lives.

3. Methods: Ethnographic investigation

My data collection involved interviews, participant observation of relevant events as well as a complimentary ethnographic study of the wider music world involving migrant musicians in the Oslo area. The study was undertaken through examining written material (both Online and in hard-copy magazines), attending general music festivals with participating migrant musicians, and additional meetings with organisers and state-funded organisations working with migrant musicians. I recruited my initial research participants strategically by contacting organisations that had good networks with migrant musicians. Through meetings with staff members from these organisations, I not only started to build a list of potential research participants (plus one research participant from my own personal network), I also enhanced my understanding of the (admittedly broad) area of migrants and music making. These organisations thus became gatekeepers that provided access to research participants. This was reflected in the initial sample, which consisted of active musicians who were used to some level of networking, formal or informal. Later, the technique of snowball sampling supplemented my initial strategic sampling as many of the musicians were happy to introduce me to their friends, colleagues, or collaborators. This way, the ethnographic approach simultaneously enabled me to access my initial research participants and also pushed the research project forward with new research participants.

Overall, I interviewed twelve migrant musicians of different ages, genders, backgrounds, and stages of their career, two Norwegian musicians who collaborate with migrant musicians, and two staff members within relevant organisations. All of them were either living, or visible/active in the music scene, in the Oslo area. The interviews were semi-structured and of a biographic narrative approach (Bertaux & Kohli, 1984; Chamberlayne, Bornat & Wengraf, 2000; Roberts, 2002) was applied. This guided me through the views and experiences of research participants as musicians living in Norway. At the same time, I made sure that I covered areas of interest with respect to my research: their musical backgrounds, biographies, career paths before and after the migration, daily musical engagements, collaborators, and their plans and ambitions. As the subject of career trajectories of musicians was one of my main research interests, I conducted additional interviews with some of my research participants, who seemed to have undergone major changes in their music careers during the period of 6 to 12 months after the first interviews.

I have also undertaken participatory observation of music events that my research participants were involved in during the data collection period. My presence at the

music making events was important as musical experiences are corporeal and multisensory (Finnegan, 2003; Frith, 1998; Seeger, 2008; Shelemay, 2008; Titon, 2008). The ethnographic study was useful in exploring the meaning of music that emerges in the process of music being appropriated by individual actors (DeNora, 2007), given that music is an inherently social process (Small, 1998).

In keeping with the conventions of grounded theory (Charmaz, 1995: 32–33), from the very beginning of the research project, my research interests and the direction of further data collection were led by the data. This grounded approach also allowed me to explore how my research participants experienced and negotiated cultural differences and how their social relations and identities were mediated (Wise and Velayutham, 2009: 3) through the process of developing their music-related skills. Overall, I was able to collect “thick descriptions” (Geertz, 1999), that touched upon a wide range of issues that are relevant to the lives and experiences of musicians both in and of Norway.

The data were analysed and coded using NVivo© (QSR International Pty. Ltd., Australia) qualitative data analysis software and by applying a grounded theory approach in the analytical process. The rich data obtained revealed many-faceted music worlds encompassing a wide variety of actors and a multitude of musical expressions; elsewhere, I have discussed other aspect such as musical pathways between old and new musical fields (Hara, in review). Here, however, I shall focus on exploring the actions that musicians undertook in order to sustain their careers.

4. Findings

As aforementioned, I will focus on two of the twelve musicians, Resa and Jorge. Both migrated to Norway in the 1980s and they eventually settled there with a clear desire to establish themselves as professional musicians. Although their career trajectories are rather dissimilar, both of them made use of the opportunities of collaborations to develop their music career further. Examining the collaborations that took place within these two different trajectories, we can enhance our understanding of what types of actions are important to sustain a music career for migrant musicians living in Norway.

4.1 Jorge's case (Male, 56 years old, percussionist, Brazil)¹

Jorge comes from a family of classical musicians; he is himself classically trained and has played the drums since childhood. He moved to Norway in 1983, aged 24, to teach Latin rhythms and samba and meant to stay for just one year, but ended up living in Norway for thirty-two years. In 2015, however, he returned to Brazil due to a lack of jobs in Norway. Below, I outline his 33 years as a musician in Norway, as a three-part trajectory according to his location.

4.1.1 Brazil to Oslo: Towards an internationally active and versatile musician

After having taught Latin rhythms and samba for carnival use in Norway for one year, he decided to stay in Norway because of the jazz music. He also told me:

In the 80s, in Norway, there was a lot of jazz, there were a lot of jazz clubs, (...) I could play sometimes in 2 places in the same night. (...) you know this was incredible. And there was a lot of music, all types of music. I was living from clubs (emphasis), playing in the clubs...

He also mentioned how the diversity of the music life in Oslo at that time stimulated him:

I could play with the Indian musicians. I could play with African musicians. I could play Norwegian jazz; it was rather different than from the jazz we were playing in Brazil. (...) So I had a lot of diversity in different ways than what we had in Brazil. (...) When I came here, [it was] very different. I went home to practice to be good enough to get jobs. Practicing 12 hours a day.

Thus, his move to Norway gave him a chance to perform in a number of different musical fields and to learn a range of music styles, whereby he could expand his aesthetic preferences and together with others produce new aesthetic experiences. These activities helped him to cultivate his musicianship. Cultivation is a term I will use to denote activities that enrich his existing musicianship with new abilities and skills. This activity type is also something that my research participants have engaged in, and it is one of two types of actions that appeared to be important for sustaining

¹ Names of the research participants are anonymised.

the careers of my research participants. Cultivation, for Jorge, included a broadening of his aesthetic capacities by exploring different genres, and he also increased his possibilities for further actions, thus reflecting arguments by DeNora (2013) and Hara (2013), that the opening up of your taste opens up new opportunities for action.

Through these experiences, he also reinforced his identity as a versatile musician who is not limited to a specific genre or style; “a musician for anything” as he emphasised. During his 17 years of residing in Oslo, he was involved in many musical projects in and outside of Norway and he built an extensive international career. He became rather well known in Russia, toured in the U.S. and brought musicians to Brazil. Hence, the migration to Norway became a springboard for him to strengthen and cultivate his musicianship, from a classically-trained percussionist who loves to perform diverse music styles in Brazil, to a versatile and internationally active musician.

4.1.2 Oslo to Drammen: A shift to work with children

After having been involved with many musical projects in and outside of Norway for about 17 years and “travelling a lot” while residing in Oslo, he moved to Drammen, a smaller town with a population of 60,000 people in the south of Oslo. The main, initial reason for this was to shift his lifestyle away from travelling, and from evening work to daytime work in order to improve his family life. He, therefore, decided to focus on the projects of *Concerts Norway* in order to perform for children in schools and kindergartens².

This shift not only helped him to change his lifestyle, but also impacted on his musicianship. For instance, he explained to me what he learned from working with small children:

When I started playing for small kids for my project from 0 to 3 years old, I had to learn one element I didn't have. If I am singing about forest, I have to see the forest. I have to be present in what I am doing. There is a song I am singing; I am rolling a boat. They have to see the fishes, water, I have to be in to that thing. If I don't do, I lose their attention. You know (...) I have to be at the moment. This was a VERY VERY valuable lesson for me. I didn't know about that.

² Concerts Norway is the biggest music agency in Norway and is owned by the Ministry of Culture, which runs music tour projects for professional musicians, and which includes non-European musicians, to give live concerts in schools and kindergartens around the country of Norway.

In this new stage of his career trajectory he performed alone, unlike with his previous Oslo-based work. Just as he practised hard to be able to perform new styles with other musicians when he first arrived here in Norway, in a seemingly different trajectory, he again cultivated his musicianship to suit the audience, in this case, young children. His work for children is rather theatrical, using a variety of percussion instruments and singing, as well as bodily movement to bring the children into the audio-visual aesthetical presence of the scene that he is presenting (e.g., “the forest”). As verbal communication is difficult with children under 3 years of age, he developed a new skill in order to use his instrument communicatively. In his earlier international career trajectory, his virtuoso drum solos would no doubt be rewarded with applause from the audience. This type of culturally conditioned response cannot necessarily be expected from small children. Instead of giving up, he developed an alternative type of solo performance for kids, adapting his performance style in order for it to be more narrative-based.

In this way, further cultivation of his musicianship also required certain activities, that are described above, that constitute negotiations, a second activity type that seems to be required among migrant musicians in order to sustain their careers. In this case, Jorge had to aesthetically adjust his performances according to the requirements of the new collaborative musical field, in this case, a musical field shared with young children. This adjustment required him to learn the capacities and possibilities of the audiences (which also consisted of his collaborators) and to develop appropriate performing styles, accordingly.

4.1.3 *Leaving Norway*

During the 15 years of his second career trajectory, he concentrated on work for *Concerts Norway*, however, the amount of work with them was slowly reduced and he had no contracts left with them in the spring of 2015. He recently told me about these regretful negative changes to his scope of action; in particular, how his job in Norway had been reduced only to Brazilian music despite his ability and his identity of being a versatile musician:

[When] I came here I was a musician for everything. I played all styles and all types of different music. Slowly, slowly, today I am a Brazilian percussionist. So I am exclusive for Brazilian music. (...) In a way, I felt very strange in the beginning, because I wanted to play the Jazz, I wanted to play funk, I wanted to play rock'n'roll, [and to] play pop. But it never happened again. But then

OK, I can do it when I go to Brazil. I can do it when I go to Russia, I can do it when I go to the USA. But in Norway, I became a Brazilian Percussionist. (...) Here I am Brazilian [pause]. [The] only thing that has to do with Brazil [pause]. Very strange. They put me into this frame.

As discussed earlier, when Jorge first came to Norway, he was fascinated by the opportunities to perform with musicians with various backgrounds. He took those opportunities as springboards to further cultivate his musicianship and expanded his scope of actions by moving from one musical field to another. In these musical fields of collaboration, he also found similarities in the embodied musicianship of the musicians he collaborated with; how to play, hear and listen to the music despite differences in styles played and their backgrounds. Nevertheless, 30 years later in the same country, he was experiencing the discomfort of being pigeonholed into the single “Brazilian musician” identity.

The type of work offered by *Concerts Norway* to foreign musicians is often centred on the music of their (ethnic/country) origins (Ellingsen, 2008). During his work over the past 15 years for *Concerts Norway*, he has therefore been performing the role of “Brazilian musician” in Norwegian society, to some extent. This in turn influenced the musical fields of actions that were available to him. This shows how musicians can make a positive use of resources from their personal biography, but at the same time, it can constrain their actions and identities as Hesmondhalgh (2013: 40) has also discussed. Feeling limited by the reduction in his current possibilities of action in Norway, he decided to go back to Brazil in 2015, where he had, fortunately, kept up his connections and he has a producer and manager to work within musical fields ranging from educational to therapeutic settings.

During the fifteen years of working primarily for *Concerts Norway*, Jorge was able to sustain his music career financially in a musical field where he could also cultivate his musicianship with challenging collaborators, i.e., small children. However, through this work, he was musically pigeonholed, which resulted in an unsustainable career when the “requirement” for “Brazilian music” decreased and his possibilities of actions were reduced. Perhaps, if Jorge had simultaneously cultivated his musicianship in other musical fields, in collaborations or otherwise, this would have helped him remain “a musician for everything”, as he used to be.

4.2 Resa's case (Male, 50 years old, santoor instrumentalist and composer, Iran)

Resa plays the santoor, a traditional Persian instrument and is also a composer with music education from both Iran and Norway. He arrived in Norway as a refugee, aged 20 years. Current projects include composing for a Norwegian string quartet and arranging music for a multicultural music group. Below, I will discuss the trajectory of Resa as a musician in Norway, using a chronological order according to the kinds of activities he engaged in that he, himself, defined during the interview.

4.2.1 First decade: learning

Resa learned to play the santoor from, as Resa notes, "the best, greatest master of this instrument" back in Iran. He was interested in developing his musicianship when he moved to Norway, therefore, he took classic guitar lessons and attended a college in Oslo to learn Western music theory and composition. By being exposed to Western music, Resa realised the potential of his knowledge and the capabilities of Persian music, and he practiced hard to develop his own style. In the beginning, he was just performing solo, as performing with others was uncommon within his musical tradition and also because he believed that his tradition was interesting in itself.

The turning point came through a project by *Concerts Norway* that involved performing with other musicians from other countries. However, Resa was very hesitant in the beginning about performing with others. The musical collaboration with other musicians required him to negotiate with his own tradition and the musicianship he had cultivated back in his home country:

It was the type of education I had before I came to Norway. Music was connected to old traditions and it was connected to a big philosophy and was a very serious thing. For me it was actually, to go from this border and play with others, very difficult in the first year.

Although it was difficult to go against the traditions he was taught and which he ultimately embodied, he took up this challenge.

After a while, he found it interesting to play with other musicians, to learn about other cultures and simply to study and develop as a musician. Musical collaborations with musicians from other musical cultures also expanded his aesthetic capacity; "I tried

and saw that is interesting [sic] because it is a kind of feeling that is freedom". He has also become "a multinational musician" through collaborating with others, the kind of musician he had wished to become. Just like Jorge, Resa had also increased his possibilities of actions by broadening his aesthetic capacity through the opportunities of collaborations with musicians having different backgrounds.

As Resa stated, the first decade was about learning. He acquired new skills of the Western music system; playing classical guitar, learning music theory and composition. The collaborations with musicians from other backgrounds that were initiated by *Concerts Norway* made him aware of the potential of collaborations as musical fields to cultivate and to negotiate his musicianship. This learning was also a preparation for further exploration of his musicianship in the second part of his career trajectory.

4.2.2 Second decade: experimenting

Having discovered the potentials of the musical collaboration, Resa started taking the initiative to collaborate with other musicians with diverse skills and background. He also started his career as a composer, writing music for film and theatre. As he, himself, reflexively suggested in our interview, the second decade was a period of "experimentation" when he tried to incorporate the resources he acquired in the previous decade in various combinations. This included using his composition skills to write his own music pieces and also to arrange music, initiating collaborative projects with various musicians while making use of the social network he had built up in the past, and also while availing himself of further collaborative opportunities to learn more and to cultivate his musicianship. His scope of activities was not limited to a specific music genre either; he made himself available to various scenes from so called "world music" via his own ethnic community's music, and from jazz to Norwegian folk, and also classical music scenes. Hence in this period, he negotiated his musicianship further through working with the "other" musicians while incorporating varieties of resources he had acquired in the past to see how they fit together.

4.3.3 The third decade onwards: Running his own projects

As a result of the decade of experimentation, he now has three main projects of his own; 1: solo performances; 2: the multinational collaborative project and 3: a project with a Western string quartet. He produced his first solo album in 2011, however, he no longer focuses so much on solo performance. Instead, he puts most of his energy into his collaborative projects. He performs his own compositions with these two groups.

During the interview, which took place in his music studio in Oslo, he showed me pieces he had composed for the string quartet in notation software on his Macintosh computer. His compositions vary from being “traditional” to “Baroque” inspired, to more “experimental”, “abstract” and “folk” (his words). He said about himself “I am a crazy guy (laughing)” while showing me the notations he told me how he learned the technique of composition in Oslo. All of this music, although some pieces are influenced by Western music, is based upon Persian music and, as Resa noted, based on Persian poems.

Composing is just the starting point of a collaboration for Resa. For instance, he carefully teaches other performers how to play these pieces, and spends time to achieve a common understanding (or “find a place” within the harmony) of how to play quarter tones, which is common practice in Persian, but not in Western, classical music. He also teaches the other performers how to very carefully play structural improvisations. During performances, he acts as the band leader, sitting in the middle of a half circle on the stage, directing the whole performance using his body, and with his eye contact on other performers while playing the santoor. He also composed a piece for these two groups to perform together on the same stage for the first time in 2015.

As we can see, collaborations provided access to musical fields that could support relatively large adjustments that were, at times, required of Jorge and of Resa. Collaborations were at the same time challenges that prompted adjustments and supporting frameworks that made these adjustments easier. Resources acquired through collaborations were, over time, included into the assemblage that constituted the musicianship of my research participants. It is now useful to delve deeper into my findings and to explore the different mechanisms that facilitated a sustainable music career.

5. Discussion: Sustain the assemblage to sustain the career

The key goal of this paper was to examine what kind of actions appear to be necessary to sustain the career of migrant musicians in Norway³. This was examined extensively

3 Although this study has limitations, as discussed in the focused cases in this paper, over the whole range of types of music-related occupations, and the study was undertaken within a particular time period (2013–2016) and place (Oslo, Norway), the findings of this study can be applied to the relevant musical fields. I would hope that these findings are likely to be of great interest to the vision of music educators, sociologists, cultural mediators, practitioners, and cultural policy makers, and also to both taste keepers and taste makers.

using ethnographic methods in tracing the musicians' trajectories toward a career as professional musicians. My data here have focused on two of twelve musicians, however, the data from the remaining musicians showed similar, and overlapping findings with regards to the findings that are discussed below.

To better understand the roles and purposes of actions that were required of these musicians, I categorised the actions into two core types: 1. cultivation and 2: negotiation. The actions that these two categories cover are concerned with a) adjusting to, and appropriately responding to, opportunities, requirements and expectations of other actors, and b) assembling appropriate resources into their musicianship. These actions would often be undertaken in order to enter or work inside what I termed a "collaborative musical field". For my research participants, such musical fields were about more than just music making. Collaborative musical fields were often the nexus where a wide range of new and existing actors and resources intersected, in other words, they are a key arena to increase the social mobility of musicians.

As discussed in relation to Jorge's work with small children, it is common for musicians to expand their styles and performances to make their musicianship fit to the needs and requirements of the new musical fields of collaboration, i.e., a negotiation activity. Although initially struggling with the requirement of new musical fields, Resa also found a workable musicianship assemblage so that he could collaborate with others within the two music groups discussed earlier. This allowed him to explore new aesthetic dimensions, while at the same time continuing to (re)interpret Persian music. This, in turn, further allowed him to cultivate his musicianship, starting a virtuous circle:

Because if I want to learn more, no university can teach me anything more than just playing with others and trying to make music. I am also developing all the time, because I am not in my own tradition all the time. I am getting new challenges. I think its new sound. It's new ways of thinking, It's new ways of playing.

The main purpose of these continuous cultivation and negotiation activities is to acquire or enhance different resources i.e., actors as defined by Actor Network Theory (Latour, 2005). These actors can include musical skills, new music partners, their musical traditions or funding bodies which are gathered into the musicianship assemblage. Actors may be already present within a musical field, or as Dyndahl et al. (2014: 53) have discussed, a musical field may attract new interest(s) from actors with additional

power and resources that migrant musicians may choose to compete over. Accessing such additional resources may provide further opportunities for migrant musicians to sustain their career.

The actions required to expand the musicianship assemblage by adding resources are undertaken by the musicians, who themselves are the actors. They bring all relevant actors together to fit into new musical fields of actions. For example, musicians cultivate their musicianship by acquiring new skills or by strengthening their skills, by expanding their scopes of activities, hence bringing new actors into the assemblage while nurturing what they already have in the assemblage. Musicians also negotiate their musicianship through encounters with different musicians and cultures. They reflexively deal with or allocate the actors on a trial and error basis (using negotiation and cultivation type activities), to see which combinations may work in the new musical field and whether any actors need to be adjusted. In this way, continuous cultivation and negotiation of musicianship help them to move from a musical field to another musical field, which helps them to sustain their music career.

One consistently important part of musicians' efforts to cultivate and to negotiate musicianship, was the broadening of their aesthetic capacities by exploring different genres. By doing this, my research participants were generally able to increase their possibilities of further actions. Such aesthetic flexibility was, I would suggest, supported by the embodied cosmopolitanism of my research participants. Such cosmopolitanism was created by, and caused the very act of moving to, another country and seeking a music career there. The benefit of this embodied cosmopolitanism was particularly important in collaborations and international work, by allowing them to more easily bring new elements into a collaboration. Applying the Moltz (2006: 2) notion of "cosmopolitan bodies" that implies that the round-the-world traveller has bodily practices of flexibility, adaptability, tolerance and openness to difference. Further, Regev (2013: 176) has discussed the corporeal flexibility and adaptability to aesthetic diversity as an "aesthetic cosmopolitan body", which he defines as:

not just a body capable of recognizing, accepting, and adapting itself to otherness, to aesthetic idioms and circumstances associated with cultural materials other than those familiar to him or her from his or her native culture, but rather a body that articulates its local identity by incorporating elements from alien cultures (Regev, 2013: 176).

The aesthetic cosmopolitan bodies of my research participants emerged and were reinforced through the opportunities to experience different musical styles and to perform in new settings with new collaborators. Therefore, the aesthetic cosmopolitan bodies of the musicians helped them to sustain and to update their assemblages, by allowing them to be more open to new aesthetic impulses and letting them move between different musical fields.

However, “aesthetic cosmopolitan body” does not only mean the aesthetic openness to otherness which supports the social mobility of the musicians. It also means a body that can perform its local identity while incorporating elements from other cultures that are encountered (Regev, 2013). Therefore, just as musicianship is more than musical skills in isolation (Ellefsen, 2014), the concept of the aesthetic cosmopolitan body also touches on, among other things, a person’s values, discourses, interpretation of events, and modes of action. For Resa, collaboration is a musical field where he feels a sense of belonging and where he carries out and expresses his mission as a person who is “a result of multiculturalism” as he calls it. He told me how he, as a “minority”, tries his best to show, through performances, the possibilities of music to make people feel a sense of belonging and also to show how human beings, while seemingly different, are not actually different. Composing, performing and arranging, in other words, musicking (Small, 1998) thus allows Resa to make sense of the world he lives in (Frith, 1996) and, at the same time, articulate a sense of belonging (Stokes, 1994).

In the terminology of DeNora (2000), Resa is crafting (or cultivating) the self, that is, his inner experiences and his identity as a musician and a minority, by carefully crafting collaborative aesthetic productions with other musicians through his own projects. In this way, his musicianship, the musically-driven assemblage, extends from his “playing” into his “being”, and this allows him to thrive both as a musician and as a person living in Norway. Crafting and nurturing the “self” part of the musicianship can, therefore, be an important part of sustaining one’s music career.

Failure to crafting the self, and allowing others to define you, can have negative consequences for the sustainability of a music career. The musical pigeonholing of Jorge over time decreased his possibilities of action, reducing the possibilities to only “Brazilian music”, and when this genre was less sought his career became unsustainable.

Such assumptions by powerful actors in the musical field can in turn influence what musical fields of actions are available to an actor. Jorge lost control of a large part of his own musicianship assemblage and he stopped crafting “the versatile musician

self” after having been pulled into orbit around a strong actor (*Concerts Norway*) for many years. The crucial difference between the trajectories of these two musicians is that Resa has been keeping the musicianship assemblage in control, to keep it in line with his own ideals, what he wants to achieve as a musician (“a multinational musician”) and a person (“minority”) living in Norway. Jorge, on the other hand, although his music career flourished in line with his ideal of being a “musician for everything” in the beginning, lost the control of his musicianship assemblage over time in his unconscious efforts of trying to fit into the external ideal of what roles he should play.

Overall, this study has attempted to show that the aesthetic negotiations of musicians, that take place as they encounter new actors in various musical fields is not a single and straightforward act. Instead, it is a set of on-going actions that requires and encourages migrant musicians to continuously cultivate and to negotiate their musicianship; actions that are initiated by the musicians themselves in order to sustain their music careers in their host country by sustaining the particular assemblage that constitutes their musicianship.

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