

Chapter 7

The Lebanon Project as a Master's thesis theme

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In Norway, the prevalence of master theses has increased dramatically since the end of the 20th century. The political decision that everyone has the right to upper secondary education laid the foundation for increased recruitment to higher education. Simultaneously, the amalgamation of small institutions into larger higher education units together with new accreditation criteria in the university sector increased the number of university colleges and universities offering master's programmes. Whilst master's programmes had exclusive status in the beginning of the 1960s and were offered by only two universities and five state colleges, today master's programmes are offered across the higher education sector. In addition, a political discussion about requiring a master's degree to become certified as a teacher, such as in Finland, clearly demonstrates the tendency to regard a master's degree as a kind of necessary, general academic education.

The current master's programmes at the Norwegian Academy of Music (NMH) cover many subjects. The first programmes were introduced in the 1970s and included performance studies only. In the beginning of the 1980s, the Diploma in Music Education was created, which later was renamed Master of Music Education. In the 1990s, master studies combining performance and music theory were added, and in 2003 the first thesis in the Master of Music Therapy programme was published. Despite this growth in the scope of master's programmes and master's theses, very few theses have addressed topics such as the Lebanon project.

Parallel to the increasing number of master's students and theses, the issue of educational quality in higher education has emerged as a core priority. This has occurred in connection with the Quality Reform of higher education (Ministry of Education and Research, 2001), the Bologna Process (Danish Bologna seminar, 2003) and international scholarship on educational quality (Steensaker & Maasen, 2005). Among the challenges of maintaining and strengthening the educational quality of master's programmes is the issue of relevance. This applies both to the programmes and the thematic content of master's theses, including the research studies on which those

theses rest. Directing interest towards projects such as the Lebanon project can increase the thematic relevance of all these aspects.

Relevance as an aspect of master's theses

Relevance in higher education can be conceived of in a restricted way as being directly connected with the labour market and concepts such as accountability and employability.¹ Seeing it this way runs the risk of blurring other, significant ways of understanding educational relevance that may be highly important in master's theses. We will point to four such significant notions of relevance that, we suggest, may be of importance when considering the Lebanon project as a potential thematic topic of master's thesis projects.

One such conception of relevance is the commonly under-communicated notion that in order to be relevant, higher education should train students to become critical citizens in a democratic society. In other words, they should acquire the competence of contributing to the further development and constructive change at the vocational and societal levels. This demands the skill of critical analysis be part of students' vocational and professional competence. Systematic studies of the Lebanon project may challenge master's students to conceive new ways of developing such critical competence because of the vast differences between the Lebanese and the Norwegian contexts.

Another conception of relevance is connected with the research on which theses are built. This is directly connected with the general question of how research can be said to be relevant and what kind of relevance criteria can be applied in that connection. Here, relevance connects to the choice of focus, design and methodology. In order to be thematically relevant, a thesis should focus on an issue or knowledge area with the potential for developing new knowledge. Furthermore, the research design and methodology must support the chosen focus and research question. In the Lebanon project, new possible issues and thematic perspectives are opened up. In addition, the project affords new perspectives on traditional music education questions. We will discuss both below. In addition, challenges of methodology, such as language,

1 For a more detailed discussion of employability and accountability, see for example, Horsley, 2009; Johansen & Ferm, 2006; Yorke, 2004; Johansen, 2016.

cross-culture encounters and ethics hardly seen in Norwegian contexts, must be handled.

A third notion of relevance concerns the master's thesis' relationship with the latest developments in the knowledge area wherein it is positioned—in our case, the area of music education. Studies of the Lebanon project can contribute new knowledge to several such areas of development. Among these are the fields of community music education, adapted music education, music education and gender and music education and religion. We will discuss these below. A fourth conception of educational relevance refers to the students' experience of themselves as capable of taking part in the development of their subject area and whether the work involved in the master's thesis supports such a self-image.

When compared to such definitions and notions of relevance, the Lebanon project reveals great potential for master's thesis work in an array of music fields, such as music therapy, music and health and particularly music education. Most probably, exciting challenges relating to the boundaries between such areas can also be described, even if we concentrate on master's theses in music education in this chapter. In order to more closely examine this potential, we will first turn to a short description of the Lebanon project.

The music project

The Lebanon project is extensively described in the first chapter of this volume. In this chapter, we will direct attention towards the music part of it. In particular, we will address some sides of it that, in our opinion, will be particularly interesting in a discussion about master's theses and the potential for knowledge development.

The music project can be seen as divided into four main categories or parts. The first part includes the work done with refugees in the Rashidieh refugee camp, which during the last few years has also received Palestinian refugees who previously stayed in Syria. The second part of the music project includes music in Lebanese elementary and secondary schools and students' music activities outside school. The third part includes the professional placement training of student music teachers at NMH, as described in chapter 3. The fourth part includes collaborative projects between Lebanese

and Norwegian schools, including the collaboration projects involving the Algarheim elementary and Jessheim upper secondary schools, as described in chapter 2.

Altogether, these four parts of the music project reveal the potential for master's thesis work in areas where we have needed new knowledge for some time. This becomes clear if we look back on the thematic content of some earlier master's theses in music education at NMH.

Master's theses in music education at the Norwegian Academy of Music

Slightly more than 100 master's theses in music education have been written in the master's programmes at NMH since its start in 1980. They have used both empirical and theoretical designs and have covered a great variety of thematic issues. Still, it is possible to see some main traits. The vast majority address instrumental and vocal teaching, followed by issues connected with primary and secondary school, culture schools and higher music education. The overall profile is self-referential. Putting it in a very straightforward way, we might say that at the NMH we think a lot about ourselves; we are closest to ourselves and believe we can define what the world looks like by referring to ourselves.

However, an examination of previous master's theses reveals one music education thesis (Jordhus, 2010) and one music therapy thesis (Kippenes, 2007) explicitly addressing the Lebanon project; see chapter 5. In addition, three other theses have dealt with issues that are somewhat relevant in this respect. Hagevik (1993) studied music education with foreign language students. Svidal (2012) studied the Argentine orchestra project El Sistema with respect to how that concept may be transferred to Scandinavian contexts, including how the basic idea of offering children and adolescents a music education programme might prevent their recruitment to criminal communities. Strøm (2012) studied participants' musical agency in a collaborative Nordic project called *Are you with us?* that facilitated intercultural meetings in Nordic countries between children and adolescents from all over the world. This was done by composing a concert programme that presented 'a musical version of the new Scandinavia' (Strøm, 2012, p. 9). In particular, Strøm was interested in the relationship between musical agency, music learning and self-confidence, identity and personal development. In addition to describing such connections, she found that the

participants experienced their participation as important for their own inclusion in society, as well as that of their peers.

The Lebanon project falls naturally within the category of community music education, which is further elaborated in chapter 5 and 11 in this volume. This is a field of music education that has not been dealt with in master's theses at NMH. Another field of increasing relevance is multicultural music education or music education in multicultural contexts or with multicultural participants. A third is music education across national borders.

We suggest that if the master's programme in Music Education at NMH is to remain relevant, theses must comply with all the notions of relevance described above. They should address issues like those we have exemplified and should relate to recent developments in international music education.

Music education as an international scholarly field

After the millennium shift, some of the development traits emerging during the 1990s manifested themselves as visible changes and new issues in the scholarly field of music education. The changes include the expansion of concepts with regard to music learning, music teaching and education in music (Johansen, 2013). Studies about formal and informal music learning (Folkestad, 2006; Green, 2002; 2008; Karlsen & Väkevä, 2012), the teaching and learning of world music (Schippers, 2009), multicultural music education, music education in multicultural contexts (Campbell, 2005; Sæther, 2008; Karlsen & Westerlund, 2010; Karlsen, 2012) and Internet-based music education (Partti & Karlsen, 2010; Waldron, 2011) have contributed to this extended knowledge base. Interest in the relationship between music education and society has also increased, a development made clear at international conferences on 'the sociology of music education' and 'the philosophy of music education', and the number of publications on these topics has increased (Roberts, 2008; Froehlich, 2007; Wright, 2010; Varkøy, 2012). These topics should also be reflected in master's theses in order for theses to be relevant.

Themes for master's theses

Master's theses dealing with music education projects such as the one in Lebanon can be carried out based on three principles that encompass the notions of relevance described above. First, they can set out to map and describe what is going on, for example, how teachers teach and what characterises the participants' learning outcomes. Second, they can bring more general music education issues into focus and enlighten such issues in new ways made possible by the particular Palestine–Lebanon context. This can include everything from the participants' informal learning practices to the personal teaching philosophy of the teachers (Handal & Lauvås, 2000) and those teachers' professional identities (Heggen, 2008). Third, they can apply a comparative perspective comparing the actions in Lebanon with similar actions in other countries, for example, by focusing on exchange projects *between* Norway and Lebanon.

In addition to providing a better understanding of the actions taking place in Lebanon, master's theses dealing with such issues may help in developing knowledge of music education in general. This can be achieved by collecting their basic theoretical grounds from scholarly works on such areas as we described in connection with music education as an international scholarly field, along with complying with all our sketched relevance criteria. New knowledge can be developed in individual studies and by participating in larger research projects and in various research designs, particularly comparative designs.

We will now suggest eight thematic areas that have the potential to be incorporated into future master theses of various designs. They have all grown out of observations and experiences from the Lebanon project, having provoked curiosity or amazement among the Norwegian participants and therefore indicating the need for of systematic study.

Gender

Gender roles are played out in music education and all other educational endeavours worldwide and have been addressed by music education scholars such as Bjørck (2011), Green (1997), and Lamb, Dolloff and Howe (2002)². Applying a gender perspective to the Lebanon project can give us valuable insights and sharpen our focus on gender roles in music education generally. In turn, this can shed new light on how

2 See also <http://post.queensu.ca/~grime/bibliography.html>.

gender roles are played out in Norwegian contexts as well. Comparative designs appear as particularly prosperous in this connection.

Observations and experiences of gender roles have prompted discussion among the Norwegian leaders and the participants in the Lebanon project. Some of the topics of those discussions constitute good examples of where the development of thematic foci and research questions can start. For example, boys and girls clearly chose different instruments and different roles when playing together in groups. Questions have been raised regarding whether this has to do with where students come from, or in other words, their cultural preconditions. Others have asked if it is influenced by the leaders or teachers during the process, or whether it may have to do with the variety of instruments available.

Another impression is that girls become very competent and skilful during the periods they participate but that their participation abruptly ends when they become teenagers. The regular exception is those who take on the role of instructor. In this connection, there have been discussions about whether girls who continue to sing or play are looked down on by their family or within Palestinian or Lebanese culture. Do the cultural expectations they face point them in other directions, such as establishing traditional families and taking on traditional female roles? Is it the dimension of taking care of others—included in the instructor role—that makes this role available for girls? The boys, however, demonstrate no tendency to suddenly end their participation in the project. The reasons why they choose to continue or quit have not been systematically studied. Master's theses may help increase our knowledge of these issues by using longitudinal observation designs wherein sets of defined parameters might be utilised for analysis and interpretation. This way, such pre-understandings might be confirmed or rejected and further elucidated by drawing on gender theory. Therefore, if master's studies of The Lebanon Project addressed gender perspectives, they would be responding to the general lack of gender issues in music education master's theses in Norway.

Age mixes

Mixed-age groups in particular were discussed in connection with progressive education currents in Norway in the 1980s and 1990s. The most influential publication was Jon-Roar Bjørkvold's (1992) book *The muse within*. However, age mixes have also constituted the frames of the everyday practice of, for example, wind band leaders and choir conductors since the beginning of the twentieth century.



*The BAS Center in Rashedieh. Parts of the large orchestra.
Photo: Vegar R. Storsve*



In the Lebanon project, age mixes constitute a frame factor in different ways than in Norway. This has contributed to important experiences and interesting discussions among the leaders and participants. The music activities in the Rashidieh refugee camp are directed towards children and adolescents but also include adults who are trained to keep up the work and activities during the periods between the visits of Norwegian leaders and participants. An important part of this adult training consists of participating in the activities together with the children and adolescents. This results in different roles and functions being played out during a day of activities (Storsve, Westby & Ruud, 2012). For example, some of the adolescents shift between functioning as an

[...] apprentice (when they practice with a master), a “local journeyman” (when they work together with students in groups) and a “mini-master” when they take on responsibilities to lead rehearsals with the younger children (Ibid: 78).

Children younger than those included in the Lebanon project’s target group also visit from time to time. Even if silently observing, they apparently ‘pick up’ a lot of what is going on. In Norwegian eyes, their participation is better accepted within the Palestinian culture than it would have been in Norway, a phenomenon worthy of further elaborations.

All these aspects of the Lebanon project can be addressed in master’s theses. For example, the research interest can be directed towards how the learning going on can be described and understood by drawing on socio cultural terms, such as ‘legitimate peripheral participation’, ‘full membership’ and ‘inbound and outbound trajectories’ (Lave & Wenger, 1991; Wenger, 1998; 2006). Starting from a more critical perspective, discussions can be initiated about whether age mix is something that has been implemented by the Norwegian leaders out of convenience and whether it collides with local cultural traditions, including a stricter, hierarchical relationship between teachers and students. In that case, can the structure and organisation of the project be described as cultural imperialism? This question can also be rephrased as a starting point for discussions if it is rather the Western traditions that prove traits of hierarchies and age separation. Moreover, such perspectives can constitute a basis for discussions of more general music education issues; for example, does a closer co-existence between adults and children in learning groups foster better learning than in age segregated groups? How can the organisation and dynamics in the Lebanon project activities shed light on the relationship between authoritarian and democratic

leadership in music education? Further, how can aspects of the Lebanon project help elucidate questions about children's rights, non-violence and the pedagogy of peace? We will discuss the latter below.

Content and repertoire

The skill and competence in selecting relevant content for teaching and learning is a priority in most teacher education programmes. As a concept, 'content' can be understood as the content of the education as a whole and as subject content, a side ordered category together with aims, teaching methods, assessment and frame factors (Bjørndal & Lieberg, 1972; Hanken & Johansen, 2013; Jank & Meyer, 2003). In the latter perspective, criteria for content selection are the focus (Klafki, 2000; Johansen, 2007). Both these perspectives on content can be elucidated in master's theses that take the Lebanon project as a point of departure.

Master's theses can illuminate the content of the Lebanon project in terms of how it enables the activities to proceed and how the participants learn music. Among many possibilities, this can be discussed in comparison to how children and adolescents traditionally learn music in Palestinian and Lebanese culture and if the content of the project enhances or inhibits such processes. Master's theses can also include discussions about power with respect to the selection of content. In the Lebanon project, it is mainly the Norwegian leaders and participants, such as student music teachers, who decide and bring with them most of the repertoire used. This repertoire is often selected because it functions well in music groups with various instruments in Norway. Therefore, the question of whether a 'canon' of teaching repertoires for playing together is emerging. Moreover, the selection process itself can be questioned and analysed with respect to being imperialistic, authoritarian or anti-democratic in terms of culture. Any subsequent discussion can include how the Palestinian and Lebanese participants can be more directly involved in selecting content or in other words how the selection processes can become more democratic.

Master's theses can also discuss what happens with the repertoire in the periods between the visits from Norway, when participants and local leaders work alone. For example, are 'natural selection processes' taking place, wherein some of the repertoire appears to function well and is maintained whilst other parts of it disappear? In that case, can such processes be said to be democratic and show evidence of the participants' musical agency (Karlsen, 2011)? Or are other informal selection criteria at work? Anyhow, the issue of the repertoire's cultural basis remains to be further

dealt with. How can traditional Lebanese and Palestinian music be included in the activities? What about the participants' clear preferences for patriotic songs? And what about the working strategies brought into the project by the Norwegian leaders and participants? Do they simply impose some traditional Western ways of engaging with music on children, adolescents and adults from different cultures? Or do the chosen working strategies rather represent a breakaway from traditional Western ways of teaching and learning music? By throwing light on such questions, master's theses can bring important knowledge to the music education field.

Student music teachers' professional placement experiences

Several of the perspectives dominating earlier master's theses at NMH can be elucidated further, based on systematic studies of the Lebanon project. In particular, the activities in the Rashidieh refugee camp stand out in this connection because a one-week stay here is included in student music teachers' professional placement³ (Danielsen, 2012; Brøske-Danielsen, 2013). This fact enables master's theses to reflect on those student music teachers' experiences of planning and carrying out activities in Lebanon, for example, by focusing on the relationship between the repertoire, teaching methods and the principle of adapted education. This might include the learning strategies and processes actualized by the multi-function scores.

When in Lebanon, the Norwegian students also take part in Arabic music workshops led by local musicians. In addition to broadening their musical perspective, they also experience how those local musicians teach and thereby the cultural music teaching strategies the local musicians employ. Master's theses could direct attention towards student music teachers' experiences of differences and similarities between the local musicians' teaching strategies and those employed by the student music teachers themselves when teaching in the Lebanon project.

Adapted music education

Whilst the principle of adapted music education is well established in the educational philosophy of the Norwegian school system, the notion of teaching music to children with special needs is rather new and uncommon in Lebanon. This difference opens up

3 A four-year bachelor's programme qualifying student music teachers for a variety of jobs teaching music. See <http://nmh.no/en/study/undergraduate/bachelor-music-education>.

possibilities for master's theses studying how various groups of children, adolescents and adults are approached within the frames of the Lebanon project.

Particularly well suited for such studies are the music activities at a girl's school run by the Imam Sadr Foundation, as described in chapter 2. This school has developed from being a deeply religious, music-free school to being one that, while still religious, has music as an integral part of the curriculum. This development started with some minor attempts at incorporating music activities for special needs students and then gradually expanded into the present situation with music at all levels, along with in-service music training for teachers on a weekly basis. Moreover, by incorporating music, teachers have realised that students in the ordinary classes and those in the special needs classes have a wide variety of different learning preconditions.

A *didaktik* model, such as that developed by Heimann, Otto and Schulz (1965) or Bjørndal and Lieberg (1992), is well suited for systematic enlightenment of this development in a master's thesis format. In the case of the Imam Sadr Foundation School, the success of implementing music in the curriculum can be discussed by focusing on the interrelations between *didaktik* model categories, such as the teaching content, teaching methods and students' learning preconditions, and on how these interrelations have positively influenced teachers' preconditions and frame factors. In other words, this concerns the conception of music as a school subject among teachers and school leadership.

Among other theoretical perspectives emerging in this regard, some are connected with the justification and philosophy of music education. The Imam Sadr Foundation school case invites critical discussions about the relationship between musical and non-musical justification and the positive effects of music and the danger of developing simplistic, over-romantic notions about them.

Religion

The case of the Imam Sadr Foundation School constitutes one example of a relationship between religion and music that can be elucidated in master's theses about The Lebanon Project. A systematic study of music in the private sphere, such as at weddings and other ceremonies, along with connections between different forms and degrees of religiosity and the relationship between religion and politics in Lebanese and Palestinian society might provide master's students with insights that are unachievable when focusing on Norwegian contexts. Such studies also enable comparative designs

by which the conditions of religion and music in the countries can be reflected in each other. For example, research questions such as ‘What characterises the relationship between religion and music in a Palestinian refugee camp in Lebanon compared with the similar relationship in Norway?’ can be formulated.

Other research questions can be posed concerning the relationship between, say, Minaret prayer calls and other musical forms. For example, can connections between such calls and Lebanese or Palestinian folk music be described? How are prayer calls learned as compared to folk music in terms of recent, Western studies of formal and informal learning practices (Folkestad, 2006; Green, 2002; 2008; Karlsen & Våkeva, 2012)? Do connections between these music forms have any significance with respect to music education in Lebanon and in Palestinian refugee camps generally? In what ways may religious practice regulate informal music education in Lebanon and the possibilities and limits of music education in Lebanese schools?

Perspectives on religion and spirituality can also be included in master’s theses dealing with the justification of music education, as described in relation to adapted education. The complexity of music-religion-society relationships in the Lebanese society can constitute a possible point of departure. In order to exemplify this complexity, we will draw attention to some of the organisations that, despite their differences, take part in the Lebanon project⁴.

- Beit Atfal Assumoud (BAS), a religious and political party independent of non-governmental organisations (NGOs) that runs the culture centre in the refugee camp where one part of the music project is located.
- Imam Sadr foundation, the NGO that runs the girl’s school described above. It is connected with a political party and is founded on a Shia Muslim platform.
- Marouf Saad foundation, an NGO that runs two schools in Saida. It is non-religious but is still anchored in Sunni Muslim culture and is connected with another political party.
- Shohour official secondary school, located in a village dominated by Shia Muslim culture and several political parties.

Master’s theses would contribute significantly to our knowledge about music education if they addressed, for example, the rationale for including music in the activities

⁴ See chapter 2 for a closer description of these organizations.

of such different institutions and why they are interested in collaborating with NMH representatives. Does this interest reside in the attitudes of the leadership, independent of religious affiliation? Can it have to do with the different religious, political and cultural priorities of different organisations? Or are there other reasons? And why are no Christian schools in Lebanon included in The Lebanon Project activities? By including such questions, the prospect of comparative designs emerges, along with the possibilities of contributing to the international debate on the justification of music education in general.

Society

We consider the Lebanese society to be characterised by a complex web of religious, cultural and political powers. This may constitute an overall perspective of a master's thesis, still helpful to decide on a more specific focus area to arrive at a fruitful point of departure. On the way to defining such a focus, the themes of previous studies in music, society and education can be considered. Here, we will point to music and peace education, music education and nationalism and music education in multicultural contexts.

Music and peace education

Among the most significant student preconditions of the refugee camp participants are, naturally, their status and identity as refugees. Master's theses can elaborate on how these preconditions influence, enable and restrict project activities. A possible, theoretical basis can be found within the tradition of peace education from which connections can be drawn between historical and present initiatives focusing on issues such as human rights, social equity and participation in democratic processes. Historically, peace education can be traced back to the 1970s and the Inter-University Centre in Dubrovnik, Croatia led by Johan Galtung, the first world congress of peace education arranged by the World Council for Curriculum and Instruction at the University of Keele in England in 1974 (Haavelsrud, 1976) and the establishment of the Peace Education Commission (PEC) in 1975. The 1980s emphasis on disarmament, dedicated written curricula for peace education in Germany and the establishment of the International Institute on Peace Education at Columbia University in New York led by Betty Reardon are parts of the history of peace education

By drawing connections and discussing the relationship between the peace education of the 1970s and 1980s and contemporary initiatives such as *Music Intervention: Conflict*

*Transformation, Music Education, Youth Empowerment*⁵, *Music bus goes Palestine*⁶ and *Musicians without borders*⁷, a fruitful theoretical basis for master's theses addressing the Lebanon project can be established.

Music education, nationalism and national identity

The primary function of the refugee camps' culture centres and music activities is regarded by many inhabitants as supporting and maintaining Palestinian national identity. This priority is expressed in the musical repertoire. Whilst the Norwegian leaders and participants bring with them a repertoire rooted in a Nordic tradition of musical 'playing together' activities, the repertoire brought in by the Palestinian participants is dominated by patriotic Palestinian songs. The Palestinian participants give those songs priority above other Palestinian music, other kinds of folk music and even pop music. This observation points to several of the issues discussed above with regard to the selection of repertoire and educational content.

However, the preferences for patriotic songs also points to other issues that can be elucidated in master's theses. This includes the relationship between music and national identity and between music and nationalism, two subject areas that can prove to be particularly interesting when examined from the perspective of music education. The question of how patriotic songs are maintained and passed on in a culture is basically a question of music education insofar as music education is conceived as connected with formal and informal contexts and practices. If the attention is directed towards the informal side, a master's thesis can draw upon a rich body of recent scholarly work on formal-informal music education (Folkestad, 2006; Green, 2008; Karlsen & Väkeva, 2012), wherein adult learning (Karlsen, 2007) and lifelong learning are also addressed.

A complementary perspective includes questions about music in the relationship between society's micro, meso and macro levels (Bresler, 1998; Johansen, 2013) and about music and nationalism (Hebert & Kertz-Welzel, 2012). On such grounds, research questions can be formulated about challenges in the gap between constructive national building and identity work versus extreme nationalism and racism overshadowing

5 <http://musicintervention.wordpress.com/>

6 <http://www.musicbusgoespalestine.blogspot.no/>

7 <http://www.musicianswithoutborders.org/#>

ideas of music education for democracy (see, for example, Ferm Thorgersen, 2013; Westerlund & Karlsen, 2010; Woodford, 2005).

Multicultural music education

Studies of music education in cultural contexts that are different from the Norwegian context can by their nature contribute new knowledge about multicultural music education. However, even if the Norwegian context is becoming increasingly culturally heterogenic, the context is still Norwegian. Contrary to this, studies of the Lebanon project must reflect the fact that the social-cultural as well as the geographical context is different. It raises different challenges and makes different possibilities and restrictions visible, such as those we have tried to describe above. Within such frames, master's theses can take various forms.

The most common way of carrying out multicultural music education seems to include selecting the repertoire from the traditional music of the different cultures represented in the classroom or student group. In the Lebanon project, however, the student classes and groups are characterised by their homogeneity. Multicultural challenges appear in different ways. One is the meeting between the repertoire selected by Norwegians and the musical preferences of the Lebanese or Palestine participants. Another is the way Norwegian music teachers and student music teachers operate within cultural frames that are not their own. Therefore, research questions addressing several different perspectives are enabled.

If we examine the general literature on multicultural education (see, for example, Banks, 2004), it describes several approaches other than selecting a representative repertoire. Banks (2004) discusses four such approaches, in addition to let the repertoire reflect the cultural diversity of a class or group, which is called *content integration* (p. 5). The first is to base the teaching on different cultural ways of learning (see, for example, Schippers, 2009). Consequently, research questions can be formulated about what characterises such culturally anchored learning practices among the participants in the Lebanon project and how they can be supported. The second is connected with *prejudice reduction*; the third relates to *an equity pedagogy* (p. 5) and the fourth actualises the students' agency by aiming at *empowering school culture and social structure* (p. 5).

Master's theses can discuss and highlight how musical (Karlsen, 2011) and general agency (Barnes, 2000) is expressed and maintained in Lebanese or Palestinian culture

and to what extent it may be possible for the Norwegians to work on strengthening the agency of the Lebanese or Palestinian participants without risking conveying the message that real agency is only achievable in Western cultures. Master's theses can also address the risk of cultural oversimplification and describe the often vast individual differences in students' relationships with music (Karlsen, 2012; Sæther, 2008).

Concluding remarks

In this chapter, we have restricted the scope to include only NMH and have almost exclusively focused on master's theses in music education. However, we suggest that the issues and challenges discussed are relevant for master's theses in other NMH programmes and in other branches of higher music education as well.

The Lebanon project opens unique possibilities for dealing with traditional issues in music education in alternative ways. In addition, new, unaddressed fields can be identified and dealt with in master's theses and in larger projects wherein master's students participate with, for example, PhD research fellows and senior researchers.

The challenges and opportunities emerging when dealing with perspectives and issues such as those described in this chapter might also help shift the focus away from a possibly self-referential way of thinking at NMH and widen the scope by addressing the ideal of employing music in supporting people to change their lives on a more general basis.

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