Making music in divided cities: Transforming the ethnoscape

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Abstract

In the phenomenon of the divided city – urban environments partitioned along ethno-religious lines as a result of war or conflict – projects seeking to bring segregated people together through community music activities face many operational and psychological obstacles. Divided cities are politically sustained, institutionally consolidated, and relentlessly territorialized by competing ethno-nationalist actors. They are highly resistant to peacebuilding efforts at the state level. This article uses an urban peacebuilding lens (peacebuilding reconceptualized at the urban scale that encompasses the spatial and social dimensions of ethno-nationalist division) to examine the work of community music projects in three divided cities. Through the examples of the Pavarotti Music Centre in Mostar, Bosnia-Herzegovina, the Mitrovica Rock School in Mitrovica, Kosovo, and Breaking Barriers (a pseudonym) in Belfast, Northern Ireland, we consider the context-specific practices and discourses that are deployed to navigate the local constraints on inter-communal cooperation, but that also contribute to the broader goal of building peace. We find that music-making is a promising strategy of peacebuilding at the urban scale, with both functional and symbolic contributions to make to the task of transforming an ethnoscape into a peacescape.

Keywords

music

divided cities

urban peacebuilding

Mostar

Mitrovica

Belfast

Introduction

Across scholarly literature from community music, music education, ethnomusicology and music sociology there are increasing examples of music-making as a vehicle for connecting divided people, with connections across ethno-nationalist or religious divides a subgroup within these (Bergh 2010; Cheah 2009; Marsh 2012; Odena 2010; Robertson 2010; Skyllstad 1997). But what are the possibilities and limitations for forging these kinds of connections and bonds in settings of extreme social segregation? In this article we examine music-making in ‘divided cities’: internally partitioned cities where the population is separated by physical or psychological barriers that keep ethno-religious groups apart (Allegra et al. 2012; Björkdahl 2013; Bollens 2011; Calame and Charlesworth 2006). Frequently developing during or after protracted conflicts where ethnic or religious identity has been used as a way to mobilize groups and define sides of the conflict, divided cities are politically sustained, institutionally consolidated, and relentlessly territorialized by competing ethno-nationalist actors. The segregation of people on ethnic or religious grounds is mirrored in the creation of separate institutions and systems, including schools and universities, healthcare, social services, car registrations, and more. Partitions create for many a sense of security, yet partitions simultaneously justify and reinforce fear and paranoia, maintaining the conflict for future generations. These fears are commonly manipulated by political actors explicitly tying ethnicity to political affiliation, and all political, economic, environmental, social and cultural debates to ethnic interests (Calame and Charlesworth 2006: 3).

Divided cities amplify the way that peacebuilding and place are inexorably intertwined. The task of re-building the social fabric of people who are both socially and spatially divided is by necessity a negotiation and navigation of complex urban conditions: geospatial divides and boundaries, political and institutional manipulations and expectations, and complex social pressures from both those who accept segregation and its accompanying political

components, and those who do not fully subscribe to its imposition (Björkdahl 2013). The latter may look for ways to subvert the city's divided state and circumvent the imposed segregation in at least some aspects of their lives (Carabelli 2018: 11).

The projects we examine in this article could be considered as direct challenges to or subversions of the normalization of division. The Pavarotti Music Centre (PMC) in Mostar, Bosnia-Herzegovina; the Mitrovica Rock School in Mitrovica, Kosovo; and Breaking Barriers (a pseudonym) in Belfast, Northern Ireland each open their doors to young people from all sides of the conflicts in their respective contexts. How they negotiate the local challenges of maintaining this policy of welcome and inclusion differs however, in response to the specificities of their context and organizational capacities. It is these operational aspects and differences that this article shall examine.

The article asks: *how do inter-communal music projects navigate the spatial and social partitions of divided cities, and how can their practices be understood within the larger peacebuilding endeavour?* In particular, we shed light on the ways in which practitioners and participants navigate spatial, social and ethno-political dynamics in order to establish and maintain the flow of music and the possibility of connection across entrenched divisions. The focus on practices across three contrasting cases invites consideration of the way that the programme aspirations and idealized visions are invariably adapted in response to the realities of conflicted space. This in turn helps to build a more nuanced knowledge base about how community music initiatives in highly divided and politicized contexts work (or do not work), and therefore how to implement them effectively.

Author positioning

The three authors bring converging perspectives and viewpoints to this task. Howell is an applied music scholar and community cultural development practitioner who has investigated

and led numerous music-making programmes in war-affected places and other complex social settings. Pruitt is a political scientist with long-standing interests in youth participation in peacebuilding and creative approaches to peace. Hassler is a peace activist, musician and founder/director of the international non-government organization Musicians Without Borders, which uses music to build peace and resilience in war-affected regions. These divergent yet complementary sets of experiences mean that we work within contrasting disciplinary boundaries and engage with both empirical and practice-generated data. This article presents qualitative data from ethnographic fieldwork (Howell, Pruitt), lived experience (Howell, Hassler), and knowledge derived from decades of practical first-hand engagement with peace activism and the implementation of peace-focused music programmes (Hassler).

Data for the PMC cases were gathered through semi-structured interviews and participant observation in 2013 as part of Ph.D. research, and complemented with the researcher's firsthand knowledge of the PMC's early operations (Howell was a staff musician and workshop leader at the PMC for ten months in 1998). Once transcribed, these data were analysed inductively, with emergent themes contributing to a grounded theory for music interventions in war-affected settings (see Howell 2017). Data for Breaking Barriers were gathered in 2008 through semi-structured interviews and participant observation and analysed inductively as part of Pruitt's Ph.D. research into youth peacebuilding. Data for the Mitrovica Rock School (MRS) were gathered in-house (Hassler and Musicians Without Borders founded the MRS in 2008) through participant feedback, institutional knowledge, and an external evaluation conducted in 2015. A 2014 TEDx talk by MRS project manager Wendy Hassler-Forest is also referenced in this article.

The co-authors collaborated in 2017 on a panel presentation on music programmes in divided cities. The three operational challenges explored in this article emerged through that initial collaborative work as salient areas for comparative analysis.

Conceptual and theoretical framework

We examine the work of the three case studies through an urban peacebuilding lens. Bringing together knowledge from the critical peacebuilding and urban studies fields, political scientist Annika Björkdahl (2013) proposes that an orientation towards ‘the urban’ is a way to connect peacebuilding with urban space and the everyday, to localize it, and to sideline the statist presumptions of a liberal peace model. As a concept, urban peacebuilding encompasses social and spatial relationships, and works to transform both material and immaterial expressions of identity-based division (2013: 219). It brings attention to the ways that peacebuilding efforts are interwoven with local productions of space, being both shaped and potentially undermined by this relationship.

Björkdahl recognizes the highly ethnicized urban context of divided cities as functioning as an ‘ethnoscape’, adopting the term first coined by Appadurai to refer to the intricate and interrelated connections and practices between people (‘ethno’) and place (‘scape’) that maintain and reproduce ethnic identity in the era of globalization (Appadurai 1996). Urban peacebuilding offers a framework for understanding the mechanisms and practices through which an ethnoscape might be transformed into its opposite, a ‘peacescape’. The notion of a peacescape captures the dynamic relationship between peace and place, functioning ‘as a site where difference can be negotiated and transcended [...] compris[ing] cosmopolitan spaces of tolerance and civility and where a shared civic identity can be developed’ (Björkdahl 2013: 215). Importantly, a peacescape may function as an incubator for large transformations of society, a space in which more pluralistic and cooperative ways of living can be nurtured and strengthened so that in time, they will be sustainable beyond the protected space.

The ways that music participation might provide such an incubator are multiple. In this article we confine our interest to three sets of relationships – between people, sounds and space – taking a cue from Lederach’s recognition of the centrality of relationships to peacebuilding (2005: 34), and Small’s contention that ‘musicking establishes [...] a set of relationships’ between the sounds, the people who are taking part, and the particular place and time in which the act occurs (1998: 13). We look first at the question of place, querying how location is navigated in a context where space is contested and territorialized. We then consider inclusive practices and how the discourses and terms of recognition that shape relationships between people influence these. Lastly, we consider the relationships between people and sounds, and the ways that musical choices may support or hinder the creation of peacescapes.

Locating music accessibly in a divided city

In a divided city, space is contested and territorialized, with certain actors seeking to ‘dominate space under their control, while excluding and/or driving away “the other”’ (Björkdahl 2013: 215). It consists of predominantly ‘ethnic space’, where ethno-nationalist markers and practices are prioritized in political discourse and transferred to the physical environment (2013: 214). Therefore, the accessibility and inclusivity of a cross-community music activity in a divided city is conditioned by its location. Where can such a project be located when there are few – if any – shared public spaces?

To answer this, we must first establish how the partitions function in the three case sites. Partitions in divided cities may be physical barriers and militarized, but this is by no means the rule. Boundaries without walls or barriers will still function as psychological borders or as ‘invisible walls’ that many refuse to cross, so that voluntary and involuntary habits of segregation become mutually reinforcing, normalizing division (Calame and Charlesworth 2006).

In the southern Herzegovinian town of Mostar, the boundary line between the majority Bosniak (Bosnian Muslim) population on the east side of the city and the Bosnian-Croat majority on the west side is the town's main highway, the Bulevar (Bose 2002). It is the former frontline between the Bosniak and Bosnian-Croat fighting forces, and functions as a psychological barrier that even at the time of writing, two decades after the end of the war, many Mostarians prefer not to venture across (Hromadžić 2011). Those that do are likely to remain close to the boundary line; venturing further into the 'other' side provokes considerable feelings of discomfort for many Mostarians (Laketa 2017). Politicians and other leaders stoke these fears through divisive rhetoric in order to secure ethnic support and votes (Haider 2009). Some shared social spaces exist where inter-ethnic mixing is possible (including two secondary schools and a handful of NGO-run spaces); the majority of these are situated close to the Bulevar. In the last decade, some public spaces (e.g. a cinema in West Mostar; a square with popular bars and European fashion boutiques in East Mostar) attract visitors from both sides even if they are not openly designated as 'shared' spaces.

In Mitrovica, the boundary line is a geographical feature, the River Ibar, which cuts through the town and divides it into North and South Mitrovica. The northern bank is a majority ethnic Serbian area, connected by its hinterland to the Republic of Serbia, while South Mitrovica has a majority ethnic Albanian population (OSCE 2010). Bridges cross the River Ibar, but they have been sites of protest and attack since the Kosovo war ended in 1999 (Deutsche Welle 2014; Morina 2017). While barricades erected by Serbian fighting forces on the bridges were removed in 2014, crossing from one side of the river to the other remains proscribed and stigmatized. As in Mostar, those that do cross contain their sense of risk and discomfort by crossing sides only for specific activities.

In Belfast, physical partitions at the points of interface between Catholic and Protestant residential enclaves are a material manifestation of the city's segregation. These partitions,

known as ‘peace walls’ or ‘peacelines’, are neighbourhood-specific, and constructed in response to chronic episodes of local violence. They generally proliferate in less affluent parts of the city and follow streets that demarcate pre-existing boundaries between neighbourhoods or public housing blocks. Peace wall construction has increased since the signing of the Good Friday Agreement in 1998 and its subsequent political reforms (BBC News 2018). The homogeneity of communities inside the peacelines is reinforced through the education system, which is 90 per cent segregated (Doyle 2018). Notably, while Belfast’s geographical divisions – in the form of multiple enclaves rather than distinctive sides – might presuppose the possibility of shared public spaces, efforts to create these at the municipal planning level have been largely unsuccessful (Abdelmonem and McWhinney 2015).

A major goal of urban peacebuilding is to create and consolidate shared public spaces, and to support the continued existence of neutral space (inclusive and safe spaces open to all communities) and cosmopolitan space (international spaces that do not reference the local divisions) (Björkdahl 2013: 217). The absence or minimal presence of shared public space in Mostar, Mitrovica and Belfast made the decision about where to locate the planned music activities extremely challenging, but also meant that the music projects had a powerful contribution to make in terms of offering new neutral or cosmopolitan spaces in which inter-ethnic contact and cooperation might be normalized.

In Mostar, War Child UK (the non-government organization that implemented the PMC) was intent on creating a permanent building for their proposed music centre. While the municipal government in West Mostar was unsupportive of the project, the East Mostar municipal government invited them to build it on site of a destroyed primary school. However, this location was some distance from the former frontline and being so deep in the East meant the PMC was perceived as a Bosniak site among many people in West Mostar (Eno 1996: 105; Wilson 2016: 160). Research informants from West Mostar confirmed that their neighbours

and schoolmates ‘didn’t necessarily see [it] as their Centre’ (Kenet, PMC participant, interviewed 20 October 2013). The location therefore created multiple obstacles to realizing the goal of being an inclusive, inter-communal, depoliticized gathering space. With no public transport and the risks associated with driving in East Mostar with West Mostar car registrations, young people from West Mostar who wanted to attend PMC activities relied on personal pick-ups and drop-offs by PMC staff. While this was an effective strategy in the early days of the PMC, as the Centre’s programme of activities intensified it became increasingly unsustainable. Others from the West chose to travel to the PMC on foot, several doing so on a daily basis despite the distance and insecurities in order to attend music classes, workshops, concert events and to socialize. Thus, regular participation for those from the West required considerable commitment and effort (Ines, PMC participant, interviewed 20 November 2013).

To entice participants from both sides, the PMC staff relied on word of mouth about the diverse workshop programme on offer and the impressive music facilities, which included a professional-quality recording studio, performance spaces, rehearsal rooms and a clinical music therapy programme. There were limited opportunities for arts participation or therapy available on either side of Mostar, and none with the infrastructure, wide range of free activities, and international orientation of the PMC. In addition to offering transport for west-side participants in the early days, PMC staff led workshops in youth clubs and NGOs in West Mostar and across the Croat-dominated western hinterland. Committed participants from West Mostar also tried to spread the word that everyone was welcome. The fact that it had been founded and funded by international actors allowed it to function as ‘cosmopolitan space’ (Björkdahl 2013: 217), able to determine the rules of interaction within its own walls.

In Mitrovica, establishing a unified school for rock music required careful navigation and constant adaptation. Initially, Musicians Without Borders and its local partner Community

Building Mitrovica hoped to establish a single facility in a cultural centre near the main bridge across the River Ibar. However, the centre was still on the south side of the river, and crossing sides was heavily proscribed at that time. The next approach was to bring youth to a neutral space outside of Kosovo with a week-long ‘Rock School in Exile’ in neighbouring North Macedonia in summer 2008. The partners recruited 25 participants from both sides of the city and bussed them to Skopje. Established rock musicians from north and south Mitrovica worked alongside Dutch rock music teachers as the band coaches, the young participants played in ethnically mixed bands, and the week culminated in a rock concert in Skopje’s public park with transport provided for parents from Mitrovica to attend.

[Insert Photo 1 – **Figure 1:** Band photo-shoot in Skopje 2009, photo courtesy Mitrovica Rock School. About here]

Following their Summer School experience, the participants wanted to continue their rock music learning in Mitrovica. This time, Musicians Without Borders opened two branches of the Mitrovica Rock School, one on either side of the river. This is the model that is in place today. Both branches feature the same activities and facilities (lessons, band-coaching, recording and spaces for socializing) and are managed by an inter-ethnic team based in an office on the south side of the river close to the main bridge. Since 2015, all mixed bands undertake to practice on both sides of the city, alternating between the two MRS branches, with the Rock School providing safe transportation. The two branches function as ‘neutral space’ (Björkdahl 2013: 217) on their respective sides because even though the town’s division makes it extremely challenging for members of the other community to just drop in, there are regular activities that bring members of both communities together in one branch or the other. The annual Skopje Summer School is also maintained as it gives existing mixed bands opportunities to further their musical development and provides the impetus and safe space for new mixed bands to form. A further development in recent years has been the

opportunity for mixed bands from the MRS to perform in Mitrovica and elsewhere in Kosovo. These concerts, while not highly publicized, create an additional temporary neutral space in the town, attracting members of Mitrovica's small alternative scene and representing a promising shift in local acceptance of music as a shared site of interest and skill for the town's young people.

[Insert Photo 2 – **Figure 2:** Rock School students crossing the River Ibar, photo courtesy Mitrovica Rock School. About here]

A point of difference between Breaking Barriers in Belfast and the other two cases is that it is not a school nor centre for music. Rather, it is an organization offering multicultural arts programming through community-based workshops and extended programmes; it is therefore not restricted to housing its activities in a consistent location. Indeed, Breaking Barriers has hosted programmes in most of the sizeable towns across Northern Ireland in addition to its Belfast base. It targets youths from a range of religious, class, and national backgrounds, challenging the extensive segregation of the Catholic and Protestant populations across both school and social life. During Pruitt's fieldwork in 2008, Breaking Barriers worked in partnership with schools, community centres and youth centres to offer its programmes. It engaged in a number of strategies to bring young people together, including bussing young people from one neighbourhood to another in order to facilitate their participation. Breaking Barriers also worked with relatively homogenous groups, hosting programmes in youth centres or schools that predominantly served one community or the other. In addition, Breaking Barriers' team of multicultural and multiethnic facilitators ran participatory music activities at local festivals and community events, some of which were held in areas deemed neutral or shared spaces, such as peace concerts in the Belfast City Center. These events provided space for a greater degree of 'mixing' between communities, in addition to promoting cross-cultural awareness and inter-communal relations (Pruitt 2013). In these

ways, Breaking Barriers' workshops augment existing shared spaces as well as consolidating the cosmopolitan and neutral qualities within their hosts' and partner agencies' spaces.

These three case study programmes illustrate that there is unlikely to be a single 'best practice' for circumventing entrenched segregations and partitions; creating a 'peacescape' takes adaptability and sensitivity to what is possible in a given period of time. Working in sites that keep participant groups homogenous could be seen to reinforce the existing political divisions rather than opposing them; however, it is also a strategy that allows a programme to work with everyone, including those who are resistant to change but want to play music (Hassler-Forest 2014). For programmes working from a single site, inter-communal gathering and cooperation can still take place, but require tactics and practices (e.g. great facilities, unique learning and creative opportunities, welcoming and supportive staff, safe transport) that compel people to take a chance and cross the threshold, *despite* the challenges that they may face in getting there. Once there, if they find that 'nobody is that spooky, that other people can become your friends' (Orhan, PMC staff member, interviewed 28 October 2013), it theoretically becomes easier to return. However, in divided cities the forces working to maintain segregation are dynamic and interrelated; access is always in dialogue with those forces, which can include pressure from one's peer or family group. With this in mind, attention now turns to how these forces are navigated within the boundaries of the music projects.

Navigating relationships between people and identity

Space – in particular, the notion of 'safe space' in participatory arts settings (Higgins and Campbell 2010; Hunter 2008) – has emotional, psychological and relational dimensions in addition to geographic and physical dimensions. Highly 'ethnified' spaces feature many immaterial structures and discourses that enforce and reinforce divisions (Björkdahl 2013: 218); the labels affixed to one's identity are among these. As discussed earlier, for some,

post-conflict separation creates a sense of safety as the partitions keep the perceived enemy at a distance and limit the possibility of incursions. But there is also a profound sense of vulnerability that arises when safety and security are linked primarily to one's ethno-religious identity. Furthermore, the privileging of ethnic identity can minimize or devalue other aspects of the self (e.g. interests, beliefs, aspirations, values) so that opportunities to confront and explore these – whether as individuals or as a form of collective action – are dramatically reduced (Björkdahl 2013: 219).

How then, were the dynamics of the ethnoscape and its narrow conceptualization of identity navigated within each music programme? Staff at the PMC decided at the outset not to ask for or record the ethnic backgrounds of students and workshop participants. 'They get enough of that everywhere else. We all do', the PMC's former director Amela Sarić explained (interview 5 November 2013). This was a political stance that sought to avoid reifying the division of their city, implicitly declaring it illegitimate. Organizational disinterest in engaging with the ethno-religious identity of participants was an important strategy in establishing the PMC as a 'neutral space not tainted with ethnicity' (Björkdahl 2013: 2017). It helped to create an experience of the PMC as a refuge and sanctuary, a haven of acceptance that freed participants from the stress of ethnicized quotidian life in the external ethnoscape (Howell 2015, 2017). At the same time, this stance made it difficult to substantiate the Centre's claims to be a gathering space that was equally attractive to people from all of the town's divided communities, limiting its appeal for some potential funders (Amela Sarić, interview 5 November 2013).

The Mitrovica Rock School takes a proactive approach to facilitating cooperative connections between its students by promoting and placing young players into mixed bands with representation from the two dominant communities of Mitrovica. The strategy facilitates new friendships, emphasizes the common ground of musical tastes and abilities, and normalizes

cross-community collaboration, creating an authentic premise for students in the current era to work on both sides of their city. Pragmatically, it also ensures band rehearsals do not default to the language of the majority (the MRS uses English as a *lingua franca*, given the absence of Serbian Albanian bilingualism). The fact that, as participants become more skilled and experienced, they form their own bands that are also ethnically mixed, as observed and documented by MRS staff, is an indicator that this strategy finds support among participants. Interestingly, MRS students distance themselves from discussions that connect their music-making to the tense political situation they live within. They embrace the mixed bands policy but disengage from the ‘peacebuilding’ implications of the strategy in order to keep their shared interest in music at the centre of their activities. This is understandable: if the MRS experience becomes all about ethnicity and inter-communal gathering then it ceases to be all about the music, and for MRS participants, the music is everything. Hassler-Forest (2014) contends that this position is also more ‘authentic’, proposing that rock musicians the world over are more likely to connect over musical taste or proficiency or personality ahead of ethnic identity. Ethnically mixed bands offer a way to experiment with a different kind of social life without needing to call attention to it, and a way to be ‘normal’ in an abnormal situation. The mixed bands strategy creates opportunities for the negotiation of identities (those imposed from outside as well as those created through the shared collective action of forming a band together), which generates a form of collective power and a potential source of change (Björkdahl 2013: 219).

A divided city’s political and institutional focus on ethnicity can also imply that this is the sole source of social division and difference. In Belfast, other divisions are also well-documented, such as increasing discrimination towards the city’s growing immigrant population (Doebler et al. 2018; Gilligan 2019). As explained above, Breaking Barriers has an overarching mission to promote positive multicultural relations through music and other

arts, aiming to work across and disrupt multiple sociocultural and political divides. To that end, multicultural and multiethnic facilitators work as a team to increase participants' opportunities to engage with music and people from different cultures. These strategies acknowledge the intersectionality of segregation in Northern Ireland and shift the focus to multiple articulations of peaceful living and peace-promoting attitudes, rather than only those addressing the historical inter-communal conflict.

These three contrasting approaches to navigating the terms of recognition that the divided city imposes indicate that a peacescape is not produced merely in the absence or avoidance of labels. Rather, it is the product of values-in-action, and a commitment to the normalization of cooperation and social experimentation based on shared interests and concerns. There is room for difference, but differences are negotiated and explored in safe ways through music activities with specific terms of engagement, providing an authentic and organic social space in which to socialize with an expanded notion of self. This can enable a transformation of identity discourses from those that are conflict-generating to others that are peace-promoting (Björkdahl 2013: 218), laying the groundwork for a new, shared civic identity – the anathema of the ethnoscape – to develop (2013: 215).

Navigating relationships between sounds and people

Much of the ethnomusicological scholarship on music and conflict observes that music that is played, curated, learned, practiced, and/or performed in contested spaces is a possible source of conflict and a potential weapon. Indeed, music is one of the mediums through which space in an ethnoscape is territorialized, people are mobilized, and through which an opposing group can be terrorized. There are documented examples of these kinds of musical deployment in all three of the case sites (Calame and Charlesworth 2006; Cooper 2010; Hogg 2004; Pettan 1998; Sugarman 2010) as well as in other conflicted settings. Such practices prevail in non-conflict sites as well: consider, for example, the relatively uncontroversial

practice of piping classical music through public spaces in order to deter potential gatherings of undesired youths (Cook 2013).

In Northern Ireland, the cooptation of music for political purposes has a long tradition, arguably best exemplified in the annual marching season in July and August when Protestant/Unionist groups organize musical parades that commemorate historic events and that sometimes skirt the boundary lines of Catholic enclaves. Catholic/Republican parades also exist but are less common. Particular tunes and instruments, in addition to the spectacle and scale of the marches, can provoke feelings of dread among listeners who do not identify as Protestant/Unionist (Calame and Charlesworth 2006).

Music was similarly politicized during the Balkan wars. One genre in particular, a ‘newly-composed folk music’ known as *turbo-folk*, became closely associated with nationalistic politics, and in particular, with the war-profiteering elites of the Milošević administration in Serbia and their efforts to control the cultural landscape (Baker 2013; Gordy 1999). Hogg (2004: 223) describes some of the ways that Serbian paramilitary groups deployed loud broadcasts of turbo-folk as an accompaniment to shelling of Muslim or multiethnic residential areas. This provided a calculated soundtrack to wartime confrontations, both reflecting a politicized and radicalized Serb identity, and projecting that identity outwards in ways designed to intimidate or terrorize opponents.

Therefore, the music that features within a music programme in a divided urban setting needs to attend to the meanings or delineations (Green 1999) that could be attached to particular repertoire and instruments. Two of the three music programmes (PMC and Breaking Barriers) did this through provision of music opportunities that referenced well-established ‘world’ community music offerings rather than specific local practices, and through engagement of music facilitators adept at creating entry points for differently skilled participants. The PMC offered local youth access to practices such as African drumming,

Brazilian Samba and Latin percussion, as well as rock music, electronic music and DJing. Its staff musicians visited schools and kindergartens throughout the region on a weekly basis, offering intercultural music workshops that used songs from around the world to connect the participants to distant lands and lessen the feelings of ghettoization that can proliferate in segregated and partitioned environments (Wilson 2006).

Breaking Barriers' programming had a similar focus on engaging young people with diverse and global music offerings, including rock, rap, and participatory percussion. Additionally, as noted in the previous section, its facilitators were adult artists from multicultural backgrounds. Both the PMC's and Breaking Barriers' approaches to music programming were about diverse experiences and new sounds that provided an opportunity to explore new genres of music and with them, an alternative, musical identity.

Challenges did arise in Belfast due to cultural norms that associated particular instruments with specific politico-religious groups. Breaking Barriers programme leaders noted that many participants were sensitive to the associations of particular types of drums. The large *lambeg* evoked for many the Protestant marching band tradition, while the hand-held *bodhrán* was seen to symbolize the Catholic community. The difference in size between these two drums meant that Breaking Barriers' facilitators often used bodhráns in classroom programmes.

Two Protestant leaders explained to Pruitt that the smaller bodhráns were far more practical for group activities, in contrast to much larger lambegs, which were difficult to transport and unwieldy to use. However, some local councils criticized them for using bodhráns without also using lambegs, adamant that a truly inclusive programme should use both. Interestingly, using 'foreign' drums like the djembe had not provoked any such criticism (Pruitt 2013). The experiences at both the PMC and Breaking Barriers demonstrate that while community music's expressive function is often tied to local identities and traditions, in contexts where inclusion across politically enforced, identity-based divisions is a goal, globalized and widely

shared music practices have a strategic and pragmatic value, as well as musical value. These contexts offer a different perspective on arguments for localizing community music offerings.

In contrast to the ‘world music’ approaches of PMC and Breaking Barriers, the Mitrovica Rock School from the outset had an unambiguous focus on rock music. There were several reasons for this: first, Musicians Without Borders’ early conversations in the town revealed considerable local pride in Mitrovica’s pre-war music scene. Rock music was a cultural strength that musicians and youths on both sides of the divide were motivated to develop. Second, it had cultural significance as an alternative to the phenomenon of turbo-folk, which was ubiquitous across the region and dominated the mainstream cultural space (Haskell 2011). For many people in former Yugoslavia, turbo-folk encapsulated a post-war cultural shift away from cosmopolitan values towards the legitimization of nationalism and conspicuous (even criminalized) materialism and consumption (Baker 2013; Šentevska 2014). Consequently, embrace of rock music and/or distancing oneself from turbo-folk were ways of signifying a non-nationalist or anti-division stance (Gordy 1999). Third, rock music reinforced English as the main operational language for the MRS community. Most young people in Kosovo speak English to some level of proficiency, and the language holds additional appeal as the language of many globally admired rock bands, stars and icons. The focus on rock music invited participants to connect over music practices with international credentials that had a history of cooperation in their city.

In each of the three examples, music choices were a mechanism for inviting participants to identify with (and claim a place in) a world beyond their local and everyday environment.

The global music practices and multicultural staff of Breaking Barriers and the PMC communicated cosmopolitan and pluralistic values and invited participants to experience themselves – and identify themselves – as interconnected actors within this multicultural and networked world. In a musical environment dominated by nationalist-inflected commercial

music – turbofolk – the Mitrovica Rock School’s focus on rock music similarly offered a vehicle for discovering an alternative musical world. However, it was also a revival, an effort to revitalize rock music as a shared cultural asset in Mitrovica and a historical source of common civic pride. Taking the concept of revival a step further, rock music can be understood as preserving the relationships and values of Mitrovica’s cosmopolitan and cooperative past. As such, it functions as a vehicle for their reinstatement, as well as a platform through which participants can forge an identity that has worldwide credibility and recognition.

However, considered from a more pragmatic perspective, the most important contribution that the music choices make in these settings is in compelling people to participate in the inter-communal music endeavour, despite the obstructive forces and logistical challenges. As Hassler-Forest explains, the work of these kinds of projects is to ‘create a platform for people to meet through music. That’s it, and that’s enough’ (2014). The urban peacebuilding perspective would add: and to remain in existence long enough for the incubated substantive social transformations to take root and start to flourish. Meeting through music practices that can be linked to ‘the local’ but also offer some distance from it can be seen in all three cases to facilitate the exploration of alternative versions of the self, and even social roles not available beyond the musical practice. We argue that over time, these can be re-enacted and integrated into a general sense of being (Boeskov 2017: 92), a mechanism supporting the incubating potential of a peacescape (Björkdahl 2013: 215).

Concluding comments

In this article, we have engaged Björkdahl’s (2013) theorization of urban peacebuilding to explore and contextualize the operational practices of three music projects seeking to support

inter-communal cooperation and connection in highly segregated societies. Björkdahl's framework urges us to attend to peacebuilding in divided urbanized settings as occurring in spatial, temporal, subjective and sociocultural dimensions in addition to more prominent activities associated with political and structural power. It places attention on practices and discourses that help create or consolidate 'cosmopolitan spaces of tolerance and civility' (2013: 215), transforming ethnoscaples into peacescapes. Björkdahl suggests that even when these practices remain contained to specific people, places and times, their value is in their potential to act as an incubator for larger social transformations towards peace. The incubator may be a place of social experimentation and relationship-building, where a shared civic identity can be developed (2013: 215).

Our findings indicate that music-making as a strategy within peacebuilding at the urban scale offers three useful contributions. First, music-making contributes towards the transformation of zones within the divided urban space into shared cosmopolitan and neutral space. This includes dedicated neutral space (such as in the branches of the Mitrovica Rock School), internationally inflected cosmopolitan space (such as the PMC, which later became neutral space as its international staff departed and the municipal council assumed ownership), as well as temporary spaces of neutrality and cosmopolitanism (such as Breaking Barriers' many different workshop sites, the concerts presented by mixed bands in Mitrovica attracting mixed local audiences, and the Skopje Summer School). In addition to these physical zones, we observe the ways that music practices create ephemeral and liminal neutral spaces, a crucial mechanism for music's transformative potential (Boeskov 2017), constituted through and bounded by the sounds, interactions and accepted practices of music-making. The construction of such neutral and cosmopolitan space is 'a main objective of urban peacebuilding' given the absence of public shared space (Björkdahl 2013: 217).

The second contribution is that the transformed space disrupts the relentless ethnicization of space and practices that characterizes the external ethnoscape and invites the exploration of alternative identity discourses and practices. In the spaces created by these music projects, ethnicity ceases to be ‘the main thing, the main principle of who you are’ (Ines, PMC participant, interviewed 20 November 2013); instead, a new ‘shared civic identity’ can emerge (Björkdahl 2013: 215) that connects people through what they have in common, with their shared interests and experiences in music forming the foundation for this.

Its third contribution is symbolic. Creating an urban culture of peace requires creating a peace consciousness and Björkdahl notes the role that monuments such as peace parks or peace bridges make by offering a visual expression of the goal to the public imaginary. We contend that such symbolic contributions can also be audible, projected across space and time as sounds that model cooperation and creative responses to difference and division.

The work is anything but straightforward. Our examination of three contrasting music projects in three divided settings has highlighted the contradictions that may arise in relation to how the wider conflict is referenced and navigated within the boundaries of the music-making. The relationships between people, the music space, and the wider territorialized context are in constant tension. It is not always practical to bypass engagement with the existence of the conflict, and engagement with its terms might be interpreted as undermining the peace-promoting efforts of the work. How practitioners grapple with these tensions needs to be specific to context. Yet, the grappling is essential for the work to retain its integrity and the trust of participants.

Music therefore has both functional and symbolic contributions to bring to peacebuilding at the urban scale. It can be a drawcard towards working cooperatively, interacting socially, and building peaceful relations, even if participants are not initially driven to be peacebuilders or activists. It expands the worlds of the participants, and therefore, potentially, their world-

views, providing a way to experience distance from the conflict and explore an alternative social world. The inter-communal performances and recordings produced have the potential to represent this alternative social world more widely, an amplified example of what Christopher Small (1998: 13) contends to be the meaning of the act of musicking: to model ideal relationships as the participants in the performance imagine them to be. When projected audibly and gesturally across the divided landscape, these musical endeavours thus comprise a sonic rendering of a possible future, as well as a present call-to-action for those who are ready to respond.

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