The European Union, Brexit, and Ethnomusicology: European Perspectives[1]

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Abstract Discussing some central developments of the history of the European Union through song, this article first aims at exemplifying how this history, as well as contemporary hidden emotions and fears can be uncovered by a deeper analysis of music repertoires. Focusing on case studies by, among others, Advanced Chemistry, Killing Joke, Laibach, and reflecting on the role of folk music in this context, the article analyses the broader Europe/EU-related social, ideological, and political discourses beneath the surface contents and structures of song. This paper argues for that a deeper understanding of the various discursive layers of European identities performed in music can only be comprehensively achieved if folk music is approached and contextualized within its broader cultural sphere that includes, fusion forms, modern songwriting, and related popular music genres. Likewise, contextualizing Brexit-related musical discourses regarding issues of nationalism and Europeanness, the article calls for a wider reflection on the position of folk music research in ethnomusicology and the role of ethnomusicology within this European context.

On 31st January 2020, the United Kingdom finally left the European Union (EU). The debates surrounding the so-called 'Brexit' (i.e. 'the *British exit* from the European Union') since the consultative referendum on 23 June 2016, when 52% of the electorates voted for leaving, were shaped by fake news, confusion and a sense of helplessness on all sides. At the same time, the situation not only evoked reflections on what it actually means to be 'European,' but also how these shifting sands affected research (and researchers) in a world that is being simultaneously shaped by growing processes of 'thick globalization' (Held et al., 2003) and by increasing counter-reactions in the form of growing nationalism and seclusion. This broader context has become apparent in various seemingly singular, yet highly interconnected events, such as the migration crisis in 2015, increasing right wing activities, as well as the production of fear-induced resentment against the European Union in mainstream media. None of these issues came out of the blue, but were preceded and/or related to earlier incidents, as is evident in their thematization in various songs from popular and folk fusion music, such as 'Fremd im eigenen Land' ['Foreign in One's Own Country'] (1992) by the German Old School Hip Hop band Advanced Chemistry or 'European Super State' (2004) by the British post-punk/ alternative band Killing Joke.

Initially, this article maps key developments in the history of the European Union through song. It hereby aims at exemplifying the EU's historical development and suggests how contemporary emotions and fears can be revealed by a deeper analysis of the music, particularly the lyrics. Applying a Critical Discourse Analyses that is partly also intertwined with a Multimodal Critical Discourse Analysis (Way and McKerrell, 2018), the article aims to highlight the broader social, ideological, and political discourses contained within songs and their subtextual meanings. The selected examples discussed here are a reminder of how quickly preceding events are forgotten and how little is apparently learnt from history. The social and collective amnesia of past conflicts and events calls for a deeper historical awareness, and a tighter international networking of scholars working in music studies in order to maintain and continually represent this knowledge publicly.

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[1] This article is based on a keynote, entitled *Ethnomusicology in the 21st Century: A European Perspective* at the annual meeting of the British Forum for Ethnomusicology in Newcastle (12 April 2019).

This article therefore similarly calls for a deeper reflection on the role and conceptualization of folk musics within ethnomusicology and the broader academy in this context. Anglo-American popular music, including rap and hip hop, plays a central role in the subsequent narrative seemingly conveying a much more neutral and integrative stance in contrast to folk music. The latter often seems to represent a much more (ethnic-)national(ist) perspective, particularly in a global transcultural context. Yet, while the sound of, for instance, rock music can likewise be instrumentalized, folk music can also offer alternative perspectives. However, this only becomes apparent with a broader conceptual perspective that goes beyond still prevailing genre-related dichotomies—not only between folk and, for instance, popular music, but also concerning the position of folk music research in ethnomusicology. Consequently, this article argues explicitly that integrating the analysis of folk music(s) in conversation with other musical genres is necessary for our work to realize its fullest impact in society.

Brexit in a Globalized World: Historical and Theoretical Reflections

Since the end of the Cold War in 1991, there has been a clear shift towards 'thick globalization,' as it was termed by David Held and his authors' team in *Global Transformations* (2003, p.21–22). 'Thick globalization' can be described as a type of global flow constellation characterized by factors such as a growing interconnectedness, high intensity and velocity (apparent, for example, in instant communication), as well as by a deep stratification on all levels. Held et al. (2003) were also precise in analysing how the process of globalization—here defined as 'a process (or set of processes) which embodies a transformation in the spatial organization of social relations and transactions' (2003, p.16)—has been repeatedly interrupted. Examples of the latter are not only the national movements of the nineteenth century, but also the two World Wars and the Cold War, and perhaps also the impact of the 2020 COVID-19 crisis. Yet, pursued until the late 1990s, this profound and multi-dimensional analysis could not predict how strongly established boundaries would be further transformed in the twenty-first century. While the end of the Cold War initially fueled hopes for a new world order, of which an expanding European Union with its multi-layered organizational structure was a positive vision, the emerging power vacuum also started to lead to unprecedented global instabilities.

With developments reaching far back into the Cold War period, the events of 9/11 marked a clear dissolution of the normative historical binaries of peace and war (Münkler, 2015). With war activities increasingly at the hands of groups outside governments and a global situation of, what has been termed as, 'hybrid warfare' by political theorists (ibid.), this development has been interrelated with the displacement of whole populations and the increasing dissolution of multiple other previously clear boundaries. This transformation has also been apparent in the growing emergence of a (partly) authoritarian neo-nationalism (Eger and Valdez, 2015), the rise of far-right movements on a global scale (e.g. Worth, 2017), and, as some authors argue, the replacement of the earlier hegemonic structures of imperialism and colonialization by neo-liberal formats (e.g. Gathii, 2005). Many of these issues have become particularly apparent on the European continent, which is not only globally interconnected due to, for instance, colonial histories, but, as is often forgotten, has also been shaped by the Cold War divide on multiple levels.

Set against this background, it is evident that many EU-related debates have been shaped by a growing Euro-skepticism. The Brexit debate that emerged in 2015/16 has been the most prominent example, but echoed earlier critical global discussions around issues such as political hegemony and the privileging of transnational structures over local sovereignty.[2] This 'sceptic' position, as interpreted from Held et al.'s (2003) categorization,[3] suggests that there is only one homogenizing Europe, often identified closely with Brussels' bureaucracy, and against which, a positively viewed nationalism and separation appear as justified forms of resistance. Media coverage suggests that there was a complexity of sources driving Brexit, amongst which regional resistance to London-dominated public life and governance were prominent (Clarke, Goodwin and Whitley, 2017). At the same time, the question of 'being European' (a term mostly associated with the EU) has never been so consciously debated since the Brexit vote on 23 June 2016—also in a positive sense.

However, there appeared just one certainty throughout all positions within the heated Brexit debates—nobody has known what to do, expect, or prepare inside and outside of the EU. There may have been one exception: After the voting, the growing realization that everything would presumably get much more complicated became increasingly evident on both sides,[4] although this should have been apparent from historical knowledge. This article will thus first sketch the emergence of the modern EU through the lenses of popular and folk music examples that reflect on, and relate to the different stages of this story, before concluding with some broader thoughts on the future for folk musics and the role of specifically European ethnomusicologies.

Europe: Historical Key Points and Musical Perspectives

Despite their growing presence and virtual ubiquity in the second decade of the new millennium, keywords such as 'radical right,' 'riots' or 'asylum seekers' are not new, particularly from a German perspective. While the rise of neo-nationalism, especially during the post-reunification period after 1989, has been the result of a complex interplay of local-global reasons (Sweers, 2015), the modern developments clearly resembled earlier patterns. I will thus start from the so-called *Polyphony of Cultures* project (Fassnacht and Sweers, 2006/8; Sweers, 2015), which was undertaken in Rostock, East Germany, between 2005–2008, and aimed at raising acceptance through tolerance in conflict situations. At the centre was a CD production with migrant musicians; Germans playing world music and intercultural music projects (released in 2006). The CD was accompanied by CD-ROM (released in 2008) that, besides background information, contained a didactic teaching aid to deal with neo-Nazi music in the classroom, as right-wing extremist parties had been distributing free CDs with ambivalent, yet legal material on school yards since 2004/2005.

I had subsequently been giving talks about the project but intended to stop this for good around 2014, as the project seemed increasingly to address a singular event that had become largely historical. Yet around 2015—at a point when Europe experienced a renewed wave of extreme migration—I had to realize that the project's background story, while more than twenty years in the past, had become more relevant than ever. One might also wonder why and how nobody seemed to have learnt from the events of the early 1990s, that so clearly displayed many causes for migrant-related aggressions and the popularity of nationalist movements.

The Lichtenhagen events can be briefly sketched as follows (see Sweers, 2015, for further references): In 1992, two years after reunification, Germany faced a major wave of trans-European migrant moves. This period also marked a clear shift of asylum-seeking processes—while in 1986 74.8% had come from the then still so-called 'Third World', in 1993 72.1% came from Europe (Bade and Oltmer, 2005), predominantly South-Eastern Europe. In summer 1992, a wave of migrants from Romania—mostly Roma—had arrived in a completely desolated North-East German Rostock, that, lacking any infrastructure and housing, was unable to handle the situation. The Roma had to camp outside the admission office for asylum seekers, while the growing devastation angered the unemployed and disillusioned the local community. In August 1992, approximately 2000 neo-Nazis set the building on fire. While the Romanians had already been evacuated, the building also hosted 100 Vietnamese contract workers who were stuck inside. Although no-one was seriously injured, even a decade after the actual events it left a long-term trauma on many sides. This trauma amongst others led to the establishment of the *Polyphony of Cultures* project around 2003/4. While the events were clearly the result of a complete failure of authorities on multiple levels, including the handling of right-wing extremist movements and the ignorance of local needs, it nevertheless led to the subsequent restriction of asylum laws in Germany (Prenzel, 2017).

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[2] For a broader overview of the discourses at the turn of the millennium see Garmain (2000).

[3] Held et al. (2003). A sceptic position perceives globalization as a myth; rather it is concerned with the emergence of larger blocks in which national governments remain extremely powerful (ibid., p.2, 4–7).

[4] See Troitiño, Kerikmäe, and Chochia (2018) for a scholarly discussion of the broader context.

These events were paralleled by a period of broader transformation in Europe on a political and economic level, as well as with regard to a growing consciousness of migration-related identity issues (Van Mol and de Valk, 2016). This specific sociopolitical atmosphere was clearly reflected in contemporary popular music, most prominently in Advanced Chemistry's 'Fremd im eigenen Land' ['Foreign in One's Own Country'] (1992), that concisely addresses the developments that led to the kind of Europe one has been encountering during the second decade of the new millennium. Founded in 1987 by Toni L (Toni Landomini), Linguist (Kofi Yakpo), Gee-One (Gonzales Maldonado), DJ Mike MD (Michael Jean-Pierre Dippon) and Torch (Frederik Hahn) in Heidelberg, the band, as well as the individual activities of its members constituted one of the central groundbreaking acts within the then-emerging German Hip Hop scene. This becomes specifically evident in 'Fremd im eigenen Land' that is discussed below as a tight discursive interplay of lyrics, structural arrangement, sound, and imagery. The previously sketched Rostock events, that were just one of several, partly fatal attacks on migrants (Heß, 1996),[5] are addressed in the song's newsreader introduction.

Taken from the 8pm ARD news from 26 August 1992,[6] the speaker, describing the events of the previous night, reports the concerns regarding further riots from the Radical Right in Rostock that is described as having become a gathering point for radicals from the entire Federal Territory of Germany. By including this newsreader section, the band relates the song's content and performers' individual experiences to a broader, publicly acknowledged German political narrative.

'Fremd im eigenen Land' consists of three rapped parts that are separated by a refrain (see Table 1). Musically, the lyrically dense song is clearly recognizable as German 'old school' Hip Hop that still experimented with then-available sampling techniques: Based on a percussion and bass loop, it specifically uses abstract instrumental sound samples, such as that of a bell-like synthesizer I-V-VIII sequence that is used as an interjection or as intensification of dramatic/ central segments of the text (e.g. during the last sentence of the newsreader), and other shorter samples that are similarly used as exclamation mark-like interjections or (as evident with the string sounds) for the intensification of the dramatic atmosphere, constructing an uplifting news account that elevates it above more simplistic episodic narration. The actual refrain is relatively short and followed by a brief, dance-like bass- and trumpet-sound heavy sequence that abruptly jumps into the next part.

Min. 0:00-0:29	0:30-2:08	2:08-2:22	2:22-4:53	3:24-3:38	3:39-4:49	4:50
Intro: newsreader:	Part I: Perspective Linguist/ (Torch)	Hook/ Refrain	Part II: Perspective Tony L	Hook/ Refrain	Part III: Perspective Linguist/ (Torch)	Outro: newsreader:

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[5] See Han (2015) for further details regarding the song's background.

[6] The 'Arbeitsgemeinschaft der öffentlich-rechtlichen Rundfunkanstalten der Bundesrepublik Deutschland' ['Association of the public service broadcasters of the Federal Republic of Germany,' ARD] is a public German TV station that was founded in 1950. The 15-minute news at 20:00 count as the most popular news broadcasting in Germany.

Riots in Rostock	…who address their African-German identity and encounters with prejudices. Political situation in Germany, 1992. End: 'Not a foreigner and yet a stranger.'[7]	dance-like sampled instrumental	…who addresses his Italian identity (Intro: 'I have a green passport…')[8]. 2:31-2:36: Scratching and football whistle sample Situation of 'guest workers' in Germany End: 'Not accepted in one's own land/ Not a foreigner and yet a stranger.' [9]	dance-like sampled instrumental	Intro: 'I have a green passport…' … address their situation in general .. comment on the post-reunification situation and asylum-seeker laws. End: 'I have a green passport with a golden eagle. But here I am a foreigner.'[10]	weather forecast

Table 1: Overall structure of 'Fremd im eigenen Land' (1992) by German Hip Hop group Advanced Chemistry.

The lyrics address the broader political atmosphere of the immediate post-reunification era after 1990 through the use of a first-person narrative that represents the individual experiences of the performers. The song therefore constructs an atmosphere shaped by the fear of foreigners, and particularly asylum seekers abusing the system, which is instrumentalized by right-wing extremist parties. Set against this broader framework, the rappers, whilst all born in Germany and of migrant background, reflect on their own experiences of prejudice, such as remarks about their appearance and, as evident in part 1 and 3, stereotyped questions of 'Are you ever going back home' (which is countered by 'To Heidelberg?') or 'Are you from America?'. They therefore amplify the emotional affect of the neutral official newsreader style by adding the perspective of those actually affected by the events of that time. At the same time, Advanced Chemistry goes beyond a victimized position due to the inherent anger that is evident in the narrators' almost shout-like, fast performative styles, the rapped statements, as well as in the video's visuals.[11]

Some details of the lyrics as well as of the video images appear dated from a 2021 perspective, e.g. when Linguist speaks of and displays (in the video) his 'green pass with the golden eagle' at the beginning of part I and at the end of part III. This example points to relicts from the pre-reunification period: The West German passports were dark green until 1988, after which they—as well as later the blue East German passport—were replaced by the Bordeaux-red colored European one from 1988 (West Germany) or 1990 (East Germany) (Reisen, 2012). This likewise echoes the controversy around the colour of pre-EU British passports in the Brexit debate, and their reintroduction post-Brexit, as a symbol of island-state independence by Brexiteers. Yet, many thematic issues and key phrases of repeatedly expressed public fear from that period (e.g. 'loss of living quality' in the face of migration, 'exceeded acceptance capacity' of asylum seekers, 'asylum seekers must leave') mentioned in the lyrics appear disturbingly timeless from a 2021 perspective.

Within the history of German rap and hip hop, Advanced Chemistry, as well as 'Fremd im eigenen Land,' are representative of the earlier development of German hip hop ('old-school Hip Hop') that had only just become more widely popular at that time and included artists such as Sabrina Setlur, Xavier Naidoo, Die Fantastischen Vier or Massive Töne. Advanced Chemistry, who also addressed Afro-German identity issues, were thus a marker of the growing awareness in the 1990s of Germany as a country of migration. As band member Kofi Yakpo (aka 'Linguist') pointed out in retrospect (Yakpo, 2004), the musicians initially started to rap in English, which constituted a significant anchor point in their identity formation. Even in the late 1980s, singing in German would have still been regarded as too overtly racist, and was, in the case of the Afro-Germans, also questioned. This is reflected in the verse line 'Is it so unusual that an Afro-German speaks his native language?' Yet having grown up in a German-speaking culture, the subsequent shift to German, grounded on a preceding globally anchored English-speaking self-confidence, also musically with regard to rap techniques, only seemed consequent to the band members, while the self-description as Afro-German was a clear provocation against established prejudices, such as 'You cannot be German and black' (Yakpo, 2004; Hagen-Jeske, 2016). The choice of music—rap and hip hop—is also a reflection of this complicated situation. For instance, while folk and even then-popular World Music-related sounds would have pointed to (often also ethnically-based) difference, separation, and exclusion, rap and hip hop and rather appeared as a more neutral and inclusive choice of sound-related German, European, and Western identity at that time.

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[7] 'Kein Ausländer und doch ein Fremder.'

[8] 'Ich habe einen grünen Pass.'

[9] 'Nicht anerkennt im eigenen Land/ Kein Ausländer und doch ein Fremder.'

[10] 'Ich habe einen grünen Adler mit n'em goldenen Pass drauf. Doch bin ich fremd hier.'

[11] See YouTube: skafaceaka, 'Advanced Chemistry—Fremd im eigenen Land.' https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hU5j_RqUjas (accessed 15 April 2020).

Thus grounded in reflections on post World War II-racism in (West-) Germany, 'Fremd im eigenen Land' also addressed the contemporary situation in multiple layers—be it with regard to the 1992 Rostock arson attack or the emerging European vision, as is likewise evident in the passports displayed in video and lyrics, of that time that only becomes apparent with further contextualization: Preceded by a long pre-history that included the foundation of the European Coal and Steel Community in 1951 as the core of the future EU, the Treaty of Rome led to the foundation of the European Economic Community in 1958.[12] This structure, which consisted of a number of different European Communities, saw its first enlargement in 1973 when Britain and Gibraltar joined.[13] Specifically, the year 1992 marked the coining of the term European Union' after the ratification of the Maastricht Treaty, which resulted in the emergence of the European Trade Union. Further outcomes were a common security/ defense and legal system, the introduction of the Euro, and unique regulations that allowed free movement. As reflected in the lyrics of part 1 of 'Fremd im eigenen Land', the ideal of a borderless Europe was, somewhat similar to the chosen musical genre and sound, clearly one of the most desired outcomes of these developments by Europeans of Advanced Chemistry's generation. At the same time, the lyrics of part 1 point out a context, in which the members of Advanced Chemistry had to face multiple problems due to their experiences of Otherness: Crossing the borders, Afro-Germans like Yakpo, unlike all other travelers, had to display their passport. And yet, the lyrics also articulate the band members' awareness of their privileged free movement, which is set in contrast to the enforced situation of the refugees in 1992. This example can thus be read as the marker of a profoundly shifting Europe after the end of the Cold War, resulting in a growing, also violent nationalism on the one hand, and, on the other hand, an increasing articulation of new European identities that are, rather than in folk or world music, articulated in popular music-related genres like rap and hip hop, as well as in fusion styles.

Euro-skepticism and the Instrumentalization of Anglo-American Popular Music

While Advanced Chemistry's song was later described as the soundscape of the post-reunification grey-zone era in Germany (Han, 2018), its lyrics also reflected some optimism regarding the positive prospects of a growing European Union (Sedelmeier, 2014). On 1 May 2004, the EU saw the Eastern Expansion with eight former communist countries, that had partly just been (re-)founded (Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Slovakia, Slovenia), plus Malta and Cyprus joining. Despite the enthusiasm by many established EU and particularly the new members, a lingering uneasiness was already evident in contemporary discourses. The failures during the Yugoslav Wars and particularly the Kosovo Crisis (1999), as well as the growing financial austerity that followed the decision for a European monetary union in the 1990s, clearly fueled a growing Europe skepticism,[14] especially in regions of economic trouble: This became also apparent in East Germany that underwent its second post-reunification trauma at that time—a high unemployment rate peaking with 20.6% in 2005.[15]

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[12] Already in 1946, Winston Churchill had called for a United States of Europe (Churchill, 1946).

[13] See Loth (2014) for more details on the history of the EU.

Set against this background, it might not be surprising that songs such as 'Europa—Jugend—Revolution' ['Europe—Youth—Revolution'] (2004) by the band Carpe Diem ['Seize the Day'] emerged, which talks about the shattered vision of a unified Europe. At first listen, the song evokes the atmosphere of a hard-rock sound with broad electric guitars, bass and drums and rough male vocals of which especially the catchy, shouted sing-along refrain ('Europa—Jugend—Revolution') is audible. Again, the lyrics' actual ideology that is conveyed by a conscious choice of specific key phrases in the specific verses—that require, in contrast to the loud refrain, a more focused listening—only becomes apparent through a broader Critical Discourse Analysis.

The song suggests that the current Europe exists under 'the wrong power' which has been destructive by 'fueling up' conflicts that led to 'brother fighting against brother' (for a detailed analysis see Wolf, 2006). While, without further contextualization, this song appears as an early criticism of Europe by the increasingly unemployed youth generation of that time, particularly the above-mentioned phrases as well as the publication context point to a specific right-wing extremist ideology. The song was actually taken from the 2005 edition of the so-called *Schulhof CD* [School Yard CD], entitled *Der Schrecken aller linken Spiesser und Pauker* [*The Horror of all Left-Wing Philistines and Teachers*]. Freely distributed by right-wing extremist parties on schoolyards in the North-East German county Mecklenburg-West Pomerania in 2005, the CD exemplifies the strategic blurring of established identities based on the dichotomy of extreme right versus (extreme) left at that time. The cover, as well as many music tracks, convey leftist images, sounds (several songs are set in singer-songwriter style) and ambivalent phrases, as in the case of 'Europa—Jugend—Revolution!' The actual meaning of the song thus only becomes apparent with a further broader political contextualization of the band: Founded in Stuttgart, Carpe Diem has been under observation by the German Verfassungsschutz [Office for the Protection of the Constitution] as it was attached to the Neue Rechte [New Right] movement—a well-connected trans-European network of right-wing extremist groupings (Raabe and Dornbusch, 2005; Wolf, 2006). Set against this contextualization, the seemingly neutral text—masked by a driving hard-rock sound—is not relating to Brussels's bureaucratic EU politics, but rather points to 'the Jews' (who are not directly mentioned) as the destructive power. The sonic signifiers of driving rock sound therefore to a certain extent amplify the multimodal message of the song which is explicitly antisemitic through the re-contextualization of cover images, lyrics, and violent musical sounds with the extreme antisemitic views of the Neue Rechte. This multimodal re-contextualization thus demonstrates how seemingly innocuous music, text and image can construct divisive messages when understood in their local socio-political context, particularly problematized here by widespread distribution to school children.

The prominence of songs like Carpe Diem's 'Europa—Jugend—Revolution' not only led to the development of a didactic teaching aid in the aforementioned *Polyphony of Cultures* project (Fassnacht and Sweers, 2006/8), but also informed the repertoire of the related CD: We consciously decided against including too explicit German folk material, i.e. local-traditional repertoires and instruments, as well as (song-) repertoires categorized as such in the broader public, as especially the latter was still too strongly tied to a nationalist stance we had clearly wanted to avoid in this situation. Tellingly, most German performers presented on the CD had decided for ‘World Music’ styles (e.g. Latin-American music), while the only local folk tune included here, a dance tune from Mecklenburg-West Pomerania (track 15 ‘Schiefer’ by Bilwesz), was arranged in such way—a harp-dominated sound combined with concertina and percussion—that its fusion-sound was not recognizable as ‘German’ at all.

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[14] See Oberkirch and Schild (2010) for a differentiated study on the various levels of the so-called Euro skepticism.

[15] Institut Arbeit und Qualifikation der Universität Duisburg-Essen, 'Arbeitslosenquoten, Deutschland, West- und Ostdeutschland 1975–2019.' *Sozialpolitik aktuell in Deutschland* (abbIV 35), 2020. http://www.sozialpolitik-aktuell.de/tl_files/sozialpolitik-aktuell/_Politikfelder/Arbeitsmarkt/Datensammlung/PDF-Dateien/abbIV35.pdf (accessed 15 April 2020).

As is evident here, the choice of musical genre can become a strong and tricky statement regarding the process of identity and integration in contexts which have been shaped by national(ist) discourses. As indicated in the case of Advanced Chemistry, one pattern that has been evolving within many related European themes has been the preference for more neutral, border-transgressing Anglo-American styles, in this case, rap and hip hop. However, this has likewise been surrounded by strategies of neutralization of ethnic-national connotations (in the case of folk music) and deception (in the case of right-wing extremist rock music).

European History Writing and Local Folk Song

The collocation of folk song with extreme ethno-nationalism has become a relatively new phenomenon across various European nations, as well as in Germany (e.g. Richardson, 2017; Spracklen, 2013). It became likewise evident in the fragile situation of a transforming Eastern Europe in the new millennium. Significantly, Carpe Diem’s song was released when Europe underwent further profound transformation due to the multi-layered change of Eastern Europe, which was intertwined with the emergence of new forms of nationalism. While this situation has been viewed as a threat particularly in ‘the West’ or became indeed a source of new conflict,[16] it was, in Eastern Europe itself, interconnected with a search of identity within a newly found independence and a counter-reaction against the increasingly ‘thick globalization’ flows (Held *et al*., 2003). Consequently, this identity formation was intertwined with a revision and re-reflection on the earlier East Block/Soviet/Cold War history (e.g. Beissinger, 2009; Balázs, 2014). Yet the new national historiographies were also confronted with earlier conflicting historical transnational issues left unresolved due to the Sovietification processes—on musical and cultural levels as well.

How strongly this also affects academic research, particularly with regard to history writing, became apparent during my fieldwork in Latvia between 2000–2008 and during a subsequent preparation for an encyclopedia entry on modern Latvian music (Sweers, 2019a). Torn between a struggle of constant occupation (and oppression) and a consequent search for national identity, the three Baltic countries Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania had been a complex jigsaw of multi-ethnic identities. The profound changes from the Second World War and Holocaust, as well as the re-settlements of German populations has made for an extremely complex ethno-religious social context in the Baltic States.

Each culture has been leaving its musical traces, hereby contributing to a highly heterogenous musical narrative, as evident in the urban classical music culture of Riga that entailed a mosaic of international performers (Brauns, 1980; Sweers, 2009). The central national trauma, however, was constituted by the deportation of a major portion of Latvian cultural and intellectual representatives to the Gulags during the Soviet occupation, which raises questions regarding the balance between Latvians and Russians (who had migrated to the region after 1945) in Latvia. This, however, easily overshadows the long presence of the Old Believers who had fled Czarist Russia in the seventeenth century (Hoppenbrouwers, 2006). In 2017/2018

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[16] This was already reflected in 2004; see Detlev Pollack, ‘Nationalismus und Europaskepsis in den postkommunistischen Staaten Mittel- und Osteuropas,’ Bonn: Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung, 2004. http://www.bpb.de/apuz/28111/nationalismus-und-europaskepsis-in-den-postkommunistischen-staaten-mittel-und-osteuropas?p=all (accessed 15 April 2020).

I therefore found myself in a dilemma that illustrates the entanglement of researchers within growing nationalist discourses: Relativizing the Latvians (who were still in the process of securing their culture by a strong national emphasis) by highlighting the presence of the approximately 30% residents of Russian background[17] too strongly, could therefore be offensive. Yet it could also be taken as a further justification for a new occupation, especially after U.S. President Donald Trump indicated that NATO would not intervene in the Baltics (Fisher, 2016). Can we thus talk about a (however flawed) self-defensive or protectionist nationalism here? During my fieldwork, it became clearly evident that minorities and 'non-citizens' were disadvantaged by Latvian cultural funds, for instance—a recurring issue during an interview with a Russian Old Orthodox music group, which served as a performative role model for the extinct vocal styles in the revival of Latvian music traditions (Sweers, 2009). While I ended up with the politically correct, but vague sentence pointing out that 'The population and, thus, music traditions in Latvia completely changed after the Second World War' (Sweers, 2019a, p. 1317), this situation raises the (unsolved) question of how to properly handle folk musics shaped by political and ethnic-national(ist) discourses within a broader research context.

As I would argue here, much ethnomusicological research on European national musical traditions has tended to avoid complex ethno-nationalist questions and rather focused on historical research of music-as-object. Given the complexity of, as in this case, likewise ethno-religious identities, it seems that the still existent epistemological approach to singular, historical 'national' narratives cannot realistically be useful in the 21st century anymore, if applied exclusively, despite the inherent political challenges of alternative perspectives. This likewise includes the supercultural level (cf Slobin, 1993). For example, I also recall the enthusiasm of finally belonging to a trans-continental political-economic network when Latvia joined the EU in May 2004. Yet I also remember an interview with Ilga Reizniece, front singer of the Latvian *postfolklore* fusion band Iļģi, who worried whether the Latvians—who had previously been subject to becoming New Soviet Persons—might be transformed into 'New Euro Persons' (Reizniece in Sweers, 2014). Relating to Iļģi's musical approach that combined local Latvian traditional repertoire, such as the *dainas*, and revived singing and instrumental performance styles with (global) Anglo-American rock elements and instruments, she hoped to contribute to 'a national sentiment that is positive' (Reizniece in Sweers, 2014, p. 483). This clearly constitutes not only a contrast, but also an alternative to the German experiences of nationalism during the Nazi Era (1933–1945) that led to a long-lasting rejection or politization of folk music (Sweers, 2005b).

In fact, North German solutions (as evident with the previous example of Bilwesz, but also with singers like Achim Reichel or even shanty bands like Santiano) have indeed been a fusion of English-Scottish-Irish folk and Western rock styles with local German and Low-German repertoires in order to avoid ethnic-national connotations. While also Electric Folk seems to convey a much more transnational interpretation of traditional material, this approach can again likewise easily turn into an ambivalent situation as is evident in readings of Celtic symbolism in music as indicators of white pan-European supremacy. As happened with the British *Oysterband* during its live concerts (Ian Telfer in Sweers, 2005a, p. 260). Especially in the first quarter of this century, this range of concepts, which could only briefly be indicated here, thus calls for further reflections on the notion of the national in folk song in Europe. Given that singular nationalist narratives around folk song and national identity cannot realistically be maintained in the 21st century, this particularly also calls for addressing still prevailing specific ethnic-national connotations, its challenges, pitfalls, turning points towards nationalist traces, yet also potential alternatives—that become specifically apparent through musical lenses.

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[17] The numbers vary, depending on whether Ukrainians and Belo-Russians are included here. Most Russians hold the status of 'Non-Citizens' (Morris, 2005) without Latvian or Russian passport. European Commission, 'Latvia: Demographic Situation, Languages and Religions.' (13 February 2020). https://eacea.ec.europa.eu/national-policies/eurydice/content/population-demographic-situation-languages-and-religions-40_en (accessed 15 April 2020).

‘European Super State’

At the end of the first decade of the new millennium, the EU became a recognizable trans-continental and, thus, global unit under the Treaty of Lisbon. Signed in 2007 and enacted in 2009, the Lisbon Treaty also limited the impact of individual member states, because that situation had previously hampered the political power of the supra-national EU. It is not clear, however, when exactly the division between a growing individual nation(s) versus the—inaccessible, domineering and bureaucratic—Brussels-based EU started, despite all nations directly electing and sending their representatives to the EU.[18]

This increasingly visible EU and growing articulation of a European identity intertwined with the ideal of active participation, and its growing bureaucracy was clearly thematized in the song ‘European Super State’ (from the album *Absolute Dissent* 2010) by the British post-punk/industrial band Killing Joke.[19] Rare in depicting a positive EU image—front singer Jaz Coleman has been known to be pro-European (e.g. Coleman in Harcott, 2010), the song urges listeners to become active in creating the New Europe. Musically mixing elements from dance punk, hard house and electronic body music (Doran, 2010) into a highly dramatic soundscape, the song can be read as an urgent warning to secure and join national forces in order to prevent, bureaucracy and NATO taking over; the supposed two central enemies of Europe.[20] ‘European Super State’ is further significant in that its lyrics summarize significant socio-cultural and political discursive issues with regard to the EU at that time, including:

- the heterogeneous political perception of EU-Europe (here even described as ‘Empire’);
- the lyrics’ reference to the dominance of Judeo-Christian morality—which emphasizes a white pan-European identity, while others, such as historical Islamic cultures, have no place;
- the repeated usage of the phrase ‘Old Europe,’ which had been ‘Word of the Year 2003’ after it had been employed by U.S. Secretary of Defense, Donald Rumsfeld, when the European States refused to support the U.S. in its war against Iraq.[21]

The content is also supported by the music video, that, in the style of an animated silent movie, hereby relating to the First World War era, falls back on clichéd European musical and cultural images (Germany is represented by a beer-drinking male, Ireland by a female clog dancer, or France by a pantomimic male performer), while depicting the two central threats as cylinder-wearing nineteenth century bankers (representing bureaucracy) and gas-mask wearing First World War solider armies (representing NATO). ‘European Super State’ hereby clearly reflects on the complex and partly contradictory discursive situation of that time: For example, despite the pro-European stance, the video and song have also been read as anti-European, not least because of the negative NATO imagery, which, at the end of the video, threaten the European states that have just managed to overcome their bureaucratic problems.

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[18] *Aus Politik und Zeitgeschichte* 18 (2010): *Europa nach Lissabon*. Bonn: Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung https://www.bpb.de/apuz/32782/europa-nach-lissabon (accessed 15 April 2020). A central issue of EU-related debates was also the special status of Britain.

[19] See the comments to YouTube: KillingJokeOfficial, Killing Joke, ‘European Super State.’ https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=71POjwXIBKw (accessed 15 April 2020).

[20] Because the Supreme Allied Commander is always provided by the U.S. North Atlantic Treaty Organization, ‘Factsheet: The NATO Command Structure’ (February 2018). https://www.nato.int/nato_static_fl2014/assets/pdf/pdf_2018_02/1802-Factsheet-NATO-Command-Structure_en.pdf (accessed 15 April 2020).

[21] U.S. Department of Defense, ‘Secretary Rumsfeld Briefs at the Foreign Press Center.’ (22 January 2003). http://www.defense.gov/transcripts/transcript.aspx?transcriptid=1330 (accessed 15 April 2020). The expression was already used by Marx in 1848 (Peter Roter and Zlatko Šabič, ‘“New” and “old Europe” in the context of the Iraq war and its implications for European security.’ *Perspectives on European Politics and Society* 5(3): 517–542).

However, 'European Super State' remains an exception in its pro-European stance. The public and media-based perception changed from 2007/2008 on, when the initial optimism became overshadowed by the financial and economic crisis with devastating consequences for average populations, which undeniably revealed the weaknesses of the still comparably new structure on many levels. The growing number of Europe-critical perspectives is musically exemplified by the Slovenian band Laibach founded in 1980. Already the German name of the former artists' collective,[22] as well as the uncommented usage of totalitarian and martial ideologies, was meant as a political provocation. Emphasizing internal threats, particularly totalitarianism and especially consumerism, the lyrics of 'Eurovision' (*Spectre* 2014) already decry a Europe falling apart. This is also reflected musically in dark synthesizer loops, drum machine sounds, a whispered growled speech-like singing style at articulates the refrain 'Europe is falling apart' in an undertone singing-like style. The video depicts a dystopian, apocalyptic scenario being filmed in a former industrial area of Trbovlje (Slovenia), the band's hometown. 'Eurovision' thus becomes a different Europe than that celebrated by the actual Eurovision Song Contest (ESC).

While the ESC has often been celebrated as a transnational celebrating an almost iconic Europeanness (Bohlman, 2011), it also mirrors the unsolved (national) frictions between the various countries. Set against this context, Laibach's song title 'Eurovision' can thus also be read as anticipatory, as became apparent shortly after the song's release with the divided reception of 2014 ESC winner drag queen Conchita Wurst who, as blogger Latebit (2014) complained, was considered intolerable by the more conservative ESC members.[23] These aesthetic differences have also become apparent on a musical level: While some, particularly East European, members preferably integrate folk-style elements, others have shifted to a Western popular music style. This includes preferably English lyrics, which, covering up any recognizable national reference points, are internationally understood, thus further Atlanticizing or Anglicizing the general sonic impression of the overall event. While these Europe-related discourses suggest an existent prevailing concept of Europeanness, it should nevertheless be emphasized (cf Patel, 2013) that, even until the first decade of the new millennium, Europeanness had still been a new concept and, if existent, being highly heterogeneous, and not necessarily coterminous with the European Union or a homogenizing unit. Rather, it could also be viewed, as Fligstein, Polyakova, and Sandholtz (2012, p. 112) have argued, as having emerged and existed alongside national, regional and local identities as a complementary, and not incompatible, form.

Europe and the Migration Crisis

Laibach's 'Eurovision' was released briefly before the refugee crisis became truly evident in 2014/2015. Usually, the year 2015 is given as a marker of the events, when, for a variety of complex political and economic reasons, the number of refugees rose dramatically in 2014 and spectacularly in 2015.[24] Within this context, 'Europe' has taken on a further set of meanings, memories, hopes and, most significantly, also traumata, as will be briefly illustrated by two examples.

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[22] Laibach was a wing of the so-called 'Neue Slowenische Kunst' ['New Slovenian Art'] that utilized politically provocative German expressions and names (Laibach is the German name for the Slovenian capital Ljubljana). See also Monroe (2005).

[23] Latebit, 'Laibach nail it again with "Eurovision".' *LiveJournal* (8 July 2014). https://lateblt.livejournal.com/182977.html (accessed 15 April 2020).

[24] Due to the different statuses, national registration modes, and illegal moves, exact numbers are difficult. Viewed globally, the number of refugees in Europe is comparably small; according to the UNHCR, only 10.4% of the registered refugees have been migrating to Europe. UNHCR—The UN Refugee Agency, *Global Trends: Forced*

Representing the refugees' perspective, 'Safarna Ala Europa' ['Our Journey to Europe'], that was written by Syrian refugee Nidal Karam and describes the sufferings in Syria and during the journey, as well as the situation of the torn families and the prevailing home sickness, has partly been described as an unofficial refugee hymn. As Mehta (2016) pointed out, the song has been so prominent among the Arab-speaking refugee communities that was even memorized by the children's generation.[25] As is evident in the lyrics, Europe has been viewed as a place of hope from beyond its borders. Yet, set against the actual experience inside Europe, the song has likewise become an expression of unsolvable homesickness. 'Safarna Ala Europa' is just one example of how particularly music not only provides a means of expressing the often emotionally unsolvable experience of migration, but also of how these voices are essential for a more multi-dimensional understanding of Europe's role, as well as of Europe itself. This includes the perception of this development in Europe in musical genres and in scholarship. It calls for further reflections of concepts of folk music in Europe. Who and what is included and excluded here? What is the position of songs like 'Safarna Ala Europa' in the European (folk) music spectrum? On a more general basis, this points to the increasing importance of sonic markers of folk music and oral tradition, and thus, the focus on musical materials, in our understanding of where the genre begins and ends. This is also intertwined with an increasingly globalized context that involves a growing ethnic heterogeneity across Europe.

The question likewise concerns modern folk musics and singer-songwriting. For instance, British (folk) bands such as Show of Hands were remarkably early in warning of an emerging refugee crisis—long before the situation was perceived as such. A good example is the band's song 'The Flood' (*Cold Frontier* 2001) that combines newly written traditional-sounding melodies and guitar backing with lyrics addressing the contemporary crisis. While, on the surface, referring to the severe rain flooding of 2000/2001 in the UK, the song, by evoking images of rising water, drowned humans, lorries as cages and a breaking (breaching) dam. The song also treats 'the flood' symbolically as representing the flow of refugees. By pointing to the imminent dramatic situation on both sides, locally and with regard to the migrants, 'The Flood' thus likewise needs to be read as an admonition to consider the larger situation of all groups involved. Whilst these warnings went largely unheeded at the time and reverberate some of the sentiments already articulated in the 1990s by Advanced Chemistry, 'The Flood' illustrates how music and song acts as an alternative social commentary or history, often containing narratives that only become prescient with hindsight.

Although these two examples point to the negative experiences of recent migration, authors like Patel (2013) likewise argue that the perception of Europeanness has actually been inseparably intertwined with productive intercultural encounters as a result of migration on the long term. This points to a much larger narrative beyond the actual dramatic situation, existing alongside a purely national identity (Fligstein, Polyakova, and Sandholtz , 2012), which has not yet reached its endpoint. As the previous examples have illustrated, ethnomusicological research needs to be more public, because ethnomusicological research can contribute important insights to the public sphere (Sweers, 2019b). Yet, this requires a greater discussion inside the discipline too: For example, as has become evident with regard to the German situation, a conscious and more open reflection on the impact of migration and its practical consequences, e.g. with regard to inter- and transcultural (music) education, only became

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Displacement in 2017, https://www.unhcr.org/statistics/unhcrstats/5b27be547/unhcr-global-trends-2017.html (accessed 15 April 2020). See Rasmussen et al. (2019) for a response from ethnomusicology.

[25] YouTube, RTL Nieuws, 'Zanger Nidal heeft hit onder vluchtelingen: 'Ik zi - RTL NIEUWS' (December 29, 2016). https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ynF1ZpUPVsk (accessed 15 April 2020). This statement was also confirmed in Dutch TV documentations that displayed Syrian refugees instantly singing the song.

evident in the 1990s and still has not been adequately explained or embedded in educational curricula by scholars of music and culture (cf Sweers, 2005b).

Europe 2020: Brexit

When Brexit was finally put in action on 1 February 2020, Europe had been going through three years of extensive discussions, shattered hopes, numerous protests, polemics, despair and applause. The British government's move to leave the European Union led to a tsunami of song-writing—both supportive, such as BrexitAnthem's 'We Want Our Country Back' (2017), or critical and reflective, as with Billy Bragg's 'Full English Brexit' (*Bridges Not Walls* 2017).

In this song, singer-songwriter Bragg concisely addresses the fears of the elderly population, who had constituted the majority of pro-Brexit voters, of the significant consequences of Brexit. This song also satirizes the political impulse to withdraw from the open market whilst simultaneously expecting to receive its benefits. While many supportive Brexit songs need to be read within the context of a complex political and media-related manipulation, they again point to patterns of fear—similarly overlooked as in the case of the Rostock-Lichtenhagen arson attacks—that might have needed to be addressed by politics as done by Bragg.

While, to those outwith the UK, Brexit appeared as a protest against European bureaucracy and immigration—as it had been advertised in the Leave campaign (cf Graeber, 2020 for a detailed analysis), it nevertheless likewise needs to be read as a protest against the London-centricity of UK politics on multiple levels, including the UK media (Pidd, 2019). Given the comparably higher unemployment rate in regions outside London,[26] reading the decision as a form of protest against London's super concentration of power and government seemed unsurprising. From a mainly European perspective, the socio-political situation had many parallels with East Germany and the resulting Lichtenhagen attacks. And yet, it likewise raises further questions that became apparent in the previous examples. For instance—where is the position of migrant and post-migrant communities and their (musical) cultures in this situation? Do they remain a supplement or external 'Other'—or are they integrated into a broader and more heterogenous concept of local identity beyond the ethnic-national, as has also been expressed in concepts of inter- and transcultural music education (Sweers, 2005b)?

On 1 February 2020, everyday-life appeared unaltered at first sight—which was however, deceptive. As Wearmouth (2016) cautioned pointing to the Scottish border nearby Newcastle, 'Could Brexit for EU lead to a modern-day Hadrian's Wall?' While this likewise requires a broader awareness of and reflection on the contemporary role of popular and folk music and the question of inclusion and exclusion of repertoires (e.g. Winter and Keegan-Phipps, 2013), it also calls for a re-reflection of previous conceptualizations of music, e.g. with regard to the nationalist abuse of folk songs. As Stick in the Wheel's Nicola Kearey and Ian Carter point out in the *Guardian* article entitled 'English folk music helps us to fathom our heritage of struggle', 'It's difficult to be outwardly proud of English traditional cultures, partly for fear of being called racist or a flag-waver' (Kearey and Carter, 2017). A statement not unfamiliar to German public discourses around its Nazi period, and clearly contrasting with the more positive vision of a layered sense of Europeanness combined with an open national, regional, and/or local identity (cf Fligstein, Polyakova, and Sandholtz, 2012).

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[26] Interestingly, ethnomusicology has been quick in reaction and foresight here, as became apparent with the annual conference of the *British Forum for Ethnomusicology* (BFE) on 'Europe and Post-Brexit Ethnomusicologies' in Newcastle (12–15 April 2018), although there had still been hopes that it might not happen. In retrospect, Newcastle appeared ideal for a broader reflection on this situation during the BFE conference—being located in the North East of England, which voted (with the exception of Newcastle that voted for remain with 50.7%) for Brexit (e.g. Northumberland: 54.1%) in 2016. BBC News: EU Referendum—Local Results. https://www.bbc.com/news/politics/eu_referendum/results/local/n (accessed 15 April 2020) Regarding the unemployment rates of this specific region, see Northumberland County Council, https://www.northumberland.gov.uk/NorthumberlandCountyCouncil/media/Northumberland-Knowledge/NK%20place/Other%20area%20profiles/NorthumberlandFactsFigsMar18.pdf (accessed 15 April 2020). The source is from March 2018, but includes the 2016/17 data as well.

For example, with regard to ethnomusicological folk music research in the U.K., this not only requires an intensified popular and folk music research on issues of trans-continental interrelations, such as the North Sea cultural region to, which has always been an exchange space of shared folk song repertoires (e.g. sea shanties), themes (including folk ballads and traveling artists).[27] Other examples are the musical and cultural transnational spaces that have emerged from shared linguistic communities such as Gaelic, Catalan, or broader Celtic-derived or Mediterranean cultural worlds. It also necessitates a stronger focus on the integration and adaptation of styles outside the national/ regional confines or the re-adaptation of classical folk songs from a modern, i.e. migrant perspective, as has been the case with 'Tam Lyn retold,' a re-interpretation of the Child Ballad 'Tam Lin' (Child 39A) by the Imagined Village (*The Imagined Village* 2007). In collaboration with established English folk musicians such as Eliza Carthy, British-Jamaican dub-poet Benjamin Zephaniah here transforms the narrative of the Scottish Border ballad of the enchanted knight Tam Lin who is saved by his courageous female lover in a dramatic horse ride. The ballad is transformed into a rap-style tale of an illegal migrant who is enchanted by numerous prejudices, stands through the court hearing due to his female lover believing in him—and subsequently becomes a DJ. Brexit forces us to re-examine folk music-related assumptions that have been taken for granted—not only on how easily a national tradition can take on nationalist devices, but also reflecting on what constitutes an open tradition that displays positive devices/ contexts as Ilga Reiznice envisioned it. This points to the importance of ethnomusicologists needing to address musical and lyrical material not as just objects in themselves, but more strongly also in combination with a perspective on their transnational and intertextual significance in order to contribute to a more pluralist understanding of regional traditions.

The Study of Folk Musics in Europe in a Transforming Context

While the main idea of this article was a history of the EU through music, the previous examples also shed a light on popular and folk musics in various European and nationalist discourses. As is evident here, a fuller picture only becomes apparent by combined analysis of different musical examples. The choice of rap and popular music styles for an expression of transnational European identities by its performers might be obvious at first sight, but it is also apparent that a deeper understanding of the different discursive layers of European identities can only be fully perceived by integrating folk musics as well because it has been so closely aligned with national identities across Europe in the modern period. But this is only meaningful if folk music is approached by a broader conceptual idea that likewise includes fusion forms, modern songwriting, forms of popular music and related genres like rap and hip hop, reflecting the reality of our porous genre boundaries in the internet age. If contextualized accordingly, each of these examples can be read like a historical document similar to 19th century repertoires ranging from work song to broadsides, despite being shaped by 20th/ 21st century media-related conditions. This perspective not only goes beyond still existent conceptual dichotomies such as popular versus folk music, authentic v. revival etc. but also prevailing fixed ethno-national ideas so closely tied to folk musics. I consciously did not provide a comprehensive definition of European 'folk music' in this context, and it is also not the intention to equalize the expression of popular music with folk music. Rather my intention is therefore to elaborate some of the epistemological issues significant for scholars of traditional music and culture in the contemporary, and increasingly pluralized world.[28]

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[27] Such as composers like the English violinist and viol player William Brade (1560–1630) who was active in Northern Germany and Denmark.

My argument rests on selected music examples addressing the European situation but point to broader ethnomusicological issues. As is evident from any survey of recent conference abstracts where keywords such as neoliberalism, nationalism, torture, terror, conflict, dispossession, or displacement are increasingly in evidence.[29] Ethnomusicology and ethnomusicologists are in touch with the current global situation. Even so, one might wonder about the position of European research and specifically the role of folk music studies here. While avoiding over-generalizations, international ethnomusicological curricula from the second decade of the new millennium seem to indicate that European music has slipped out of the broader (international) canon. There are exceptions (e.g. Bohlman, 2011[2004]), but many European musics tend to be addressed in local/ national folk discourses. From a larger perspective, this is also apparent in the still existing divide between ethnomusicology and folk music research, and the exclusion of examples from different spheres of popular music these areas. How far does this call for new perspectives or research networks further transgress established genre-related and disciplinary boundaries, also to tell a more multi-layered European narrative as depicted by Patel (2013)? This particularly also with regard to debates of inclusion and exclusion that were brought forward in the growing racism debate (2020) in the wake of the killing of George Floyd in the U.S. on 25 May 2020. Where, for instance, are migrant studies positioned in the broader context of the discipline, its educational curricula and in relation to folk musics? Which folk musics? Who is actually telling—and controlling—the local and broader European narrative(s)? What are the role and multiple appearances of folk music in relation to issues such as 'globalization,' 'migrant,' 'refugee,' 'diaspora,' or 'national identity' addressed in the previously discussed songs? To what extent does popular music and especially rap/ hip hop also need to be included here? In which way? And how does ethnomusicology handle the different concepts of 'national(ism') and ethno-national ideas and politics, as well as the position of folk musics in this context? In the face of Brexit and growing national(ist) movements, what are the dangers of folk musics being instrumentalized here—and how can ethnomusicological provide responses, also for the musicians affected by the situation?

About Being Connected: Ethnomusicology and Folk Music Research in Europe in the Twenty-First Century

Brexit has revealed the deep interrelatedness between European nations of the European countries, because each moment in the ongoing exit of Britain from EU structures has been, and will continue to, affect all other countries in the EU. Science has always been about being interconnected, which not only becomes evident in research, but also at ethnomusicological conferences—maybe even more strongly in such a discipline that allows to truly connect over the globe. Brexit will make an impact here as well—first of all, on a very pragmatic level, such as visa regulations that will alter conference participation, often of those in an already disadvantaged position. Yet it will most likely also affect international scientific research, such as the participation in EU-funded scientific research and exchange programs that are highly vulnerable segments in EU-related debates (Sweers, 2019b).

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[28] For example, the former Deutsche Volksliedarchiv [German Folk Song Archive] in Freiburg/ Breisgau that was founded in 1914 was integrated into a larger structure, consciously called 'Zentrum für Populäre Kultur und Musik' [Center for Popular Culture and Music] exactly for these reasons, as this allows to approach related repertoires from a broader and less politicized perspective. See also https://www.zpkm.uni-freiburg.de (accessed 10 May 2021).

[29] Taken from conference papers of the BFE Newcastle meeting, position statements and publications. See https://conferences.ncl.ac.uk/media/sites/conferencewebsites/bfe2018/BFEConfProgrammeFINAL.pdf (accessed 15 April 2020). Further examples include the Society for Ethnomusicology's (2017) position on music and torture, but also the publications of Cusick (2006), Steingo (2016), Ndaliko (2016), or Teitelbaum (2017).

Given the importance of internal stability, specifically in the face of the developments in the second decade of the new millennium, interconnectedness within and beyond academia seems to be more important than ever, and this is why the cultural sciences are so significant (Sweers, 2019b). This not only concerns establishing and conveying cultural knowledge or active applied involvement, and the urgent need of a broader and more open exchange about folk musics in this context, but, interrelated, also the maintenance and expansion of inclusive professional transnational networks and teamwork. As has become apparent within the European context, the importance of *professional networks as means of support* is clearly evident on multiple levels. As, for example, the annual meetings of the *European Seminar in Ethnomusicology* (ESEM) illustrate, a group of international scholars can convey the feeling of recognition to a local community, as became evident during the 2017 meeting in the village of Santu Lussurgiu (Sardinia). A scholarly meeting can also signal that a country is recognized as being a part of Europe, as was evident in Tbilisi/Georgia (2018)—or it might establish a space for safe discussion in places of conflict, as was apparent at the third meeting of the ICTM Study Group of Applied Ethnomusicological in Nicosia/Cyprus (2012).[30]

At the same time, these academic conferences raise the question of *who is actually included in Europe and how to define 'Europe*,' also when talking about European folk musics. A mathematical-geographic definition would place Lithuania at the center and would, with the Ural Mountains forming the easternmost border, also include more Asia-oriented regions, such as Tatarstan—regions that are not considered being at the core or even included. Yet, particularly Georgia is a reminder of the complex boundaries of Europe whose cultural networks transgress any geographic frameworks. Located east of Turkey, Georgia is and perceives itself culturally and religiously closely tied to Europe, but it has often been overlooked from a central European perspective, as are any cultural/ religious ties of migrant cultures. This situation is thus a clear reminder for ethnomusicology that it is necessary to not only cast *a look beyond seemingly established boundaries, but also to further reflect on the concept of 'Europe'.*[31]

Yet, maintaining international interconnectedness is not easy, and it is a good reminder, notwithstanding the justifiably criticized over-bureaucratization, that this was also the initial communal ideal of the EU—to facilitate movement and exchange. Interestingly, the EU has often likewise been accused of the neoliberal commodification of science with the Bologna reform as the clearest expression of this development. Initially meant to provide free movement, as envisioned in the lyrics of Advanced Chemistry, it has nevertheless become a tool for homogenization, neoliberalization and control, often at the costs of the humanities and cultural sciences (Sweers, 2019b).

A reflection on ethnomusicology and the study of folk musics in the twenty-first century thus likewise needs to consider these developments. Besides some very pragmatic issues (such as handling international payments) interconnectedness particularly requires *constant negotiation* on an equal basis that does not lose the actual idea out of sight, as the case of ESEM indicates. As I experienced in this specific context particularly during the 1990s and the first decade of the new millennium, the meetings were partly shaped by the contrast of ('modern' anthropological) Western versus ('old style' folk music oriented) East European scholarship—with a clear and hegemonic bias and dominance of West-European countries, locations, and publications. While the different scientific languages have always been a subject of negotiations during ESEM meetings, these likewise clichéd pre-conceptions increasingly started to break up in the face of personal encounters, underscoring the need for continuing to meet face-to-face at conferences in the coming years.

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[30] Reports on this and other meetings of the ICTM Study Group of Applied Ethnomusicology can be found here: http://ictmusic.org/group/applied-ethnomusicology

[31] One step in that direction can, for instance, be observed the foundation of the European Folk Network in 2021, which has adopted a pluralistic definition of what counts as traditional arts and folk music. Rather than being based on geography, the definition relates to residency and participation in orally developed cultures.
See also The European Folk Network, https://9a57f843-6677-4289-a828-953018d5b4b5.filesusr.com/ugd/b0bb1c_29cf9b4ef6214974b203d22f9f7e3ffb.pdf

This year-long process not only confirms the importance of direct exchange and interaction, particularly also within financially weaker regions, but also the need for a constant *awareness of hidden unbalances*.[32] How far does the discipline thus also need to rethink hegemonic structures/ thinking between different national ethnomusicologies that also include folk music studies? This, however, calls for *a constant awareness of political transformations*, including the instrumentalization of folk music within contexts of growing nationalism that, however, also do not lose further issues, such as unsolved racism and gender issues, out of sight. What kind of support could be given here from an interconnected perspective?[33]

Brexit finally happened at 24:00 MEZ on 31 January 2020, but it is still difficult to envision the actual outcome at the time writing in 2021. However, as illustrated by the music examples—and particularly also the situation and utilization of folk music—discussed in this article, the most dangerous aspects of this situation are the vacuum, confusion, insecurity, and paralysis within the context of a complicated global world order that will most certainly result from this decision. Humans tend to forget about preceding failures and disasters. Even on a small scale, ethnomusicology provides a much needed broader cultural and human education, and can thus make a difference; and maybe it is especially though small disciplines like ethnomusicology that much needed global and continental holistic perspectives can be developed. Europe and European folk musics in all their different dimensions and relations is a good field of exploration here, specifically with regard to the question of what it means to live in Europe and to be European in a global, post-colonial, neoliberal world.

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[32] Such as limited access to (Western) scholarly debates, which has been—as in Georgia—partly answered by extremely creative strategies of the younger scholar generation who, facing lacking financial resources, started to obtain electronic publications of any kind. This has been resulting in completely new approaches towards local traditional and popular music cultures. In a way, some of these issues reflect the patterns that have been emerging in related BIPOC/ racism discourses in ethnomusicology (2020), which indicates that hegemonial structures and biases in the discipline are even more complex and entangled that apparent at first sight.

[33] One approach of ESEM is actually to position the Seminar meetings alternately in Western and Eastern Europe. While this, on the one hand, provides local scholars with limited travel means with an internationally visible platform, it also positions the academic host community with an equal seat–and, thus, voice–in the ESEM board (CORD).

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