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APPLIED ETHNOMUSICOLOGY IN THE PROCESS OF THE POLITICAL RECOGNITION OF A MINORITY: A CASE STUDY OF THE AUSTRIAN ROMA

by Ursula Hemetek

Applied ethnomusicology has a special relevance for studies on music and minorities.¹ What constitutes this relevance in particular cases was the focus of a plenary panel discussion at the 38th World Conference of the ICTM in Sheffield in 2005, which explored cultural, social, political, and economic issues pertinent to the musical life of minority groups within the context of a larger (majority) society. Panel participants addressed the topic from the perspective of their individual research fields and the different minority groups they have worked with: Adelaida Reyes provided the example of refugee camps, Stephen Wild of the Rom ceremony of Australian Aborigines, and John O'Connell of a Song for Peace by a Kurdish singer. The aim was to contribute to discourses on applied ethnomusicology in the light of theoretical and methodological insights gained through studies of music and minorities.

My discussion here focuses on Roma with whom I have been conducting a long-term research project.² In this article, I look particularly at the role of ethnomusicological research on Romani music as it related to the Austrian political arena. First, though, in order to clarify the specific situation of Romani music research in European music studies, one shaped by a mainly derogatory approach in the past and by new strategies of empowerment in the present, I will briefly outline some aspects of applied ethnomusicology in Romani music studies. I believe that reflection on the results of our work is an important aspect of ethnomusicology, especially in research on the music of minorities, and I also want to address through these reflections the problems that can arise in the application of ethnomusicological findings.

In the process initiated in 1989 of claiming political recognition in Austria, the public presentation of Romani traditional music contributed enormously to proving that a group of people who had been discriminated against and who formerly were merely seen as a social minority were in fact an ethnic one, with a distinct cultural heritage of their own. Several research projects by Austrian scholars on the music of the Roma formed the basis for activities in the broadly conceived field of applied ethnomusicology, yielding results in the areas of cultural mediation, politi-

1. I want to thank for their ideas and advice on this paper: the editors, Adelaida Reyes, the reviewers, and Eric Martin Usner, who also provided language editing. My gratitude goes also to all the partners in my research, musicians as well as scholars, for their friendship and their patience.

2. I will use the term "Roma" throughout the paper for all the different groups living in Austria, as it was used officially for the political recognition of this people in 1993. Gypsy, or in German *Zigeuner*, are words of derogatory character, although some Roma, especially musicians, use the latter for economic reasons.

cal activism, public promotion, and education. Dilemmas arose due to the different expectations of the parties involved: the Roma musicians themselves, the public, Roma organizations, and the political institutions of the Austrian state.

Applied ethnomusicology and the Roma

Applied ethnomusicology is a very broad field, and sometimes has to face the critique that the term is too vague to mean anything. The argument goes that everything ethnomusicologists do is applied to a certain extent: teaching, publishing, and presentation of research results, all of which may benefit culture bearers. I do understand that attitude, especially in relation to European folk music research, which from the beginning was so closely tied to the promotion of folklore that the whole field is very often called “folkloristics.” Others reject the “applied” aspect exactly because of that history, or due to the political instrumentalization of that kind of research (see, for example, Giurchescu 1994, for a Romanian example). Hermann Bausinger, a German ethnologist, expressed his own hesitance towards application during the conference *War, Exile and Everyday Life* (Zagreb, 1996), exactly because he had been socialized in folklore research. The application known to him he named “dubious, trivial and ridiculous.” But he also acknowledged the responsibility of science and the “necessity of practice” in certain situations:

If there are burning problems, hurting, scaring and depressing people and opening up old sores, there is no chance to escape to so-called pure science—you have to make options and say yes or no or you have at least to point to the practical implications of your scientific interests. (Bausinger 1996:288)

He spoke about the war in the former Yugoslavia; but with minorities in general and especially with Roma, there seem to be burning problems that demand for action also in times of peace.

According to Svanibor Pettan (2006) the growing interest in applied ethnomusicology is often related to exactly those groups of people at the focus of contemporary ethnomusicologists’ research, as defined by Mark Slobin for the 2006 symposium “Emerging Musical Identities,” which Pettan lists as: minorities, diasporas, ethnic groups, immigrants, and refugees.³ This list is based upon the special situation of three states created out of the former Yugoslavia, but is of relevance for Europe as a whole and beyond. The common denominator for all these groups of people is that they face a dominant group, and suffer discrimination on different levels. Pettan (2006) further argues that applied ethnomusicology has very much to do with the empowerment of such groups. The overall scope of applied ethnomu-

3. Roma are to be found in most of these categories in Austria, depending on the political circumstances of their settling in Austria: minority or ethnic group would be the category for the “autochthonous” groups; those with immigrant or refugee status are the immigrants of recent times. The term diaspora requires some “homeland” as a common region of departure, but there is nothing of that kind for the Roma, unless one defines India in that way, but this is usually not done by Roma themselves.

sicology is much broader, but in connection with the groups of people mentioned, this is certainly one of the most important aspects of applied work. If we look now at the strategies of applied ethnomusicology as listed by Daniel Sheehy (1992), we find the following, all of them, in fact, implicating the role of empowerment, although it is not mentioned explicitly:

1. developing new “frames” for musical performance;
2. “feeding back” musical models to the communities that created them;
3. providing community members access to strategic models and conversation techniques; and
4. developing broad, structural solutions to structural problems.

Although applied research can be empowering for members of minority groups, I agree with Svanibor Pettan when he says that “it would obviously be senseless and wrong to label the studies about musical universes of minorities, diasporas, ethnic groups, immigrants, and refugees ‘applied’ as long as there is no intervention on behalf of an ethnomusicologist and no expectation of change resulting from his/her intervention” (Pettan 2006). The history of European research on the Roma includes examples that only partly meet this definition as well as those which do not necessarily have positive aims or outcomes. My intention here is to focus on positive examples, but it is necessary to mention the narrow-minded and racist approaches sometimes found in relation to the music making of the Roma. One reason is the way European nationalism influenced music scholarship and especially folkloristic studies. Roma are the minority par excellence, having no nation state anywhere in the world. They are a counterpart to national traditions because their integration of different musical traditions especially challenges the idea of “national folk music” that seemed so important in European folk music research and folklore studies. When Franz Liszt (1859) suggested that the music played by the Roma in Hungary was “their own” the protests were never ending.⁴ More typical were accusations that the Roma “stole” or “corrupted” music, having no “musical roots” of their own (Djordjević 1910).

These attitudes towards the Roma and their music certainly influenced the views of the dominant society on Roma musicians. More influential still were the results of other fields of research, like the “race-studies” (*Rasseforschungen*) of the Nazi regime, when so-called “scholars” tried to prove the inferiority of the “race” of Roma, by collecting physical and ethnographic data that were used to select them for

4. Franz Liszt’s book on gypsy music, inspired by the creative virtuosity of Gypsy musicians of his time, categorized the music they played—which was later on named Hungarian Gypsy music—as their ancient folklore. He saw this music as part of a vanished national epic, which he wanted to reconstruct. The Hungarians were furious about Liszt’s book: what was thought to be “national musical expression,” a symbol of Hungarian nationality in a time of Habsburgian suppression, Liszt ascribed to the Gypsies, the most despised minority. Gypsies were the representatives of that style, but Liszt also made them its creators.

the concentration camps.⁵ Finally the “scientific” argument for the extermination of the Roma was that they were not “pure,” but of “mixed race” (*Zigeunermischlinge*), a genetic disposition which made them socially inferior, “anti-social,” and criminal. One legacy of this history is a certain reluctance among the Roma to serve as research objects for non-Roma, including ethnomusicologists.

Max Peter Baumann has remarked that a defining characteristic of a minority is the lack of power to define itself, thus leading to its being defined by the dominant majority. In the entire history of Roma music in Europe, in research as well as public perception, Baumann’s observation rings true:

the cultural “I” finds itself ... confronted with the difficult situation of a majority society constantly trying to determine the values of a minority group ... It is always majorities who want to force their own monopoly of interpretation on others and feasible paths must therefore be found that aim for the self-determination of minorities. (Baumann 2000:480)

Self-determination is a compelling issue in ethnomusicological approaches to Romani music nowadays, and applied ethnomusicology is much concerned with these matters. Most of the ethnomusicologists involved in current research among the Roma are non-Roma, but there are quite a few who successfully crossed this boundary (for example, Speranta Radulescu, Irén Kertész-Wilkinson, Anca Giurchescu, Katalin Kovalcsik, Svanibor Pettan, and Christiane Fennesz-Juhasz).

The strategies of application of research by ethnomusicologists vary according to the specific political situation in the given territory. In Romania for example, for a long time it was like an act of heroism even to mention the word Roma in a publication, because political authorities suggested that there were no Roma (Radulescu 1996). The mere naming of the Roma and their music—proving that they were there—was a political act that helped to bring to public awareness the important role of Romani musicians in music making in Romania, which was usually concealed in official contexts. Another applied aspect which was very much promoted by ethnomusicologists including Speranta Radulescu in Romania was the *developing of new “frames”* for musical performance by Roma, especially abroad.

“Feeding back” musical models to the communities that created them is an important aspect of Katalin Kovalcsik’s work in Hungary (for example, Kovalcsik 2002), mainly through publications that meet the demands of the community. She also incorporates Roma music intensively into her teaching activities. The scholar-based promotion of ensembles like Kalyi Jag—musicians who “reinvented” the Lovari style and created a new mainstream style in Hungary based on traditional musical models—was done by providing reliable liner notes to several LPs of the group. Kalyi Jag served as a model for other ensembles in Hungary because of their public success, and that gave empowerment to many young musicians and to ensembles like Ando Drom.

5. Robert Ritter and his assistant Eva Justin tried to collect these data by entering the Roma communities and pretending interest in their way of life. Eva Justin even learned some Romani for this purpose, and is called *loli čaj* (red girl) in Roma oral history. Data collected by the couple were the death sentence for many Roma.

In the former Yugoslavia, Svanibor Pettan's 1992 dissertation on music of Kosovo Roma (book version in 2002) and the publication of a film (1999) and CD-ROM (2001b) can be seen as an example of different strategies of applied ethnomusicology (both *feeding back* as well as offering a *solution to structural problems*). Roma in Kosovo have been affected by the succession of wars that from 1991 to 1995 moved from Slovenia over Croatia to Bosnia-Herzegovina and by the war of "ethnic cleansing" of 1999 in Kosovo, which was followed by the bombardment of Serbia by NATO. The musical life Pettan documented prior to these unfortunate events no longer exists. The Roma suffered extremely in these wars, even though they were not directly involved in ethnic conflict. Pettan dedicated the film and CD-ROM to the memory of those who had died and, by granting them a high percentage of the income, to the benefit of those musicians still alive. In publishing documents of the "past," he also provided the community with musical models for the present and by stressing the interethnic aspect of Roma music making in Kosovo—they were playing the musics of all ethnic communities in Kosovo—he made the Roma a model for intercultural communication. This is an argument against the prevailing politics there, where the Roma, as so often in history, were made once again into the scapegoats.

All the above instances have been chosen to exemplify "best practice"—many others could be listed, of course. The researchers established long-term relationships with the groups they are working with, they were accepted as members of the community to a certain extent, and they view their informants as partners, not as objects. Lifelong interest and solidarity with the Roma people are characteristics emerging from such research.

The following case study from Austria will touch on several of the already mentioned aspects of applied work and should function as an example of different application strategies of ethnomusicological research. They follow the path from the first encounter with the music and the people to political application, and include reflection on the problems arising.

Meaning through music

Ethnomusicologists usually possess a certain affinity for the subject they investigate and their curiosity plays an important role in how they choose their topics. My own research on Roma music began because I was attracted by the music, but more so by the secrecy that seemed to be part of the identity of that people. What first inspired me was a film broadcast on Austrian public television about Roma in Austria *Ihr werdet uns nie verstehen* (You will never understand us; Breit and Schwarzenberger 1988). The title quoted from one Sinto (one of the Roma-groups living in Austria, see below) in the film, and he really meant what he said: that we as *gaže* (non-Roma) could never understand the Roma because we were so different from each other. But at the same time it was the film's aim to make *gaže* understand—at least a little bit—who the Roma are and how they live, because this was the first well-founded information, the first serious documentary on the life of

Roma in Austria ever broadcast there. This film explained a lot about the Roma in Austria, about their view of life, their living conditions, and their history. A social and cultural dichotomy was emphasized, with the Roma on one side versus *gaže* on the other. There was a beautiful song at the end of the film which touched me deeply although I did not know anything about the music, its language, or meaning. The film conveyed the following message to me and new thoughts started working in my mind: there is a people, living in my country, severely discriminated against, somehow mysterious, telling me “I would never understand them.” Here was a fascinating music not at all known in public at that time, and I learned that the singer of the moving song lived in Vienna, only a short distance from my home.

Unfamiliar as I was with the final song and its lyrics, the quality of direct expression, the fascinating melody, and the way it was sung still overwhelmed me. This was not simply a case of performance skill, as usually associated with Romani musicians, but a result of the quality of the music that seemed to say something about the social system from which it stemmed. Thus from the beginning on, I was drawn to a socio-musical message, the “insight into people as social beings who choose to mean through music”—as Adelaida Reyes called the phenomenon in her abstract for the panel session at the world conference in Sheffield (in Stock 2005:167).

Only much later was I able to record the song in an exploratory research project with Ruža Nikolić-Lakatos (figure 1), the singer of the song in the film. I had made her acquaintance through Mozes Heinschink (see below) and, after many visits and conversations, she finally trusted me to record and publish the song. That is why I am able to provide a transcription, which is necessary to understand the style (figure 2). I learned that it was a mourning song of a man in prison who worried about what his wife might be doing during his absence. In the end he says that the Vienna bridge should fall down so his girl cannot walk over it to meet the drunken *gaže*.



Figure 1. Ruža Nikolić-Lakatos, 1994 (photo: Birgit Karner, Archive of the Institute for Folk Music Research, F 35/17)

1. Jaj de ka - na e lo - li mol pav sa ba - ju - ra ke - rav

sa ba - ju - ra ke - rav jaj de ter - ne še - jen ka - (a) - mav.

If I drink red wine, I do stupid things and I hit the policemen.
 I am locked in prison, with high walls around me.
 Mother, give her money, so she can buy red silk,
 So that she can make herself up for the boys and the drunken *gaže*.

Figure 2. Transcription of “Jaj de kana e loli mol pav” (Hemetek 1994:44)

Ruža told me that there was a true story behind that song. In fact, many of these *loke gila* (slow songs) have a historiographical function; until about twenty years ago Romani culture was mostly transmitted orally.

Much could be said about the features of the music. Let me just mention some of the publications written especially on this vocal style by colleagues such as Bálint Sárosi (1977), Katalin Kovalcsik (1985), Irén Kertész-Wilkinson (1996, 1997) and Christiane Fennesz-Juhász (1996, 1999). The songs are characterized by four lines, rubato, descending melody, special treatment of the final note, and an improvisational manner of performance underlining the meaning of the words. The musical structure and the articulation make it quite clear that a story is being told.

In the film *Ihr werdet uns nie verstehen*, the chosen images also support the message of the song to a certain extent: Ruža sings the song standing on a modern bridge, actually on the Reichsbrücke, one of the busiest bridges over the Danube in Vienna; we see cars passing by, and a boy, carrying musical instrument on his back, walking along the bridge. These images, the female singer in a Romani dress, and the boy with the double bass on his back surrounded by modern architecture and cars in the rush hour symbolize the contrast between two worlds. So the “meaning through music” in this particular example was on one hand conveyed by the structure and performance of the music itself, on the other hand by the way it was presented musically and visually.

Political reality: Severe discrimination

Roma are usually discriminated against wherever they live; at the same time they are often praised for their musical skills. Carol Silverman, for example, describes this socio-political phenomenon in the Balkans: “In fact, most Balkan non-Roma do value Rom musical abilities while simultaneously discriminating against them as a people” (Silverman 1996:237). This holds true for Austria as well. In 1988 there was severe discrimination against the Roma in Austrian society. The prevailing opinion among the majority society was that they were a group of people who



Figure 3. Ceija Stojka, 1991 (photo: Gerhard Maurer, Archive of the Institute for Folk Music Research, S 11/17)

stole, who wandered about somewhere in the woods, who did not work, and who mainly were criminals, quite opposite to what I had learned from the film.

After I had started to make contacts in 1989 in order to learn something about the Roma and their music, the first singer I spoke with and interviewed was Ceija Stojka (figure 3), a Lovari (one of the Roma groups, see below). Ceija, who had survived the Nazi concentration camps, told me about her life, about the experience of prejudice and racism, and about how Roma had to hide their ethnic identity to escape this discrimination. In spite of that, Ceija Stojka had decided to write a book about her experiences and, for the first time in Austria, there was a Romni (i.e., a Romani woman) publicly outing her ethnic background (Stojka 1988). My first interviews with her were about what music meant in her life and even what it had meant in the concentration camps (see Hemetek and Heinschink 1992). Her songs were very similar to the one I had heard in the film, because she belongs to the same Roma group as Ruža, the Lovari, and these songs had exactly this same quality of “meaning through music.”

Through Ceija, I was introduced to a Romani political movement. Motivated by an act of discrimination, the first Romani organization in Austria was founded in 1989 in Oberwart, a town in the south of Burgenland. That year young Roma had been denied entrance to a disco merely because they were Roma, an occurrence which needs to be understood within its historical background. Burgenland is the easternmost province of Austria, and until the end of World War I was part of the Hungarian component of the Austro-Hungarian monarchy. In 1921 it was included into the Republic of Austria by international treaty. Burgenland is historically the most ethnically diverse part of Austria. For centuries Croats, Hungarians, Germans,

Roma, and Jews had lived side by side. Jews and Roma had been the object of Nazi terror, deportation, and murder in the concentration camps, but prejudice and discrimination were to be found before and after the Nazi period. Jews did not return to Burgenland after World War II, but some Roma who had survived came back to what they imagined to be their home. Roma have been living in Burgenland since the fifteenth century, mainly earning their living by professions that necessitated travelling some part of the year—coppersmiths, scissors-grinders, and also musicians. Seen as “aliens” by the settled peasants and the Habsburg authorities alike, they had been subject to many discriminatory decrees, especially during the reigns of Maria Theresia (1740–80) and Joseph II (1780–90; see further, Halwachs, Gärtner-Horvath, and Wogg 2000). Nevertheless, the musicians among them were appreciated for their musical skills as well as for the intercultural competence concerning their wide repertory. Roma musicians were employed to perform at weddings and other events by all the different ethnic groups of Burgenland. This, however, did not mean an acceptance of Roma as a people.

All the mentioned actions and attitudes concerning the Roma clearly point to a racism that found its most horrible culmination during the Nazi regime and did not end when the few who had survived came back in 1945. Many were denied reparation because the concentration camp of Lackenbach, to which many of the Burgenland Roma had been deported, had been categorized merely as a “working camp” until 1988. The labour exchange authorities responsible for the provision of work for the unemployed—and many Roma were unemployed because their traditional professions were outdated by that time—maintained a kind of black-list which contained the category “*Zigeuner*” as an additional description of a person. The result was that such an individual could not find a job. Roma children were severely discriminated against in the education system, hence their educational level was low. The housing situation mirrored the social segregation as well, there being separate settlements of Roma outside villages. The resulting social problems were in the focus of public consciousness, but it was a vicious circle: Roma were different because they were poor and uneducated; they were denied access to work and education because they were different.

Due to these circumstances, it is remarkable that in 1989 Roma in Burgenland decided to fight racism. Their political aim was to be recognized as a so-called *Volksgruppe*, a political category in Austria granting certain rights to ethnic minority groups.⁶ To acquire this legal designation, it is necessary to prove ethnicity, to prove that Roma in Austria were an ethnic group. Now this was a new approach, at least in public perception, because Roma were seen as a social problem and not as a group with a distinct cultural tradition, though they were understood as in some

6. Other ethnic groups being recognized as *Volksgruppe* in Austria are the Burgenland Croats, the Carinthian and Styrian Slovenes, the Czechs and Slovaks in Vienna, and the Hungarians in Burgenland and Vienna. They have the right to constitute a council, which has the ear of the prime minister in minority-related matters, and they are granted a certain amount of money in order to preserve their culture. It also means that their minority language should be part of the curriculum in elementary schools in areas where the minority lives.

way racially defined and different. But the ascribed identity markers, like stealing, were negative. In 1955, when certain rights for folk groups were defined in the constitution, nobody would have thought of Roma. Nor would they have in 1976 when the *Volkgruppengesetz* was implemented as the legal instrument for these matters. This ignorance reminds one of National Socialism, when the argument for killing and deporting Roma was their ascribed status as anti-social and criminal. Even after World War II, Roma who had been deported to concentration camps were denied their reparation with the argument that they had been arrested and deported as criminals. The first official argument to deny their recognition as a *Volksgruppe* came in 1990 when Austria's Prime Minister Franz Vranitzky said that he did not see any "cultural markers" that indicated an ethnic tradition.

This whole matter is influenced by the history and ideology that underlay the idea of the European nation state. Nation states in Europe from the nineteenth century onwards were defined by ethnic criteria, and the nation was and still is seen as holding value. National identity is expressed in "national" cultural practices. Whereas all the other ethnic groups in Austria can claim some kind of "national" tradition deriving from their former "homeland," the Roma lack this, having no common homeland and having entered the territory as different groups from different neighbouring countries (see below). They have no common cultural tradition in the sense of a "national culture"—apart from, to a certain extent, the Romani language. But it was necessary to prove an ethnic tradition, and the Roma wanted to do so. As traditional music and language have been and still are the classic identity markers for ethnic groups in Europe, ethnomusicology played a role in such a process of political recognition—applied ethnomusicology in the sense of public presentations of traditional Roma music, publications, teaching activities, and cultural mediation. Thus from the beginning of my research—which coincided with the beginning of the Roma political movement in Austria—the idea of applying the results seemed to be expected by my partners. Roma musicians themselves were the ones who chose the means of public presentation, a way of passing on information quite contrary to the former strategy of concealment, and they accepted ethnomusicologists as partners in that process, as well as scholars from other disciplines.

Empowerment strategies of applied ethnomusicology for Austrian Roma

Cejja Stojka became the first Lovari singer to agree to present Lovari songs to a *gaže* public in 1989. After many conversations with Cejja and after having documented her Lovari repertory—and keeping in mind the political situation—it seemed necessary to present that style in public because the Austrian majority was ignorant of what seemed, to me, a wonderful expression of cultural, and therefore ethnic, identity. Unconsciously, I used one of the strategies of applied ethnomusicology: *developing new "frames" for musical performance*. The new frame was public events addressing *gaže* as well as Roma. The type of the event was what I have defined in another article as an "informative strategy" in contrast to a "consuming multiculturalism" (Hemetek 2001). One principle of this type of event is to

let the majority participate and to try to make listeners understand differences and similarities, and something about the culture that is presented in a very personal way. The aim is also to reduce prejudice and to provide well-founded information. For most listeners it was their first personal encounter with a Roma. This personal encounter can be very effective, as I have subsequently experienced many times. Once, a sixty-year-old *gaže* woman in Goldegg (a village in Salzburg) addressed Ruža Nikolić-Lakatos quite openly after such a performance: “If I had known the Roma were like you, I would not have been afraid of them and despised them all my life.”

But *developing new “frames” for musical performance* has more facets: it also means including Roma musicians in teaching activities in schools as well as in universities, and it leads to integrating them into “consuming multiculturalism” events as well. These are the major folk or folkloric festivals of the majority, including huge events. Some time after her first appearance on a public stage in 1991, Ruža Nikolić-Lakatos made her way onto these multicultural stages. I promoted her, functioning as kind of non-profit agent for her. This affected her repertory and her performance style immensely, because now she had to cope with an audience that did not want to understand about Romani culture so much as, first of all, have fun (see further on that problem in Hemetek 1997). But, and this is another most important aspect, nowadays she can make her living by performing music and actually supports her whole family.

My research and promotion activities had started with the Lovari style, but very soon I found out that there were many other styles of Romani music in Austria, most of them also quite unknown in public. It was like an epiphany when, in 1989, I first met Mozes Heinschink, a long-term researcher of Romani languages and music (see Fennesz-Juhász 1999), who had collected a huge number of sound documents of Romani dialects and music from the whole world. He had done this privately, without any institutional support, and the whole collection was stored in his living room—more than eight hundred hours of documentation. He revealed part of his treasure to me one evening. My acquaintance with him and the experience of that evening had consequences for us both. Although by birth a *gažo* (sing. of *gaže*), he became an expert in Romani language and well integrated in the different Roma communities. Mozes became my mentor in most of my subsequent research, as well as a partner in many applied activities; I was able to oversee his integration into the academic community through my contacts.⁷ He is now one of the central persons in all academic activities in Romani studies in Austria (linguistics, ethnomusicology, ethnology, and sociology). I was inspired by the huge diversity of Romani music and culture revealed in that encounter, and I followed it with research on other Roma groups as well.

7. One important step was the safeguarding of his huge collection in the Phonogram Archive of the Austrian Academy of Sciences. He first was very sceptical about that and about academic institutions in general, but finally cooperation with Christiane Fennesz-Juhász, who was in charge of the project, was fruitful and has led to their producing many joint publications.

This diversity was also represented in the first large-scale public presentation of Romani culture in Austria, an event which was held in May 1990 in Vienna. It was organized by Ilija Jovanović, a Romani poet from then Yugoslavia, Mozes Heinschink, and me. I mention it because the whole event was important for my further activities on several levels. The goal was to present the cultural wealth of four different Roma groups living in Austria (Lovari, Burgenland Roma, Sinti, and Kalderaš). It was a very unusual project, for the audiences, as well as for the political authorities and for the Roma themselves. We wanted to present Romani culture in literature, painting, film, and music, and include political discussion all over four weeks, three evenings a week. The reactions of the funding state authorities were positive, as this was a time of very modern and open-minded cultural politics in Vienna. But still, many years later, one of the persons in charge told me in private that at that time there had been internal discussions, even among these open-minded people, whether really to subsidize the project, because the artists were *Zigeuner*, a people known for stealing, but not for art.

The project was successful in many respects. The audiences were satisfied; they accepted what was offered to them: artistic presentations, intellectual discussions, and the personal encounter with Roma and their culture. There were mostly *gaže*, who met Roma for the first time in their lives. The artists were satisfied; some of them were performing for a *gaže* audience for the first time and had not expected such positive audience reactions or reviews in newspapers and on radio stations and television. But there was also critique of the diversity of presentations that arose due to ethnocentrism among the different Roma groups. Explicitly, one of the Roma representatives (from Burgenland) said, in response to my invitation, that he definitely would not attend the other groups' presentations, because their performances had nothing to do with his (Roma) culture. The organizers were satisfied as well. For me it was a great moment when one of the most influential persons in the Lovari community told me that he would never forget what I had done for them; it seemed that I had won the confidence of those who had stated in the film of 1988 that "I would never understand them."

This presentation was very important for my fieldwork on Romani music. Finding the ensembles that would perform meant research among the Roma, and the doors were opened because I was entering not only as a researcher but as a promoter as well. I recorded many rehearsals with the musicians. These were necessary because we wanted to find out together what kind of repertory would fit best for the new audience. And I was invited to private events of musical practice for the first time, as for example to weddings of the Kalderaš. I could also do documentary fieldwork. These recordings became the basis for another strategy of applied ethnomusicology later on: "*feeding back*" musical models to the communities that created them. Some of the music that came to the fore in this research was no longer common knowledge among the wider communities, but it was proof of disappearing cultural practice, due to the above-mentioned political and social

situation of the Roma. Its publication functioned to promote the self-identification of Roma communities.⁸

Politically the festival had offered public proof of the existence of “ethnic traditions” of Romani culture, something very necessary in the process of political recognition. But it had other political consequences as well. Ilija Jovanović and Dragan Jevremović, both having been involved in the organization and both Roma from the former Yugoslavia, suggested that there should be a Roma organization founded in Vienna. The only organization so far had been that in Oberwart, Verein Roma.

I was fascinated by the idea and readily provided my knowledge and experience towards that end. My engagement aimed at two other strategies of applied ethnomusicology mentioned above: *providing community members access to strategic models and conversation techniques*, as well as *developing broad, structural solutions to structural problems*. The organization Romano Centro was finally founded in 1991 in Vienna. The founding process itself, as well as the running of such an organization, requires a lot of knowledge, both of Austrian authorities and of Austrian bureaucracy. The adoption of the necessary techniques by the Roma means their empowerment, which was a precondition for finding solutions to *structural problems* (the legal and institutional means by which people are denied rights) that require the fighting of racism and discrimination.

The history of empowerment of Roma in Austria over the last fifteen years is too long to be reported here in full; instead, I have tried to outline the beginning of this struggle in detail in order to illustrate the role and the strategies of applied ethnomusicology. I should add some of the more recent results though. After the founding of further Roma organizations, intensive political lobbying, several public presentations of Romani culture, and several research projects, the Roma were recognized as a *Volksgruppe* in 1993. This had certain legal consequences, for example, that Romani language has to be taught in elementary schools in areas where many Roma live. As there was neither a codification of Romani language nor school books available, these had to be produced, as was achieved through a very successful linguistic research project for at least one group, the Burgenland Roma (see Halwachs 1999).

Ceija Stojka published her fifth book in 2005, and other Roma authors have found their way into public recognition. Ruža Nikolić-Lakatos became a very well-known singer and calls herself “ambassador of Roma culture.” She performs on major stages in Austria, as well as in other parts of the world. Other Roma musicians also benefit from a distinct “boom” in “Balkan Gypsy music,” initiated by the movies of Emir Kusturica (such as, *Time of the Gypsies* and *Underground*) and the musical arrangements of Goran Bregović. Roma music became part of all major festivals. There are new Roma ensembles emerging and successfully performing, to a certain extent due to the promotion of ethnomusicologists. *Gaže* musicians

8. The Heinschink collection proved to be the most important source for such activities on a long-term basis, and tremendous work was and still is being done by Christiane Fennesz-Juhász and Mozes Heinschink, as well as Dieter Halwachs in that respect (Cech et al. 2001, 2003; Halwachs, Gärtner-Horvath, and Wogg 2000).

became interested in Roma music, a fact which can also be interpreted as a marker of reputation. Romani songs are nowadays sometimes even taught in schools, with Austrian children singing in Romani language. In 2004, *Coming Home*, a mainstream musical by the well-known Austrian composer Christian Kolonovits, was produced, giving a platform to Roma musicians and their musical traditions among other minority groups.⁹ The sources for Kolonovits's musical arrangements were ethnomusicological publications from 1992 onwards. To a certain extent Romani culture has become part of Austrian cultural consciousness.

This does not mean that Roma in Austria are not discriminated against any more. Discrimination in the labour market, housing, and education, as well as everyday racism still persists. A bomb attack on 4 February 1995, aimed at the Burgenland Roma in Oberwart, killed four Roma and was the most severe assault in Austria's history since World War II. It was committed by a right-wing terrorist who was well informed about the Roma, perhaps due to all the public campaigns mentioned. He masked the bomb with a sign reading "Roma back to India."

Some reflections on "shadows in the field"

The bomb attack evokes further, and more difficult, ethical and moral questions. Already at the very beginning of my research, I had realized that if I wanted to do research on the Roma, I would have to take a position. That position would have to be a clear one, transparent to my informants. And it would have to be on their side. I would have to build up intensive long-term relationships. This meant that I would never publish anything that might do damage to my informants or to their relatives, never publish anything they did not want to have published. After the bomb attack, some Roma blamed the political and cultural activists, saying if they had been silent they would not have stirred up hatred. And there were others who opposed these critics. There were discussions about responsibility also among scholars. I cannot offer any solution here, as this is one of the well known dilemmas in ethnomusicology, one of the "thorny" ethical issues Mark Slobin wrote about: "individual soul-searching must be going on within the discipline constantly" (1992:336).

Among other publications, *Shadows in the Field* (Barz and Cooley 1997) and, more recently, *Music Making in the Polish Tatras* (Cooley 2005) deal with the "soul searching" and impact of the researcher on the communities under study, an issue of great importance. These writings do not deal explicitly with applied ethnomusicology, but speak about the manifold, if partially unintentional, consequences of ethnographic and ethnomusicological research. If the application of research results is involved, some impact is, of course, intentional. But there can be other consequences that might not have been intended. I want to deal here with

9. *Coming Home* uses the topos of Burgenland emigrants who went to the USA at the beginning of the twentieth century. The grandson of one of these emigrants then comes back to Burgenland in search of his grandfather's roots. In fact he finds his own roots in the multicultural ambience of Burgenland, which is presented in the musical by folklore ensembles, musicians, and traditional singers of Burgenland minorities like Roma, Hungarians, and Croats, and of the German-speaking majority, as well as by orchestral arrangements.

one specific aspect that is very much connected with Romani culture in Austria and with applied ethnomusicology.

It has to do with identity constructions of minorities and the musical expression of this identity. Figure 2 above, the Lovari song, at first glance seemed to meet the expectations of several parties involved in the recognition process of Roma in Austria: for the institutions of the majority as well as for researchers, this kind of music was a clear expression of an ethnic identity, through language, melody, and performance style. This was confirmed by international ethnomusicologists who had already been dedicated to that Lovari vocal style some years before. Bálint Sárosi (1977), for example, even labelled it “real Gypsy Folk Music,” in contrast to what he calls “Hungarian Gypsy Music,” which for him is “newly composed Hungarian music.”

Austrian governmental institutions expected there to be one Romani culture to express cultural heritage, because all the Roma living in Austria were to be recognized as one *Volksgruppe*, like the Burgenland Croats or the Carinthian Slovenes. Very soon politicians realized that it was not going to be as easy as that, because there were and still are at least six different Roma groups living in Austria (see figure 4).

<i>name</i>	<i>in Austria</i>	<i>coming from</i>
Burgenland Roma	since fifteenth century	Hungary
Lovari	since 1900/1956*	Slovakia, Hungary
Sinti	since nineteenth century	Bohemia, Germany
Kalderaš	since 1965	Serbia
Gurbet	since 1965	Serbia
Arlije	since 1965	Macedonia, Kosovo

* In 1956 many Lovari—among 120,000 Hungarians—fled from Hungary to Austria, due to communist repression after the revolt there

Figure 4. Major Roma groups in Austria

Due to their specific history, the social structure of Roma is very different from that of other Austrian minorities. This becomes clear when we take one of the very useful definitions of what constitutes a minority and try to apply it to the Roma. According to Adelaida Reyes (1979), “an ethnic group is a collectivity within a larger society having real or putative common ancestry, memories of a shared historical past and a cultural focus on one or more symbolic elements of their peoplehood” (after Schermerhorn 1970:12). Nearly every keyword in this definition proves to be problematic when applied to the Roma in Austria. Although, to a certain extent, there is a common feeling of belonging to one people, the most important level of identification is represented primarily by the greater family and only secondarily by the cultural group. Other Roma groups are considered to be very different and often not even Roma. The reason is a lack of “common ancestry” and “shared historical past.” Roma groups in Austria have entered the country at different times from different regions. That the Roma made their way from northern India to Europe and that Romani has Sanskrit roots is not common knowledge

among the Roma, not part of their “national narrative.”¹⁰ Their common bond is mainly the experience of discrimination, the “shared or common enemy.” If we try to find “symbolic cultural elements” there is, of course, the Romani language. But Romani is spoken in many different variants, influenced by many different languages on the long way from India to Europe and to Austria; indeed, some groups no longer speak it. Nevertheless, it is a stronger identity marker than music. The music styles have been very much influenced by surrounding cultures because there has always been a tradition of professional Roma musicians performing for the majority society. Thus a great variety of local styles influenced Romani music. There are no common “musical roots” in Romani music.

This diversity is also mirrored in the political and cultural situation of Roma in Austria. There is not just one political organization representing all the Roma in Austria, there are several, the most influential being Romano Centro, Kulturverein österreichischer Roma, Romani Dori, Roma-Service, Roma, Ketani, Gypsy Info, and Romano Drom. All of them represent different Roma groups with different cultural backgrounds and different agendas. The musical styles these groups identify with are very different from each other: beside the Lovari style, there is Serbian Roma music; as well as Hungarian Roma styles, there is “oriental” Roma music from Macedonia alongside Sinti Jazz; and all forms of fusions with jazz, pop, and rock. Whose music is Roma music? Which style is going to represent Romani culture in public? Severe conflicts have arisen from this question, especially among musicians, fuelled in addition by jealousy and ethnocentrism. Problems started as early as 1990 with the first public presentation. The Kalderaš think that Ruža’s songs are not Romani music, and that is what she in turn thinks of their instrumental music. For the Sinti, the only style they identify with is the Sinti-Jazz of Django Reinhardt, and for the Burgenland Roma it used to be Hungarian Gypsy music and some old traditional songs at that time. This might not be a problem for the ethnomusicologist who is an outsider, for all these styles can be the subject of research. It is not even a problem in public presentation, if you present them separately and always explain the distinctions. However, it starts to be a problem when one group wants to monopolize public presentation, which has a lot to do with intra-Romani politics and the perceived power of music as a means of cultural expression. (And, of course, it had to do with financial means. For the first time, state authorities had subsidized an event of Romani culture. Thus many thought monopolizing the musical representation in promoting the style of their own group would mean a solid income for relatives, clan members, and their own organization.) This problem had never occurred until the Roma were presented to the public, until applied ethnomusicology had found a new forum for these styles, until they had been staged for the Austrian public as the proof of a cultural heritage in a political process.

The promotion of specific musical styles that underlined “difference” shaped the whole Roma music scene in Austria at that time. My initial fascination in the “meaning through music” of a very specific musical style, so different to all I had

10. The Roma had entered Europe already in 1100, but only in the eighteenth century did scholars prove the Indian origin of the Roma by language analysis. Johann Christian Rüdiger (1990 [1782]) was the first linguist to discover the Sanskrit roots of Romani language.

experienced before, stood at the beginning of applied action and influenced it, having also negative results. I still believe that in the specific situation of Austria in 1989 the application of ethnomusicological findings was absolutely necessary. But the situation in 2006 is quite different.

There is an ongoing learning process for me as an ethnomusicologist. The ways of expressing identity, of meaning through music by Roma, have changed since 1988. I started my paper with the example of the film that emphasized the difference between Roma and non Roma, the “you will never understand us.” A certain aspect of identity—the ethnic—was stressed. The cultural expressions of that specific aspect played an important role in the whole recognition process, with the proving of heritage and tradition. But, as we know, there are more ingredients to identity than just ethnicity. Nowadays young Roma musicians find other ways to mean through music, they use other forms to convey similar messages.

For the Burgenland Roma, who had founded the first Roma organization in Austria, and had therefore started the process of claiming political recognition, *traditional* Roma music is no longer important. This shift became obvious in the cultural programme presented on the occasion of the tenth anniversary of the bomb attack in February 2005. No traditional music whatsoever was to be found. What could be found were many film projects, comedy shows, exhibitions, political discussions, popular music, and contemporary composition, using some traditional elements—especially, one traditional song, “Ma rov, ma rov” (“Do not Weep”) appeared several times. The organizer of the festival, Peter Wagner, said in an interview that it was not his intention to exclude traditional music, but as he was cooperating closely with the Roma in this project, he had to follow their wishes, and traditional music simply did not come up. For the younger generation of Burgenland Roma, musical identification has moved to other genres. I was involved in one of the panel discussions during the event and I raised the issue of “old traditional songs,” like “Ma rov, ma rov,” and how important they seemed to me. I was told by some musicians that this old stuff was not worth mentioning any more and that there were new songs, new musical expressions, modern, individual ways of musical articulation. This corresponds very much to Svanibor Pettan’s (1996, 2001a) findings concerning the Roma musicians in Kosovo. He emphasizes the fact that Roma musicians do not necessarily cherish cultural heritage, but on the contrary often try to be as modern as possible and to include new styles—meeting their aesthetic criteria—in order to please the public. This stands in great contrast to the traditional folklore ensembles of other ethnic communities, whose repertoire is related to “old,” “rural,” and “ethnic,” and is meant to celebrate cultural heritage. Burgenland Roma have chosen to adopt other music styles. In 2005, at the tenth anniversary, young Roma reflected on the bomb attack with a rap in German as a political statement against racism.

Performers: Backspinna Crew

Title: "Thr versteht es einfach nicht" (You simply don't understand)

Beginning of the rap text:

<p>Ich seh das so: Ich könnte mir kein Urteil über einen Menschen machen den ich nicht mal kenne ... und ich versteh die Leute nicht, die behaupten dass alle Ausländer falsch sind ...</p>	<p>I see it this way: I can't judge a person whom I've never met ... and I don't understand people who say all foreigners are false ...</p>
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The text uses the language of young people in Austria, in a typical rap manner, and verbalizes the stupidity of racism from the perspective of a young man, using different arguments, such as how can you judge someone whom you have never met. Further on, he says he raps in order to remember the four victims of the bomb attack. That is one connection to Romani culture; another is some images in the video. We mostly see the musicians in the studio, surrounded by modern recording equipment, but there are some pictures of Oberwart, showing the graves and the monument to remember the dead among other local places. And we see the young men in that surrounding. But if you are not familiar with the history or the local situation, you would not realize that these rappers are Burgenland Roma. No "ethnic" symbols in the traditional sense are used. This is in stark contrast to the example I described at the beginning, or to the treatment in the musical *Coming Home*.

I can compare this making of "meaning through music" to another song by Ruža Nikolić-Lakatos, which she made in the Lovari tradition four days after the bomb attack (1995). Ruža used a traditional melody and also produced a video (Hetzer 1995). She sings the very sad song in the ambience of her home in Romani language, wears a traditional Romani dress, and is accompanied by her husband and two sons on the guitar. We see pictures of the funeral in Oberwart. Here we see a fifty-year-old Roma woman expressing her sorrow in a way she has adopted from her forefathers, her singing being an individual expression using cultural practices she has grown up with and finds useful to express her feelings. The twenty-year-old Roma rappers were doing the same, but they had grown up with different cultural practices in another generation. The act of "meaning through music" is similar in both cases, despite the difference in musical genre.

Conclusion

The process I described here allows several conclusions concerning the relevance of applied ethnomusicology for studies of music and minorities. Ethnomusicology may be important in proving, documenting, and mediating "cultural heritage" for minorities. I have tried to demonstrate that in certain political processes it is of relevance. Several positive results of political or cultural applications of ethnomusicological work for indigenous minorities in various parts of the world are presented in "Traditional Music in Community Life" (Seeger 1997). For instance, in her essay "Songs, Land Rights, and Archives in Australia," Grace Koch reports

on the advantages that arose for Aborigines thanks to their research of documents (Koch 1997). For a certain time in Austria, the celebration of Romani cultural heritage was important in achieving political recognition.

What I learned additionally to my experiences with the Roma and to problems that arose is that we have to be particularly careful with concepts like “collective symbolic identities” in general and especially when applied to the younger generations. Eva Fock writes in her study of young descendants of Turkish immigrants in Denmark:

In the eyes of the majority, symbolic collective identities overshadow the much more complex and vulnerable individual identities of the youngsters. Without looking beyond what is served on a silver plate by media or public politics, the old stereotypes of “ethnic” and “traditional” youngsters as strangers in a modern world are maintained. In reality, the individual way of combining a clear personal preference with the ability to adapt to constantly changing demands, is typical for these youngsters. (Fock 1999:75)

Fock describes a phenomenon in Denmark that can similarly be observed among the Austrian Burgenland Roma. If young Burgenland Roma choose to rap in German, it might not be what the majority expects from Roma. It might also contrast with the “back to the roots” movement of the last years in Roma musical history in Austria and it might also surprise ethnomusicologists who contributed to that movement. But it is their way of contemporaneous musical expression. If there had not been a certain empowerment of the Roma before, the young Roma would perhaps not have been able to find their individual manner of musical expression and surely they would not have been heard by the majority. Ethnomusicologists’ mediation of cultures has paved the way and given a platform to minority musicians who are now free to choose to deny the “ethnic” stereotypes expected by the majority. The whole political movement has given young Roma the chance to choose from different musical identities; they also may adopt the role models of the majority—or, in this case, African Americans, the minority whose music of identity and resistance has been and remains the musical model for youth expression of numerous minorities around the world. Researchers should no longer expect “difference” or the “exotic” as a starting point; rather, strategies have to change according to political realities. Ethnomusicology is limited by definitions like “all tribal and folk music and every kind of non-Western art music” (Kunst 1969:1) or a strong concern for “the authentic,” by which was meant “the old, the unchanging ... untouched by the modern world” (critiqued in Nettl 1975:18). This may not seem worth mentioning, at least in the context of ethnomusicology in the USA, but it definitely still is relevant in relation to the study of European traditions. Conservative folk music research still is very influential, especially in Eastern Europe, and for these researchers Roma rap would be placed within the frame of “not authentic” and, therefore, not worth investigating. Applied research focusing on the musical expressions of Roma in Austria now would have to stress the similarities with mainstream music youth culture and not the differences.

Of course there are many other aspects of the wide field of applied ethnomusicology, but, in my opinion, the political relevance and political application of ethnomusicological results seem to be the aspects that are most tightly connected to research on minorities, especially if severely discriminated minorities are involved. Minority issues seem to call for applied work, on the condition that we choose to work in accordance with our partners (musical informants, social informants, teachers, or whatever we call them).

I started my long journey into Romani culture in order to “understand it through the means of music.” I am still travelling and there is still much to discover and to learn. I was honoured with sympathy and intimacy by the Roma, who shared their lives and their musical world with me. They trusted me to present their world to the inhabitants of my world through public presentations and publications. I have participated in the political empowerment movement. I probably made mistakes, and misunderstandings still arise; young generations have quite different musical role models than the ones presented in my former ethnomusicological publications. But I learned about the values of applied ethnomusicology, especially with a people like the Roma. The situation of the Roma in Austria has changed since 1988. There is much more information now, teachers in schools organize Roma-related projects, the Romani language is taught in school as well as at university, Romani musicians are invited to all major festivals, and the Roma have a better legal status by being accepted as a *Volksgruppe*. These goals were reached by the Romani organizations themselves, but ethnomusicology, like other scholarly fields, was able to play an important part in this process.

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