

# Experiences and Perceptions of Multiculturality, Diversity, Whiteness and White Privilege in Music Teacher Education in Mid-Norway – Contributions to Excluding Structures

*Sunniva Skjøstad Hovde*

Queen Maud University College

**Abstract:** This article focuses on how staff in musical teacher education institutions experience and perceive the terms *multiculturality*, *diversity*, *whiteness* and *white privilege*, and how this might contribute to excluding structures. The author suggests through a post-qualitative rhizomatic analysis some ways through which excluding structures might be maintained, some touchpoints between different fields of practice, and some marginal practices with enough power to create alternative norms. The author also suggests some points of immanence, what can be seen as remaining within (unspoken of) the practices and a list of possible excluding practices and/or possible consequences for the marginalized groups.

**Keywords:** systemic racism, higher music education, teacher education, multiculturalism, whiteness

In the report “Culture + School = True” [author’s translation] (Berge et al., 2019, p. 186), the authors point out the unbalanced social and cultural representations in Norwegian schools of music and performing arts (NSMPA). There is no information in any language but Norwegian, and

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web information is relied upon to access the local NSMPA. Leaders in NSMPAs also confirm that this is an issue they are working on; this bothers them and is important for them, as they do not fulfil their societal mandate if there is a mismatch between the population's diversity and the demographics in NSMPAs (Kulturskolenettverket, 2019). The Arts Council in Norway has led the project *An Inclusive Cultural Sector in the Nordics*, which was finalized in 2019.<sup>1</sup> The departing point here was that the cultural sector in the Nordics has not been inclusive enough, which has resulted in a lack of diversity, which threatens the prerequisite of democracy. The whole cultural sector recruits music directors, musicians, teachers and administrators from the music education institutions in Norway; in Mid-Norway, this means that they are recruiting mainly from higher music education institutions in Mid-Norway, all of which are situated in the Trøndelag region. The author also works at one of these institutions. It has been important to write in a way where as little as possible can be identified to a specific individual or institution. I have, been leaning on, amongst others, ethical guidelines for humanities and social science, from NESH (2019). Particularly on the issues of respect for individuals, groups and institutions.

These institutions also recruit music teachers for primary, secondary and high schools as well as for higher education. Very little is known regarding the cultural or ethnic backgrounds of teachers in primary and secondary schools in Norway, but it is known that the teachers' backgrounds, educations and acquired knowledge are crucial when it comes to the content and methods used when teaching (Sætre et al., 2016). If structural and formal documents do not really shape what or how a person teaches (Sætre et al., 2016), then it becomes even more important for a student's education to address issues that they might not have experienced in daily life, such as issues regarding diversity and multiculturality.

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1 The intention of the project was to supply NSMPAs with "more knowledge on, and insight in, how refugees, asylum seekers, minority language speakers and others with different cultural backgrounds can be included through the communities' art-and cultural offers" (Kulturskolen som inkluderende kraft i lokalsamfunnet [NSMPAs as an inclusive power in local communities], n.d.; author's translation).

This would also be important to help students understand their privileges and how (lack of) privilege affects us.

This inquiry has a decolonial starting point, as I intend to question the normative structures that might make us contribute to an oppressive/exclusive cultural representation in music teacher education. The term *decolonialism* entered Norwegian higher education with strength in 2018 when Studentenes og Akademikernes Internasjonale Hjelpfond (SAIH) published a resolution (*Hva mener vi med avkolonisering av høyere utdanning?* [What do we mean by Decolonization of Higher Education?]) for the decolonisation of academia. They point out that colonial processes have created oppressive and unbalanced power structures, systems and dynamics which instruct what has been acknowledged as knowledge as well as what is taught and by whom. This is also how I understand why we need to discuss power structures, systems and dynamics in our educational systems.

Since February 2020, when the Black Lives Matter movement reached a worldwide audience, systemic racism has also become an issue of discussion in Norway. At the Oslo National Academy of Arts in Oslo (KHIO), this has already been under discussion for some time (Kifle, 2020). We have not had these discussions openly in Trøndelag, where the institutions of Nord University, Department of Teacher Education at the Norwegian University of Science and Technology (NTNU, ILU), Department of Music at the Norwegian University of Science and Technology (NTNU, IM)<sup>2</sup> and Queen Mauds University College are placed. Of the permanent staff, no employee identifies as a person of colour. There is one employee with a Sami background, one with a Vietnamese background, three with northern European (not Norwegian) backgrounds and one with an American background. The total number of employees at the four departments is approximately 65.

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2 The entire department consists of Dance Studies, Music Technology, Musicology and Music Performance Studies, but Dance Studies and Music Technology have not been included in this study as they do not recruit much to the various teaching positions within Norwegian Schools of Music and Performing Arts (NSMPAs) and the regular school system. It should be known that these two sections have many more students and employees with more diverse backgrounds, both intersectional and ethnic.

Both Kulturskolenettverket (2019) and Berge et al. (2019) point out that if we want to achieve a more correct representation of the population in music education, it has to be done structurally. A more correct representation of the population in employees and students is important for many of those interviewed, though not all. It is not a consensus that diversity is always wanted, or that it is important, but everyone acknowledged the importance of role models.

My aim is to inquire how we, in music education, understand the terms *multiculturalism*, *diversity*,<sup>3</sup> *whiteness* and *white privilege*. I interviewed three groups and seven individual employees in music education in Trøndelag about their experiences and perceptions of these terms in both their artistic and pedagogical lives, in their research and in their private lives.

My point of departure is that if an all-white group, where almost all individuals identify as Norwegian, is not obliged to address the issues of multiculturalism and privilege in their classes, then students will have little experience in discussing whiteness and how white privilege and whiteness in general affect their discourses. If they have not had personal experiences of these matters, then they have heard little about how life, culture and art-making is affected by being marginalised (like many people of colour, muslims or indigenous people in Norway have been), and if experiences and familiarity with terms like *multiculturalism* are scarce, then we will unconsciously reproduce the oppressive and exclusive structures that already are at work.

“Multiculturalism” is a term that has been used widely when discussing cultural diversity in Norway, which is why I chose this particular term, since many people would prefer to use the terms “cultural diversity” or just “diversity.” Awareness of privilege and (lack thereof) racialised/marginalising experiences are perspectives many of the participants (of colour or marginalised ethnicities) I have interviewed in other projects like “Global Musicking” (Hovde, 2012) and “A Muslim Afro Joik in Swedish in Norway”<sup>4</sup> (Fazlic, 2019) see as crucial to understand, discuss and fight structures and practices which maintain unbalanced cultural

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3 This term has been added as many of the interviewed rather wanted to talk about diversity than multiculturalism.

4 A theatre performance I followed and did research/documentation for in the pilot.

representation in the arts and in education. I am curious whether music educators are aware of their whiteness and I am interested in the privileges and the implications of both situations. Do they consider their own “racialized social location and their [own] status within the racial hierarchy” (Hankins et al., 2012)?

I have therefore carefully chosen the terms “multiculturality” and “whiteness/white privilege” to look at how these terms are treated and understood, how they are part of the praxis and backgrounds in music teacher education in Mid-Norway.

This article is a post-qualitative inquiry; I do not seek representation or an essence, and I do not lean on any qualitative methodology. I seek to de-normalise the norms in the material, in line with how St. Pierre (2020) sees post-qualitative inquiries, and I look at what appears as immanent in the rhizomatic analysis of experiences and perceptions. Like St. Pierre (2020), I lean on the philosophy of immanence, the way Deleuze sees it, as what is remaining within (Deleuze, 2005, p. 252) and, at the same time, as what might hold different energies or directions together (Deleuze, 2005, p. 200). This is relevant when we discuss multiculturalism and whiteness/privilege as there are many lines and directions, but there are still powers that keep the lines together and powers which enable flight from the established order. I will say something about what I see as taken for granted, immanent and steadfast. I am interested in what the experiences and perceptions of the terms “multiculturality” and “whiteness” do not address, what they take for granted as immanent in the established rhizome of music education, and what is working to destabilise what is remaining within this understanding. This inquiry gives us examples of what is created as central and peripheral, what is immanent and what is marginalised when discussing multiculturalism, diversity and whiteness/white privilege.

Informed by the points mentioned above, my analytical question is: How do music-teacher educators in Trøndelag experience and perceive practices, values and significance related to the terms *multiculturality* and *whiteness/white privilege*, and how does this contribute to a reproduction of oppressive/exclusive structures through de-territorialising and re-territorialising existing relations and structures of power?

## Theory

### Multiculturality

Multiculturality, as a term, has status as the subject of this inquiry – I look at how music educators re-territorialise and de-territorialise the term through how they position themselves towards and against established perceptions and practices. I also use different definitions of multiculturalism to analyse experiences and perceptions of the term in the material. Multiculturalism, and variations of the term, is commonly used in curricula and policy work to describe “societies, objects, individuals or ways of thinking where a variety of cultural co-understanding are represented within the same unity” (Rønningen, 2015, p. 24; translation by the author). Rønningen points out that the term works as an empty stereotype of difference if it is not followed by more precise and informative material. This is what I want music educators to add.

Matarasso (2013, 2019) understands multiculturalism in the same way as other types of diversity, e.g. biological diversity. We seem to agree that we need biological diversity to survive on this planet, where all living creatures together produce diversity. If we look at cultural diversity the same way, it would be not only the marginal musical practice’s that produce diversity but also the dominant practice; hence, we are all part of the diversity (Matarasso, 2013). In this regard, we could say, from the report “Culture + School = True” (Berge et al., 2019), that there is an overrepresentation of one part of the population’s diversity in music education and in NSMPAs.

Teachers’ lack of competence in the area of multiculturalism might contribute to the invisibility of students with immigrant backgrounds, as the teachers would not be trained to see diversity potentials (Skrefsrud & Østberg, 2015). The difference in how teachers understand multiculturalism, as a problem or as a resource, also affects the process of stereotyping (Hauge, 2014). This is a pivotal point in why I use the perception and experiences of multiculturalism as a means to look at power. How music educators understand multiculturalism gives them the power to define and legitimise, de-territorialise and re-territorialise norms e.g. stereotypes. Lund (2018) emphasises the importance of a structural competence

on these issues. They found that employees at schools where the multicultural perspective was outsourced to one or two specific teachers, were significantly more insecure on how to use educational and sociocultural tools to strengthen marginalized students.

Kallio and Westerlund state the importance of challenging cultural, musical and educational comfort zones in the work of reconstructing music educational perspectives. This is uncomfortable, but they see this as highly necessary, as these experiences touch upon “the art of living with difference” (Kallio & Westerlund, 2020, p. 47) if one is to understand a world of difference. This acts as a subway to arrive at the issues of whiteness and white privilege in this article.

The term *multiculturality* and how it was discussed was criticised on several occasions through the interviews. Bringing in *transculturality* as a way of nuancing was done as one participant experienced multiculturalism as “wobbly” and empty: “We integrate perspectives from a wide diversity of music cultures in ourselves!” (interviewee’s translation). Another participant emphasised the emptiness of the term but also found it difficult to use any other word. The term was also criticised for overly focusing on background, geography, origin and the parents’ culture.

## Whiteness/White Privilege

How white bodies understand themselves is relevant in this project, as white privilege both facilitates power to white bodies and marginalises the relevance of discussing race in shaping social outcomes (Hankins et al., 2012). NSMPAs are an educational praxis, a physical and artistic space that racializes through an unbalanced representation.

Keinz and Lewicki (2019) point to how the European body is wanted, legitimate and standard, associated with whiteness, secularity, acceptable class/gender dynamics and systems, and beauty. These privileges are not immediately visible for the ones possessing them, but they seep through every pore in the lives of the ones not holding them.

This is why I have been asking about whiteness/white privilege. Lacking an awareness of whiteness/white privilege encourages stereotyping, as pointed out by Hauge’s (2014) discussion of multiculturalism. The issue

of whiteness or privilege is treated in this article as a way of looking at music educators' awareness of themselves in a multicultural context and their knowledge of how their white (and other) privilege(s) influence both them and their students.

## De-territorialisation and Re-territorialisation

I connect what Hauge says about stereotyping to Deleuze and Guattary (2005) and their way of looking at how something becomes true over and over and over again through re-territorialising the established. Re-territorialisation is a process of becoming what is already there, again and again; it is reproducing what is already established. De-territorialisation, on the other hand, is a process of becoming something else, where new energies form and affect the environment. With de-territorialisation, new becomings<sup>5</sup> are happening, and the rhizome is taken to the periphery of what it is (Deleuze, 2005, p. 69–71). A de-territorialisation will have consequences for the collective, and re-territorialisation affects the individual rather than the collective, as it legitimises what the environment has adjusted to over time. They work together and are not to be seen as dichotomies (Hovde, 2012).

The material deals with many areas of musicianship, music pedagogy and music teaching, e.g. professionalism. An example of de-territorialisation and re-territorialisation is how talking about multiculturalism opens up the way the interviewees are becoming artists and pedagogues through their own definitions and positionings. One talked about how pedagogues use music as a tool for subtle everyday joy and positioned artists as the ones going into the deep dark of our emotional range; the participant is, through this, making himself part of the process of being an artist, and because he is a music pedagogue through his practice of teaching music, he is also attempting to de-territorialise the practice of music pedagogues. He is not, as I see it, succeeding, because he described his own practices as “without companionship” in his institution. He also

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5 “Becomings” is a term from Deleuze and Guattari (2005), deriving from the French word *devenir*, and it refers to the way they look at how something is becoming something, and not how something is.

added that it would be different in other institutions, where more people would feel the same as him. His part in both re-territorialising his own identity as a musician and not as a pedagogue plus de-territorialising the music pedagogue is typical of these processes. They happen at the same time, and often about the same, but with different directions and power.

## Rhizomatic Analysis and the Lines of Flight

A rhizomatic analysis focuses on the diversity of entrances, crossroads and exits along the many lines produced by actors in the rhizome. A rhizomatic understanding of the world implies that one does not look at the intention, but the practice; it is how one observes movements and becomings more than what “is” (Hovde, 2012, p. 26). A biological rhizome is a fungus root structure with many or no source of creation, no start or end, and multiple meeting points where the lines of the rhizome cross each other or touch each other – touching points. If I create a rhizome of the utterances from the music educators I have interviewed, the perceptions that are seen as immanent or remaining within the norm, will form clusters of energy; they will re-territorialise the rhizome that has been legitimised over and over again. The borders of the rhizome of utterances will be determined by the energies keeping it together, re-territorialising it (Deleuze, 2005, p. 29). The de-territorialising perceptions of the term *multiculturality* would, if they have enough energy and momentum, form lines of flight to shape new rhizomes on their own (Hovde, 2012).

## Power

Lindgren claims that education, including NSMPAs, pretends to be a tool that everyone can use to enter any discourse. In any case, the educational system is political, which means that it is a particular conformation or change of discourses and knowledge, and thus power. Power is always present and always produces hierarchies of values (Lindgren, 2006, p. 51).

Lindgren is not concerned with formal power, but that formal power hides in structures of power where social relations and informal praxis are organised and regulated. This is relevant in light of NSMPAs, as

formalities exist, but the praxis's values and hierarchies are still working as they did before. I dive into those informal power structures connected to how we understand specific terms and how we value them.

Power is a lens of analysis in this article, as I see re-territorialisation and de-territorialisation as means of power. Through re-territorialisation, we give power to the collective, or the established practices, while de-territorialisation has consequences for the established, and for the community, but gives power to the marginalised.

## Who is Asked and What is Asked?

As St. Pierre wrote, “post qualitative inquiry begins not with a social science research methodology, but with a philosophy of immanence” (2020, p. 2). Later, I explain how I perform the analysis, which is not so much a methodology, but transparency in how I treated the material.

The two main questions I ask in the interviews are:

- What does it mean for you to be white, in your musical praxis, your teaching or research? Have you received any advantages or disadvantages because of this?<sup>6</sup>
- What has the term, or the praxis associated with the term, *multicultural* meant for you in your studies, your musical background, or your present teaching and research?

These questions are different from each other in terms of what material they generate. The first is operationalised by me, and I am not asking about their opinions or perceptions of the term, but merely about how they have experienced what I define as whiteness or white privilege. The term in the second prompt must be interpreted by the interviewee.

The empirical material in the article comes from four musical education institutions in Mid-Norway, which recruit music teachers for all

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6 It was not necessary to phrase this differently, as all interviewees identified as white, which includes nationalities within Northern Europe. The Sami identity has been discussed when using the term “white,” as it might point to “Norwegian” in this context, but this is not a discussion in this article, as it is related to the methodology, which is questioned in another article.

levels of music education. Altogether, 20 persons were involved in these interviews. Some of the interviews were done in groups, and some participants requested individual interviews. The individual interviews were done mostly for logistical reasons, but some also expressed the wish to do a separate interview because they did not feel comfortable talking about this in a group of colleagues. One individual declined to be interviewed for the same reasons.

## What is Told: Strata of Themes

I looked at how participants' utterances positioned some things at the margins and some things at the centre, and I observed what was taken for granted, not spoken but immanent, in their utterances. Did they position themselves in opposition to something specific? Were the utterances part of a de-territorialisation process or a re-territorialisation process? Were they returning power to the established or were they challenging it, and with which arguments and reasonings?

I thematically sorted the material, but I have not reduced the material, as that would be a step into a qualitative methodology that I do not use here. This is only done as a first step of analysis to more clearly see which areas the power is dealing with; in other words, the areas which seemed to be important for the interviewees. These thematic areas were "musical backgrounds," "professionalism" and "whiteness and black music". These themes are strata of material that were overlaid to identify lines of flight indicating energetic but de-territorialising thoughts to see where many threads touch each other, suggesting a connection (touching points). A touching point is a place where the different themes have experiences and perspectives in common, where the material comes together and keeps itself together in a tight rhizomatic structure. This is not a reduction to see what is "most common" or a generalisation, but rather a way of looking at where the material connects in the context of the strata of themes. An example of this is a type of "us-versus-them-thinking," where "multicultural" is conceptualised as someone outside of the self – as refugees, as students who want to play a genre of music that is not offered, as someone from another

country, as someone participating in Fargespill,<sup>7</sup> as someone who is different from them or the institution or as someone who doesn't fit in or has to be helped to fit in; in these situations, the "other" often does not speak the language well.

At the end of the analysis, I look at how power through de-territorialisation and re-territorialisation is expressed in these touching points and in the solitary lines of flight. I also look at what could have been, but was not, said, which corresponds with Elisabeth St. Pierre's (2020, p. 1) outline of post-qualitative inquiries.

## Assessment Practices, Curricula and Administrative Decisions

There are differences in how curricula, assessment practices and administrative decisions are given power; some interviewees mentioned these as significant barriers to diversity or as contributing to oppressive or exclusive structures. The educators saw these documents' powers differently, and when it came to assessment practices, only the ones unhappy with the praxes mentioned them. This was the one area with a clearly expressed dichotomy between art music traditions and less notation-oriented traditions.

The responsibility for a lack of diversity was partially attributed to a lack of money: "If we could use money freely and hire different competencies and varied backgrounds,<sup>8</sup> it would colour our programs." The language, and the power, of policy documents was problematised and connected to the narrated dichotomy between pedagogues and artists: "When we write these documents, there is no space for the language of art. There isn't room for anything else but non-feelings. This opens up the possibility to teach without feelings because it does not say you have to."

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7 While Fargespill (A project where young artists play with professional musicians, emphasizing the young artists multicultural backgrounds, in different ways. The word "farge" means "color", "spill" might be translated with "play" as in "playing music, or/and "play" as in how a diversity of colors can be reflected/play on a wall, in trees, in the water or the rainbow. <https://fargespill.no/>) is open to students both with Norwegian and with other cultural backgrounds, in these interviews, it was clear that Fargespill was repeatedly viewed as the arena for the "multicultural" child.

8 Different from the dominant group of employees at the institution.

Assessment practices are significant in defining legitimate knowledge and are seen by some as a strong contributor to the unbalanced representation since the notation praxis from Western art music seems to be a norm when submitting musical assessments. Some see this as a marginal praxis globally, and some present the privilege of coming from a Western classical tradition as discriminating. They also state that this was driven by the NSMPA's conservative demand for teachers, "as they preferably hire someone from the same background as the mainstream teacher in the NSMPAs: the classically schooled." Other participants stated that the students have to be evaluated on something and that they have to leave the institution with some measured knowledge.

At a group interview, one of these institutions compared the challenges with culturally diverse students with problems they faced when adjusting assessments and exams for a visually impaired student. These two examples of marginalisation were put in the same bag. This can be seen as a way of exercising a problem-oriented diversity perspective (Hauge, 2014); when someone is different from the expected norm, where a form of "colour blindness" is employed (Skrefsrud & Østberg, 2015). Hankins et al. see this as a result of whiteness, as this privilege might contribute to the ability of marginalising the relevance of race, in shaping outcomes (2019).

The tension between musician-professionality and pedagogy-professionality comes to the surface also within these formalities. The more artistic-oriented perspective is presented as marginalised because it associates the body with feelings and the "real flesh-and-blood world" and it is marginalised when it comes to assessment practices, because it is not measurable and because it is scary "for the white non-emotional so-called rational pedagogy"; this is similar to how Keinz and Lewicki (2019) discuss white European bodies and how Western art music has been presented as civilised, non-racialised, without context and universal (DeNora, 1997; Mcclary, 2002).

## Musical Backgrounds, Practices and Epistemologies

Many interviewees point to one specific music researcher in the region as pivotal in the formation of multicultural competence. He was described

as someone who challenged and annoyed his colleagues by always questioning the paradigms of Western art music and Western-oriented music philosophy. By pulling his colleagues out of their comfort zones, like Kallio and Westerlund (2020) described, he was seen as a force that moved students into unknown musical and pedagogical grounds. He is, by putting the students in these situations, giving them an opportunity to surrender to a de-territorialisation of the existing syllabus.

Some went on study trips outside of Europe and mentioned these as experiences crucial to the musical and pedagogical choices made later in life and to how they look at cultural heritage and global multiculturalism because they accessed repertoires, philosophies and ways of teaching different from West-European genres. One explained the pivotal point of understanding that different cultures have different logics and “can’t be measured through ‘my’ judgement on what is a good life”, which came while travelling. The participant experienced that when he went from walking the streets and taking in what he saw as a poor way of living to entering a small rehearsal studio, a known environment where everyone turned into musicians. He simply understood very deeply that he had no possible way of having an opinion about their lives, as they all played on equal terms; they ate together, and they travelled together. This experience was explained as a concrete reason for a strong belief in cultural meetings – real cultural meetings, “as it makes you understand music as part of us and our context.” This example shows how the interviewee went through a process of re-territorialising his own values while travelling, and then, through musical practice, suddenly had a deep feeling that this diversity had nothing to do with his norm, because “I come from a very different and in many senses very privileged place,” so he could not understand or evaluate this other reality.

“Everyone talked about their education being Western-based, some more than others: “There were no other cultures where I grew up. It was a marching band and NSMPA. And I played alone. It was two different kinds of music. One was at the NSMPA, where the art-music way of teaching “right or wrong ways of doing something” was dominant, and the other kind of music was done on the side, improvising, joking, making music and being playful.” (Interviewee)

The widespread homogeneity in musical background is interesting, as very few question it; it seems to be the most normative force in the whole material.

Unity through repertoire from Norwegian traditional music was thematised as important by some music educators, and during my analysis, this became evident in a few interviews. This kind of repertoire was described as something they expect the students to know, and instructors do not usually have to argue for its inclusion in the curricula. It was described as something that used to be taken for granted, and many expressed surprise and disappointment that it is no longer part of the norm. It is not still immanent in the repertoire of what should be learned, and as such is not part of the existing rhizome. The traditional Norwegian repertoire seems to have lost its power as relevant for the students, which is both frustrating and surprising for the teachers.

A few interviewees spoke of multiculturalism as diversity at home, in a class, in society or within a community, and they talked about it in opposition to what they viewed as the mainstream perspective. Another way of talking about multiculturalism is as part of strictly musical situations, where the “multicultural musician” is positioned as “the other.” In both of these cases, it is immanent that multiculturalism is seen by society as “the other” even though the individuals interviewed have diverging opinions about what it actually is. One participant defined multiculturalism as “the total of all variations of cultural expressions in a group or local society,” very much in line with Matarasso (2013), and did not position himself either within or outside the norm.

One stressed the need to teach students not to reproduce their teachers. He sought a de-territorialising direction within the student’s repertoire, technique or genre, and his way of looking at diversity in students’ lives as a resource makes me think about Østern and Hovde’s (2019) way of seeing life as artistic material as something inseparable from music.

To start “in the Music itself” (not in theory, history or pedagogy) is a perspective many talk about as a way of opening up to diversity and avoiding privileges, “because we improvise and we teach them to say yes to everything that comes.” “The music” is also seen as more available to everyone if the starting point is in a groove. This belief in the groove was

conveyed as progressive rather than as part of the established order. At the same time, it was not questioned, and it remained within the explanations that it is a positive force in education.

## Profession: Artist and Pedagogue?

There are significant differences in how the interviewed participants defined their professional identities. One identity was that of a music pedagogue, and “musician” was another. No participant ascribed much weight to “research profession” in their examples.

Music pedagogy was described as something that should equip all students with the ability to differentiate and facilitate any marginalisation but without necessarily being trained in specific knowledge for different marginalisations. Music pedagogy has also been called an exclusive, “Norwegian” and “white” praxis which fuels unbalanced representations and does not consider marginalised people’s needs. This interviewee feels that particularly marginalised, excluded or vulnerable people need a place to put their emotional material, as it is an emotional burden to be outside. Another participant also mentioned what he saw as the need that marginalised youth have to express themselves. “They want to do hip-hop because they feel the need to express themselves; I entered hip-hop because I loved the grooves and all the buttons and knobs to turn on. I wish they also worked here.”

One participant pointed at the importance of multiculturalism being represented by “people from foreign cultures.” This perspective of multiculturalism as a representation of “people from foreign cultures” is exclusive. For example, young people of colour, might understand themselves as Norwegian, even though they might be seen as “multicultural” or “representative of foreign cultures” by white Norwegians. This is also a perspective which focuses on multiculturalism as something that needs to be taken care of by “particularly invited ethnic musicians” (Rønningen, 2015). A more performative way of seeing music education was also presented:

To play a note written on a piece of paper is easy. Super easy! But if you are to put anything at risk and offer something, you’ll ask what they are interested in, what they play with. Maybe it is a dog! «Dog! Awesome!» Improvise the dog

on the couch with them, and maybe do some notation in the process. It might become a composition, because we record it or film it. It becomes a product without us forcing it to be a product, and it has been an eye opener for many of my students when it comes to how you can teach music. Through playing! (in Norwegian “leke”) (Interviewee)

This way of seeing teaching has a strong energy which differs substantially from other views due to this way of seeing a child as resource. He explained that this comes from an improvisational perspective. The instructor must find entrances in the student that resonate with the student which give the teacher a reason to play with the student for real and not simply for practice. This is a performative way of teaching that lets the student become himself musically again and again, but the teacher lets it happen and evolve again and again. The teacher also changes his position so that the student can always take the initiative. This is a strong de-territorialising process where a student becomes something new from moment to moment.

## Whiteness and Black Music (racialised moments)

When talking about whiteness and white privilege in relation to their backgrounds, practices and musical everyday life was new to many of the interviewees, which resulted in a wide variety of responses. Whiteness was connected to Norwegianness and white male guitarists (a stereotype in many popular music genres, including modern jazz), to limitations and to a fear of stepping into something wrong. Many talked about their connections to “black music” and how it is difficult for them to see themselves as white, musically, since they identify as mainly interested in jazz, soul, disco, blues or funk. Some mentioned that these genres have been developing a lot and maybe should not be considered “black” anymore: “Isn’t this music just for everyone now?” This was mentioned in the conversation about whiteness. It was also noted that playing “black” music was seen, by some, as something which made them feel less attached to whiteness or white privilege. This seems to be a way of taking ownership of a cultural heritage which originated from African American and African people, who paid for this with much pain, and many still do.

Solving racialisation by appropriating music is part of what white privilege can do: marginalising the importance of race, ethnicity or cultural belonging (Hankins et al., 2012).

When speaking about teaching students the music but without talking much about present privileges, diversities or marginalisation, one interviewee commented, “When we are a bunch of white people saying we are interested in black music, we are not interested the same way as we would if we had felt the context, the marginalization. We love the music, but we don’t necessarily have the context, or want the context, or are interested in communicating the context, which is pain. But we do not want to deal with this.”

Norwegianess is equated by some to whiteness, and the students’ lack of competence in Norwegian folk music came from talking about whiteness, which left me with the impression that talking about whiteness was new and somehow uncomfortable, and that the closest thing to whiteness to talk about in such a situation was what intuitively popped up as white: traditional Norwegian music, which was seen as underrepresented. “It’s almost like you have to fight to include some Norwegian culture,” and “the students don’t even know Millom Bakkar og Berg”<sup>9</sup>

The question about whiteness made one participant think about the music he was growing up with and is now playing: “It is kind of in my blood. From the neighbour and the generations before us.” The local culture and dance music is a big part of me, both professionally as a musician and in my family.” This local culture was also narrated as uninteresting, underrated and hillbilly-associated. This was the only answer to how whiteness had been important, whether anyone had felt whiteness or white privilege through their music practices.

Norwegianess and whiteness were also connected to working-class morals: “Things were supposed to be done properly, not halfway [det skulle ikke slaskes til].” Civilised behaviour and decency are two parameters Keinz and Lewicki describe as connected to European white bodies, in

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9 This is an answer that privately could have made me uncomfortable, as it turns the question from being about exclusion and discrimination of people with marginalised background into a victimisation of Norwegian culture and equates Norwegian culture with Norwegian folk music. It is, though, critical that all interviewees viewpoints are valued equally.

opposition to “carelessness,” which is related to presumptive Arabic and African bodies (Keinz & Lewicki, 2019). In other homes, there were “people from different countries discussing many issues from many places. I experienced it as diversity because they didn’t agree. I had Sami culture close as well, but it wasn’t pointed out as it was shamed at that time. Which annoys me today.” Norwegianness was also described as punctual in opposition to one of the Norwegian minorities and that this was challenging for the teacher, as punctuality was considered a Norwegian trait.

Whiteness was described as, effectively, limiting integrity in some fields as well as limiting the possibilities of what can be discussed in the classroom. The fear of talking about a marginalised population that a teacher is not part of, as when discussing racism, discrimination of Muslims or people with physical disabilities, resulted in a focus on rather general aspects of inclusion and exclusion because it made it easier to avoid any “salads you can step in” and to say something individuals in those groups would see as wrong, offending or directly discriminating.

## **Touchingpoints and Lines of Flight**

The thematic stratas I have been laying out have points of contact where they touch upon each other, regardless of time, geography, culture, etc.: touchingpoints. There are also some commonalities in how energies that goes in other directions but the established, is taking shape: Lines of flight. A line of flight refers to energies in the periphery of a rhizome that are strong enough to create their own entity and to be pronounced as different. A touching point is a point where different lines within the rhizome touch each other. They can be far from each other geographically, historically and philosophically and still have something in common for them to touch upon.

### **Solitary Line of Flight 1: Performative Understanding of Multiculturalism and Whiteness**

This solitary line of flight popped up in several places, and is present, in different ways, in all the institutions, but continuously told as a solitary

project. The music educators that share something in this line are very clear about their perspectives, and it means something to them. They talk about conflicts because of it, and they talk about not feeling at home in the institutions' dominant perspectives, whatever they may be (as this differs from institution to institution). Multiculturality or whiteness is, within this line of flight, seen as part of the individuals' complex backgrounds, as one of many variations of expressed diversity. In someone's performative musical practice, it is seen as necessary for a teacher to have an open, broad and diverse understanding of what music can be, dependent on the student's resources and interests, to understand what kind of diversity potential is present in a group or a classroom.

This perspective understands multiculturalism as a resource and suggests a problematisation of how competence and knowledge are measured and of hierarchical perceptions of musical expressions. All artistic expressions are seen as subjective, and the focus is not product-oriented but exploration. Whiteness and privileges are not important in these perspectives and experiences, even though it is seen as very important that the teachers understand their power and position. To co-create on equal terms is essential in this perspective. I see this as an overall process of de-territorialisation towards granting more power to the student, but not necessarily power towards identity politics. Some of the music educators who touched this line of a performative understanding of multiculturalism and whiteness emphasised the value of music as a place where people can express every part of themselves, including the parts not previously reflected upon but which are still embodied in the self. They see ethnicity as part of life, life as part of music, or music as part of life. Some see all contexts as disturbing, and that equality is embedded in the practice of music itself. I come back to this in the touching point titled *Music is on equal terms*.

## Touchpoint: Colour-Blindness

A specific type of "colour-blindness" comes up in different places, for example, when some music educators said that they are colour-blind, meaning that they do not really notice someone's skin complexion or

ethnic markers. “We are all multicultural” is a phrase connected to this touching point. As it is also the belief that we can all, no matter what, play on equal terms. The latter is a way of ignoring privilege and being able to, through your own privilege, marginalise the significance of privilege. This was also touched upon when one of the interviewees problematised the whole idea of diversity: “Is it actually that important that everyone and everything is represented? Do we not merely as humans represent each other?” This fuels the problems posited by Skrefsrud and Østberg (2015), that the lack of training in seeing diversity potential causes bearers of multiculturalism to be invisible.

### Touchpoint: Fear of Misstepping

In this touchpoints, there are different versions of fear of failed step. Some would avoid covering issues of marginalisation or would leave this task for someone with a different background, either in the classroom or in the staff. The practical solutions were many; some included representatives or people with knowledge about the subject in their classroom, physical resources or digital resources. Some avoided the topic and asked the students to cover it themselves. Some used students, if they were available and willing, to talk about personal diversity perspectives, and some covered it up by talking about general inclusion and exclusion.

Sami culture was discussed as a Norwegian multiculturalism with formal power via policy documents but not taught without problematisation, except from an institution with Sami staff. Other places chose to play old, archived examples to hear “traditional” Sami *joik* or focused on popular music with Sami musicians or material as a bridge to something they feel that they can talk about.

### Touchpoint: “The Music Pedagogue”

This perspective was communicated as a focus on craftsmanship, a measurable product of teaching and the teacher’s musical tradition, and was criticised both for being of little interest and for not pushing teachers out of their comfort zones, as Kallio and Westerlund emphasise as a critical

element for rethinking music pedagogy in the direction of “the art of living with difference” (2020, p. 47). I see this touching point as a strong process of re-territorialisation of what has become the pedagogical tradition over recent years. The touching point is not positioned against the established when talking about pedagogy; rather, it is told as the dominant perspective, but when talking about musical traditions there are great differences, and some saw themselves as outsiders musically, even though they felt at home in the dominant pedagogical understanding.

## Touchpoint: Music is on Equal Terms

In the line of flight concerning performativity, it was mentioned that some people would resist any contextual focus when teaching music. This touching point loosely follows the separation of musician-professionality from pedagogue-professionality. The touching point diverges from the performative line of flight, as “the multicultural” in this perspective is recognised as implicit in the musical repertoire and not necessarily connected to the individual involved. By participating in music, the people playing together are positioned as equal, and they see a focus on a specific marginalisation as disturbing, as they play the music, not the life nor its context. In this touching point, there is also an element of resistance to talk about marginalisation or structural racism, meaning that this should be left to those with specific knowledge about it. Here, it also seems to be a separation between “us” and “them” – groups are seen as different since they come from different musical cultures. I see this in relation to Hauge’s way of seeing privilege: it gives you the opportunity to marginalise the significance of it (2014).

## Immanence

I see a significant variation in how the participants saw themselves as white and as carriers of white privilege through the analysis. Some had never discussed this and found it extremely challenging because they were afraid of saying something that others, e.g. students, peers, would feel was wrong, of feeling stupid or feeling provoked. There were also several immanent perceptions expressed in the material.

The first relates to musical background, as everyone interviewed took it for granted that the common background which qualifies a person for music education or music teacher education is achieved through NSMPAs and/or a music programme at “videregående” (upper secondary school) and “folkehøgskole<sup>10</sup>” (folk high school) and the norm was discussed as Western classical music. A divergence from this path was described as “having a different background.” This is also the case for both assessment practices and teaching methods in participants’ institutions today. At the same time, genres labelled “African-American” were significant for most of the teachers. This is interesting, as it is a discrepancy between the experienced hierarchy, assessment practices and what kind of music they connect with. It is also interesting that NSMPAs are themselves seen as a conservative force, fuelling a re-territorialising process in higher education, and that reproducing NSMPA structures is closely linked to what music education institutions aim to fulfil.

The second immanence is due to what I would describe as an abyss between the terms “multicultural” and “Norwegian.” This does not mean that all the interviewees expressed their own views like this, but that the collective discussion implied that “multiculturality” and “Norwegian” do not overlap. This is remarkable because quite a few defined themselves as multicultural or as playing music which positions themselves in “musical multiculturalism” or expressed strong opinions on the matter in opposition to what they saw as an ignorant norm on the issue. This practice, where multiculturalism is segregated from the majority (in this case, being Norwegian), opposes how Matarasso (2013) describes diversity and how the author of this article defines diversity. This has made me think that the weight many participants ascribed to travelling outside of Europe to change their perceptions of music and of the world, where they experienced themselves as white and privileged, was not reconnected to their everyday lives. I am left with the impression that many of these music educators have no experience of living in a multicultural society in Norway, and that

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10 9 months program with the aim of formation, not education, where you get to practice what you learn, without any grades, no rigid curriculum and exams (folkehøgskole.no, 2020). Many music students have followed music program from upper secondary school and/or music program at a folk high school.

is maybe also why many connected “multicultural” with someone outside their lives and why they exoticized “multicultural” persons, making them tokens or representations of something. One participant suggested in an interview that her improvisational competence might be an opening to connect improvisation teaching and inclusive thinking in a teaching situation, but this has never appeared as relevant before in the teaching practice, as the issue of inclusive education had never been discussed.

A third immanence was that multiculturalism or marginalisation should be dealt with individually. None of the institutions had strategies for being more inclusive and for preventing exclusive and oppressive structures, as the University of Michigan does through their “Inclusive Teaching Initiative” which provides teachers with tools to deal with individual privileges (Inclusive Teaching Initiative, 2020). Berge et al. (2019) pointed out that it must be structures which take care of this, so that it would not be legitimate to be unaware of this field. Very few seem to be pushed out of their comfort zones by their leaders or their colleagues on these issues. This is pointed out as crucial for rethinking music pedagogy in the direction of “the art of living with difference” (Kallio & Westerland, 2020, p. 47). Marginalisation was also expected to be handled individually by the marginalised, e.g. through music. To expect marginalised people to need to express themselves more than majoritarian ones, like some music educators in the material do, is at first sight quite exoticizing, but when considering what privilege does to an individual, maybe it is not. The privileged will experience no lack of possibilities to express themselves, while it is part of marginalisation to lack spaces to be seen, expressed and acknowledged. Perhaps the mistake is to expect all individuals connected to “multiculturalism” to feel marginalised.

## **How do we Exclude, and Can we do Anything About it?**

There are a couple of situations worth looking at closely while discussing how we support oppressive and discriminative structures: When someone, without being criticised for it, compares visually disabled and racist structures/cultural discrimination, it gives a strong impression that there

is a huge lack of awareness of privilege, sensitivity towards marginalisation and knowledge about marginalisation. This is a driving force for unconscious racism, as there is a lack of knowledge about white privilege and about specific marginalisations. To consistently see bearers of multiculturalism as something different from “Norwegian” is also a driving force for unconscious racism, as it will always question someone’s identity based on complexion, ethnicity, religious markers, etc.

The performative line of flight is one of the clear de-territorialising processes, and maybe one of the strongest alternatives to the two touching points of colour-blindness and “music on equal terms,” as the colour-blind perspective in particular is generally re-territorialising in its practice and has many examples of practices, experiences and perceptions that prevent us from being more inclusive. Here are some examples of how we exclude:

- Not mentioning specific marginalisations, which makes marginalised persons feel as though their problems do not exist;
- Expecting music (“if we start in the music, we are all equal”) to be neutral, which marginalises the relevance of skin complexion and ethnicity;
- Comparing and equating the marginalisation of Norwegian folk music with non-representation of people of colour or other marginalised groups in Norway;
- Not initiating strategies at the department level or the section level to include guidelines for every person to rectify marginalisation, not simply to leave marginalisation to those who specialise in it or who have personal experiences with a particular marginalisation;
- Not teaching marginalisation out of fear of misstepping (educating yourself and asking for advice are also options);
- Exoticizing multicultural backgrounds and labelling them as “different,” as continuously looking at multiculturalism as something “foreign” that excludes you from being Norwegian;
- Focusing on scholarly achieved competence, e.g. competence to write music, to get into the education is an exclusive and possibly discriminative structure, as this greatly favours those within a specific genre and implies that this is a skill that all teachers must know,

even before entering the school (so that if someone comes from a production culture, such as hip-hop, then they will lack privilege if they try to get into an educational institution to formalise their musical competence); and

- Being afraid of stepping wrong and not daring to confront or present opinions out of a fear of someone else disagreeing with these opinions – if a person does not know what they mean or who they are, then they cannot include others, and, as such, they sustain an exclusive culture.

There were more structures in education which sustain exclusivity than I could predict. There is a severe lack of knowledge of white privilege and of the experience of marginalisation. There are also some perceptions of multiculturalism which prevent people from feeling acknowledged at institutions, in different forms and on different levels. But there are also de-territorialising initiatives that challenge these problems. Even though they are not the established perspectives, they are present in many shapes and versions. None of these practices are impossible, or even difficult to adjust, upgrade knowledge or change practices for. But it needs to be wanted or secured through central strategies to be changed; if not, it will be up to the individual to take responsibility, read up, ask and discuss.

It looks like the process of discussing these issues has started in all institutions, but many estimate something exceeding 20 years for any structural changes to occur. This perspective suggests that they see a near future where they deliberately continue to reproduce structures that support unbalanced cultural representation in music education. Still, it is a new process for many institutions, and a discussion has started with the aim of rethinking our music pedagogical perspectives if we are to support a more balanced representation in the future.

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