

Transitional Justice

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ABSTRACT

This article provides a review of literature from a variety of disciplines on the relationship between musical practices and transitional justice in the context of violence and human rights violations. In the first part, I give an overview of selected scholarly works on transitional justice, with an emphasis on truth commissions and commemorations as catalysts for collective memory. I also touch upon the interplay between memory and reconciliation. In the second part of the paper, I focus on the literature that deals with musical practices in the context of transitional justice. Taking into account existing critiques of transitional justice mechanisms as primarily top-down approaches that often do not consider local practices of transitional justice, but also survivors' needs and expectations, I contend that scholars of music can contribute significantly to putting more emphasis on and increasing the visibility of such local practices and survivors' voices. By practicing ethnographic methods and sensitivity towards cultural specificities, ethnomusicologists are well equipped to contribute to a better understanding of the culture-specific ways in which people affected by violence engage with a traumatic past. I conclude with some further suggestions for addressing the relationship between music and transitional justice.

KEYWORDS

music; transitional justice; truth commissions; reconciliation

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INTRODUCTION

In the aftermath of conflict and violence, acknowledging and confronting past injustices is one of the preconditions for moving forward and rebuilding society. This process is referred to as one of transition: from conflict to peace; from authoritarianism to democracy; from denial to truth telling; from suffering to healing. Furthermore, it includes a number of so-called transitional justice processes and mechanisms that ought to contribute to peacebuilding, democratization, and reconciliation (Fisher, 2011, p. 414). The term ‘transitional justice’ emerged in the 1980s and 1990s in relation to the transition from authoritarianism to democracy in a number of countries in Latin America (for example, Argentina and Chile) and Eastern Europe (for example, the former Soviet Bloc) (Bell, 2009, p. 7). These transitions had been initiated by the new governments formed in the aftermath of a dictatorship or military regime in these countries (Hinton, 2010, p. 3), and in collaboration with the public sector and international actors. Parallel with the emergence of the concept of transitional justice in the 1990s and the ensuing formation of the field itself in the 2000s, ethnomusicologists, especially those specializing in the musical traditions of Eastern Europe and the former USSR, increasingly focused on the changes in music caused by the transition from authoritarian regimes to democracies (for example, Baker, 2010; Buchanan, 1996, 2006; Kurkela, 2007; Sugarman, 2007; Rice, 1996, 2002). While this literature addresses multiple ways in which this transition produced changes in musical life and practices in these countries, as well as how it affected musicians themselves, it does not deal with music’s relationship to transitional justice. It is only since the mid-2000s that ethnomusicologists have begun inevitably engaging themselves with music within transitional justice processes because of their increasing focus on the role of music during and after conflict (for broader reviews of this literature, see Bergh and Sloboda, 2010; O’Connell, 2011; Rice, 2014; Sandoval, 2016). The resulting body of literature on music and transitional justice does not necessarily deal with the change in music, but how music itself can contribute to a positive change in individuals, groups, and societies, be that through assisting them in coming to terms with a traumatic past, expressing one’s own truth, or reconciliation. In this review, I focus on this growing body of literature, with an emphasis on the discussions of ways those affected by violence and human rights violations employ existing musical practices to address their traumatic past. I am informed by more recent criticisms of transitional justice mechanisms as top-down approaches (see Kent, 2011; Destrooper, 2018), and by the insistence on so-called ‘local justice’ and local politics of memory and reconciliation championed by anthropologists (Hinton, 2010). The critics of transitional justice mechanisms insist on considering ‘local’ practices of transitional justice, including, for example, local forms of testifying or mechanisms for reconciliation. In this case, the local can be interpreted as referring to both a specific locality in which these practices take place and where the violence itself occurred, but also to the practices of groups and communities of people who have been directly affected by violence and human rights violations who do not necessarily reside in a single locality, but are bound by their common experience of trauma.

The critics of transitional justice mechanisms argue that these mechanisms often do not take into account the manner in which “local communities engage with, and seek to make sense of, official transitional justice concepts and practices within particular social, political and cultural contexts” (Kent, 2011, p. 439; see also Destrooper, 2018), arguing for their ‘vernacularization’ (Engle Merry, 2006). Scholars have also recently challenged the very model of “a full acknowledgment

of the past through testimony” or the model of so-called “redemptive remembering” on which transitional justice mechanisms are based (Shaw, 2007, p. 189). Anthropologists have been particularly vocal in arguing for so-called local justice, or the manner in which

justice is experienced, perceived, conceptualized, transacted, and produced in various localities, ranging from village-level interactions between former victims and perpetrators, to offices of nongovernmental organizations, to the courtrooms of international tribunals. (Hinton, 2010, p. 1)

Conversely, anthropologists place more emphasis on the local politics of memory and reconciliation and local practices of justice, while examining the construction of and changes in narratives of the past. In addition, the very survivors of mass violence increasingly challenge the transitional justice mechanisms implemented to serve them (Shaw and Waldorf, 2010, p. 3).

As I will try to highlight in this review, the existing scholarship on the role of music in the processes of transitional justice directly responds to these critiques by focusing primarily on the musical practices of those directly affected by violence. Considering these local musical practices, this literature is marked by broader claims about music as a vehicle of memory, and, therefore, as a tool for truth telling and expressing both the individual and collective narratives of the past.¹ These local musical practices sometimes predate official transitional justice initiatives and/or are not considered during the conceptualization and implementation of transitional justice mechanisms in specific localities. Jonathan Ritter’s, Beverly Diamond’s, and Angela Impey’s case studies presented later in this paper are good examples of ethnomusicological engagement with such local practices. In addition, ethnomusicologists study local musical practices that can be characterized as ‘testimonial’ in contexts where well-known transitional justice mechanisms, such as truth commissions, had never been established. For example, while several transitional justice mechanisms exist or had existed in post-war Bosnia-Herzegovina (such as international criminal tribunal proceedings, reparations for the victims, commemorations, and similar), a truth commission was never established to focus on the 1995 Srebrenica genocide. During my own research, however, I discovered that many Srebrenica genocide survivors dispersed around the world engage in a local musical practice as a means of narrating, or testifying about, their experiences of the genocide.

This review is organized in the following way: in the first part, I review the concept of transitional justice and its main mechanisms, as well as its recent criticisms. In the second part of the paper, I focus on the literature that deals with music in the context of transitional justice. I contend that scholars of music can contribute significantly to the field and processes of transitional justice. By practicing ethnographic methods and sensitivity towards cultural specificities, ethnomusicologists are well equipped to contribute to a better understanding of the culture-specific ways in which people affected by violence engage with a traumatic past. I conclude with some further suggestions for addressing the relationship between music and transitional justice.

¹ On ethnomusicological engagements with local musical traditions from the perspective of a specific locality in which they take place, see Reily and Brucher, 2018.

TRANSITIONAL JUSTICE

Broadly understood, the concept of transitional justice focuses on the ways in which post-conflict and post-authoritarian societies grapple with past violence and human rights violations (Bell, 2009, pp. 9-10). Transitional justice revolves around a set of complementary, and often simultaneous long-term processes and mechanisms, and its four main tools include criminal prosecutions, truth commissions, reparations programs, and institutional reforms (Seils, 2017, p. 4), which are most often initiated by local governments and the international community. Addressing past war crimes on the international level has been historically tied to the establishment of international war crimes trials in the aftermath of World War II, during which the applicability of international law was expanded from states to individuals, which initiated the prioritization of international over domestic law (Hinton, 2011, pp. 2-3). Since the 1990s, the international community has been involved in the creation and implementation of transitional justice mechanisms in several post-conflict countries. For example, the United Nations created international criminal tribunals for Yugoslavia (in 1993, during the ongoing conflicts) and Rwanda (in 1994, following the genocide there), and a number of criminal tribunals and truth commissions addressing conflicts in other countries were also created in collaboration between local governments and the United Nations (Lambourne, 2009).² While the criminal tribunals emerged as one of the main tools of transitional justice in the 1990s, the establishment of truth commissions dates back to the 1980s, when new governments succeeding authoritarian and military regimes in some Latin American countries (such as Argentina) formed these commissions to deal with past violence and human rights violations (Hinton, 2010, p. 3). Since then, many truth commissions established in the aftermath of conflict in several countries worldwide have been formed as collaborations between the UN and local governments. As non-judicial and temporary bodies, these truth commissions are set up to investigate past injustices, with an emphasis on survivor testimonies to acknowledge and recognize survivors' suffering and contribute to reconciliation (Dancy et al., 2010; ICTJ, 2011). While some truth commissions (such as the Rwandan *gacaca* courts, the East Timorese Commission for Reception, Truth, and Reconciliation, and the Sierra Leone Truth and Reconciliation Commission) adopted or were based on traditional, local practices of justice and reconciliation, the level of adoption of local practices into truth commissions varies "in terms of their meaning and level of formality in response to the effects of colonization, modernization, and international expectations" (Lambourne, 2009, p. 32). In addition, scholars have pointed out that, in some cases, the decisions about the establishment of truth commissions were made without considering "the needs and expectations of the local population" (Lambourne, 2009, p. 29). Scholars are also questioning the long-term impact of these commissions on societies, victims, and perpetrators (Brahm, 2007; Thoms et al., 2008; Fisher, 2011), criticizing them for often neglecting local practices and understandings relevant to survivors themselves (Destrooper, 2018). For example, the case of the Peruvian Truth and Reconciliation Commission suggests that survivors might not perceive testifying in front of truth commissions as cathartic or empowering (Laplante, 2007, p. 435, cited in Destrooper, 2018). Similarly, several scholars have pointed out that the model of public testifying propagated in truth commissions is often at odds with local

² The Extraordinary Chambers of the Courts of Cambodia (ECCC), formed in collaboration between the Cambodian government and the United Nations to address the Cambodian genocide on the international level, is one such example (Lambourne 2009, p. 36).

responses to violence and approaches to healing and reconciliation (Leebaw, 2010). In addition to criticizing truth commissions for not including local perspectives, scholars have criticized them as being used both as a stage for the construction of official histories and national myths, and as excuses for the avoidance of investigations of controversial forms of abuses (Leebaw, 2010; see also Wilson, 2001; Leebaw, 2008).

Both individual and collective memories have their own roles in transitional justice processes, but collective memory is strongly related to truth commissions. There exist multiple definitions of and debates about collective memory in the scholarly literature on the topic (see, for example, Halbwachs, 1992; Winter, 1998). According to sociologist Jeffrey Olick, collective memory represents “public discourses about the past as wholes or [...] narratives and images of the past that speak in the name of collectivities” (Olick, 1999, p. 336). Similarly, literary scholar Aleida Assmann argues that collective memories are those memories that are deliberately created and maintained through symbols and representations of the past that have a longer lifespan, and are transgenerational (Assmann, 2008, p. 215). Transitional justice mechanisms such as truth commissions, commemorations, and trials, can be observed as catalysts for and frameworks in which official (or national) collective memories are created and propagated. After all, one of the main goals of truth and reconciliation commissions is the deliberate creation of an agreed-upon collective memory of past violence and human rights violations. In this regard, Francesca Lessa claims that

Truth commissions and tribunals can profoundly affect the collective memory of traumatic events; for instance, truth commissions allow a country's population to decide what should be incorporated or left out in the story that a nation tells itself about a traumatic past, mediating memories, and intertwining a nation's post-traumatic identity (Andrews, 2003). Thus, truth commissions are not just mere conduits for collective memory, but also have a significant influence on “which stories are told and how they are to be interpreted.” (2013, p. 22; citing Andrews, 2003, p. 46)

Public memorialization, including commemorations, is also part of the memory politics that surrounds the processes of transitional justice. As a segment of a broader body of public memorialization, including the building of monuments and the founding of memorial museums and sites, commemorations are one of the greatest expressions of collective memory (Connerton, 1989; Schwartz, 1997). In the context of transitional justice, commemorations can also be observed as a form of reparations for the victims (Buckley-Zistel and Schäfer, 2014). Commemorations are especially significant because they are seen as sites where collective memory and history are combined and official narratives of the past expressed, and where already existing identities are supported, and new identities constructed (Le Goff, 1992; Gillis, 1994; Olick, 2007). Music is often part of commemorations and can be instrumentalized to complement and reinforce an official collective memory and history of the past propagated during government-supported commemorations. For example, in Bosnia-Herzegovina, the government commissioned a piece of classical music, entitled *Srebrenički Inferno* (Srebrenica's Inferno), to accompany the official annual commemoration of the 1995 Srebrenica genocide. The oratorio, through its lyrics and music, contributes to the propagation of the official narrative about the Srebrenica genocide, especially in terms of its portrayal of genocide survivors and the representation of the genocide as a tragedy of Bosnian Muslims (see Pitic, 2019).

In addition to informing, and being directly related to, transitional justice mechanisms, memory is also significant for reconciliation. In their introduction to *Memory and Political Change*, Aleida Assmann and Linda Shortt claim that memory, with its power to transform our relationship to the past, can create “new frames of action” and contribute to reconciliation (2012, p. 4). According to Assmann and Shortt:

In order to achieve reconciliation and social integration, the often oppositional generational and cultural memories also need to be respected, and/or adapted and/or contained. For this reason, it is important to study how citizens of various ethnic, social, political groups or generations remember or refer to their experiences of violence and repression or to their experiences of a non-democratic regime. (ibid.)

Like Assmann and Shortt, Paul Seils also addresses the relationship between memory and reconciliation in the context of transitional justice, especially when it comes to so-called individual reconciliation (2017, 5). In this context, reconciling with a past traumatic experience is crucial for the rebuilding of one’s life and relationships (ibid.), and remembering traumatic experiences can assist survivors in coming to terms with their past. Individual reconciliation is reflected in the transition from traumatic to narrative memory, which often signals the survivors’ intention to ‘claim’ (after Cathy Caruth, 1996) a traumatic event and, therefore, to begin the process of healing. This narrative memory can take many forms, with the most prevalent one being a form of testimony (written or oral), while arts and music can also provide important spaces for the expression of narrative memories of past experiences of violence. As I will outline below, much of the existing literature on so-called ‘survivors’ music’ (Pilzer, 2015) positions it in terms of individual reconciliation and coming to terms with a traumatic past.

MUSIC AND TRANSITIONAL JUSTICE

It is within the body of literature on music, conflict, and violence that we can find a growing number of scholarly works that address the relationship between music and transitional justice, examining it mostly through the prism of memory and reconciliation. As I mentioned at the beginning, these works argue for music as a vehicle of memory, or a tool for reconciliation, used by those affected by conflict and violence. In addition to scholars of music dealing with this topic, non-music scholars engaged with the field of transitional justice have also called for and paid attention to artistic approaches to transitional justice as an alternative to judicial proceedings, truth commissions, and official reparations projects (for example, Cohen, 2003, 2005; Zelizer, 2003; Lederach, 2005; Milton, 2014; Rush and Simic, 2014; Destrooper, 2018). Sanja Bahun contends that, in transitional contexts, “art practices provide important unofficial counterparts for truth-finding, but also reconciliation, civic repair and psychological reparation, lustration, public apology and other mechanisms of transitional justice” (2016, p. 156), and much of the scholarly literature addressing music in these contexts relies on the same premise.

Part of the literature concerned with music and transitional justice situates local musical practices in relation to established truth commissions, arguing for music as a local and alternative mode of testifying and coming to terms with the past. In his work on post-Shining Path Peru, ethnomusicologist Jonathan Ritter (2012) offers a comparative analysis of the narratives and discourses of remembrance presented in the context of the Peruvian Truth and Reconciliation Commission (CVR) and a local testimonial genre of music, *canción social ayacuchana*. The CVR was formed in 2001 to address the violence and human rights violations that took place in Peru

between 1980 and 2000 committed by the Shining Path revolutionaries, but also the crimes committed during the rule of the ‘quasi-dictator’ Alberto Fujimori between 1992 and 2000. According to Ritter, by using repression, the Fujimori administration propagated their narrative about past violence and discouraged other versions of the past. In this context, the CVR was positioned around the dominant narrative of “‘breaking through’ the silences of the past” (2012, p. 203), relying on the collection and recording of individual testimonies about the past violence and the public televised hearings that involved testimonies. By focusing on the *canción social ayacuchana* repertoire, Ritter challenges this dominant narrative around which the CVR was framed, arguing that Peruvians used many alternative forms, including music, to testify about and remember the violence long before the CVR’s creation. Ritter details how the entire repertoire of Ayacuchan testimonial music about the war emerged from the grassroots already in the late 1980s. Therefore, he argues for “a much less ‘silent’ history of remembrance and resistance in Peru than that surrounding the CVR, one that recognizes the profound contributions made within an alternate discursive realm of musical composition, performance, and listening” (ibid., p. 205). In his later work on so-called *pumpin* songs about the violence in Peru, Ritter (2014) contends that these songs represent a ‘rural’ and ‘marginalized’ perspective on the past that was later championed by the CVR.

In Canada, the government established the Truth and Reconciliation Commission in 2008 to “facilitate reconciliation among former students” of Indian Residential Schools in Canada, “their families, their communities and all Canadians” (Government of Canada, 2019). The commission, which concluded in 2015, served as “an opportunity” to share the stories and experiences of “those directly or indirectly affected by the legacy of the Indian Residential School system” (ibid.). Drawing on her work with Indigenous musicians in Canada, ethnomusicologist Beverly Diamond (2012) points out how these musicians used music to address their or their parents’ experiences of the Indian Residential School system before the TRC was established. For example, she refers to Jerry Alfred’s *Residential School Song* that uses a variety of techniques and musical references to refer to and reflect on his residential school experience, such as the sound of the school bell, the use of the *Tuchtone* drum and Jerry’s own language he ought to forget in the school (ibid., 133). Diamond notes that survivors of Indian Residential Schools in Canada

[...] did not wait for the Harper government to offer an apology and set up the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada to give voice to the experience they or their parents had in the residential schools. The same is true of musicians who have narrated experiences of removal and forced relocation for decades. (2012, p. 133)

In another work on the subject, Diamond (2016) critiques the TRC as an instrument utilized to ‘contain’ the past and offer a ‘closure’ to the Indian Residential School chapter of Canadian history. She juxtaposes this role of the TRC with musical performances that were part of its national events, reflecting on how sonic culture resists this containment spatially, temporally, and socially. Additionally, Diamond argues that these performances challenge Western institutionalized models of healing. This argument echoes similar claims found in the literature on transitional justice, which argue that the concept of individual healing through story-telling is essentially Western, and that various local “coping mechanisms, rituals, practices, or understandings” are often neglected because of being considered performative (Destrooper, 2018, p. 8).

Another example of ethnomusicological involvement with local musical practices in relation to transitional justice mechanisms is Angela Impey's work on Dinka songs in South Sudan. Impey (2013) focuses on South Sudan in the aftermath of the Second Sudanese Civil War (1983-2005), after which the government initiated a national process for reconciliation. In relation to this process, Impey points to the anxiety about "the potential privileging by the government of top-down mechanisms of international law and human rights practice" over more inclusive arrangements that speak to the diversity of the population affected by the war (ibid., pp. 58-59). In particular, she argues for a better understanding of "local cultural ecologies of communication (i.e. relational systems and contexts of communication) and the assimilation of truth-telling in diverse and multiple forms" (ibid., p. 59). Impey follows suggestions for the incorporation of different systems of disclosure endorsed by other scholars, questioning the primacy of speech in testimony and calling for more attention to be dedicated to other speech registers, including poetry and songs (ibid., p. 37, citing Jackson, 2012, pp. 999-1023). Impey thus highlights the local significance of Dinka songs as a form of communication that has an important place in the Dinka social system (ibid., p. 59), calling them "acts of citizenship" that mediate ideas, opinions, and ideologies between individuals and groups aimed at "sociopolitical intervention and amelioration" (ibid., p. 60). As such, these songs are a window into the way a local community imagines and deals with peace and reconciliation, and, according to Impey, can potentially be a "counterweight to what are often considered remote, regulatory and culturally inappropriate institutional discourses on peace and reconciliation" (ibid.).

Recently, scholars have started devoting more attention to the role of music in remembering and commemorating a traumatic past (for example, see Ritter and Daughtry, 2007; Fast and Pegley, 2012), and a number of them have focused specifically on so-called survivors' music (Pilzer, 2015; for existing examples, see Pilzer, 2012; Pitic, 2017; Ritter, 2012, 2014; Schwartz, 2014). In his important call for the study of survivors' music, ethnomusicologist Joshua Pilzer defines this music as "the musical practices of people who endure or have endured violence and traumatic experience", arguing for privileging survivors' voices "above all else - genres, ideologies, and, yes, music" (2015, pp. 482-483). According to Pilzer, through their music, survivors can tell and teach us a lot about their experiences and "the arts of surviving" (ibid., p. 483), that is, the way individuals come to terms with their past. These 'arts of surviving' are, therefore, significant parts of an individual's reconciliation, and with it, of wider transitional justice processes. In addition, the emphasis on survivors' voices is in line with some transitional justice mechanisms, such as truth and reconciliation commissions. However, these voices can also challenge the types of narratives created through and propagated by such top-down initiatives and offer "a very different story about experience than other expressive forms and historical records" do (ibid., p. 482). In addition, survivors' voices put emphasis on individual experiences that the scholarship on conflict and violence often neglects. Pilzer himself focuses on survivors' voices in his ethnography of music performed by Korean 'comfort women', or sexual slaves during the Asia-Pacific War (1930-1945). According to Pilzer, these women sang about their experiences at the time when this topic was considered a taboo in South Korea, and they did this to remember, but also to "rebuild themselves and their social relationships" (Pilzer, 2012, p. 10).

In my own research about music in the aftermath of the war and genocide in Bosnia-Herzegovina, I deal with a growing repertoire of survivors' music that addresses the 1995 Srebrenica genocide (Pitic, 2017). This repertoire, which consists of neo-

traditional narrative songs, called *izvorna*, is composed, performed, and consumed by genocide survivors living in Bosnia-Herzegovina and abroad. In addition to *izvorna* musicians (who are often either descendants of or genocide survivors themselves) composing and writing these commemorative songs, non-musician genocide survivors commission such songs about their family members who perished in the genocide in order to preserve and transmit their individual stories. While widespread, this musical practice is local in a sense that it is present specifically within the community of survivors, and, while concurrent and complimentary to it, is not part of a national discourse about or national commemorations of the genocide. In addition to featuring narratives about individual genocide victims, these songs not only reflect on the Srebrenica genocide as an event, but also address the context surrounding the genocide, such as the genocide denial and the trials of the International Criminal Tribunal for Yugoslavia (ICTY). In this way, they serve as both a means for the expression of individual survivor narratives about the genocide, and as a local commentary on international transitional justice mechanisms.

Another example of a study of survivors' music is historian Shirli Gilbert's (2010) work on the music of Jewish refugees in displaced persons camps in the immediate aftermath of the Holocaust. During this period, Jewish displaced persons (DPs) created new songs about their traumatic experiences of the Holocaust, chronicling "mourning and loss" (Gilbert, 2010, p. 289). These songs also addressed more current topics of that time, including displacement, loneliness, and immigration. In relation to this, Gilbert writes that "as texts produced by the DPs themselves," these songs

offer a significant internal perspective on individual and community responses. Songs were a forum through which surviving victims could not only record experiences but also bear witness on behalf of those who had not survived. They reveal something of victims' interpretations of the realities they confronted and the kinds of attitudes they espoused and advocated. (ibid., p. 295)

Through her examination of the diverse musical life in post WWII DP camps, Gilbert posits that music "provides a valuable lens" into "how surviving victims shaped their understanding of what had happened to them and their relationship to the individual and collective future" (ibid., p. 290).

Music also provides insight into how certain groups remember past conflicts and violence, as well as what is remembered and what is forgotten. In this sense, it can reveal much about the way transitional societies deal with their past, whether through exposing agreed-upon official histories, or through reflecting ongoing struggles over memory. For example, in his work on music in the commemoration of the genocide against the Tutsi in Rwanda, David Mwambari (2019) discusses the politics of memory in post-genocide Rwanda, particularly the clash between the official memory of the genocide and personal memories of the survivors. Mwambari notes that the post-genocide government in Rwanda led by the Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF) headed the construction of the official historical narrative about the 1994 genocide. According to Mwambari, although Rwandan citizens and genocide survivors support this narrative, some also object to it as it represents a specific version of the past (Mwambari, 2019, p. 2). To illustrate this tension about what is remembered and what forgotten in the official narrative of the genocide, Mwambari focuses on the example of the genocide survivor and musician Kizito Mihigo, who transitioned from supporting to disagreeing with the official narrative.

Specifically, Mwambari investigates how the questions about “who should be addressed and remembered in acts and events of commemoration” (2019, p. 7) feature in Mihigo’s music by analyzing his song *Igisobanuro cy’urupfu* (The Meaning of Death). Unlike other commemorative songs by Mihigo that support the official narrative, Mwambari claims that this song challenges it by subtly referring to parts of a genocide history that are omitted in the official narrative, such as the Hutu victims (ibid., p. 9). Subsequently, this specific song was banned and other songs by Mihigo were absent in the public during the 20th anniversary of the genocide in 2014, while Mihigo himself was arrested on terrorism charges (ibid., p. 10). Mwambari claims that music is important for both promoting and critiquing annual commemorations and the memory of the genocide, and that “musicians have the power to mobilize, politicize, shape and respond to collective memory in unique and powerful ways in the aftermath of mass violence” (ibid., p. 2). The example he discusses also suggests the potential for states to use music for propagating specific versions of the past that can hinder transitional justice efforts among survivors that consider the multiplicity of voices and experiences of genocide.

While the examples presented above discuss ‘alternative’ modes of expressing the narratives about the past, such musical narratives of the past can also be examined in terms of reconciliation. For example, reconciliation is the subject of Maria Elisa Pinto Garcia’s (2014) work on survivors’ music in Colombia in the aftermath of the conflict there. Pinto Garcia observes survivors’ songs as storytelling tools that contribute to the creation and preservation of a historical memory of the conflict, and as a vehicle for expressing survivors’ truth about what happened to them. Although she points to the danger of these songs deepening the divide between victims and their perpetrators, she also claims that these songs can offer some possibilities for reconciliation, as ex-combatants responded to the victims’ songs with understanding, sympathy, and guilt. This echoes Fisher’s claim that “reconciliation must be accompanied by acknowledgment of the past” and “the acceptance of responsibility” by the perpetrator side (Fisher, 2011, p. 411). A public exposure of survivors’ truth about their traumatic experiences, exemplified through their songs, can thus provide “redress for victims and may contribute to individual and social healing and reconciliation” (ibid., p. 410).

There are several case studies about music and reconciliation, or music and conflict transformation, which are worth mentioning here. For example, Craig Robertson (2010, 2018) examines the case of an inter-religious choir in Bosnia-Herzegovina, called Pontanima, as a space for bridging divides and regaining a sense of ‘normalcy’ in which choir members belonging to different religious traditions in the country perform each other’s musical repertoires. Like Robertson, Alexandra Balandina (2010) also deals with the post-Yugoslav context in her ethnographic analysis of the Kumanovo Youth Open Festival in Macedonia to promote inter-ethnic reconciliation and cross-cultural understanding. Vandy Kanyako (2015) offers an analysis of another youth project in Sierra Leone, called Peacelinks, which gathered a group of former child soldiers and war-affected youth who used music to foster dialogue and reconciliation among themselves and their communities. Similarly, Lindsay McClain Opiyo (2015) shows how people in Northern Uganda used popular music to promote peace towards the end and in the aftermath of the armed conflict between rebel groups and the government by calling on to rebels to return home. Finally, some scholars have also focused on the possibility for reconciliation, or music’s potential to contribute to this long-term process (Gray, 2007; Howard, 2012; Pilzer, 2003).

Arild Bergh (2007) has been particularly vocal in his critique of conflict transformation projects such as those outlined in Balandina's and Kanyako's work, which revolve around a joint musical activity between conflicting groups, in which each group is represented with their respective musical repertoire. He notes that the use of music as representation in such contexts is problematic and linked to further reinforcement of differences. This perspective can be compared to the existing critiques of criminal tribunals in the field of transitional justice, which claim that these judicial bodies can have an opposite effect of the one intended by provoking more hostility and antagonism between different groups (Fisher, 2011). Similarly, Bergh's critique of romanticized claims about the power of music in conflict transformation that shapes much of the literature on the subject can also be compared to the critique of the tendency to idealize the effects of different mechanisms of transitional justice on individual and community levels (Fisher, 2011, p. 414).

CONCLUSION

The presented review of works on music and transitional justice suggests that scholars of music are responding to existing calls in the field of transitional justice to put more emphasis on the local by examining local practices of musical memorialization, testifying, and storytelling, and by studying approaches to healing and reconciliation through music. Most of this scholarship reveals an insistence on music as an alternative mode of remembrance, or an alternative mode of storytelling that is often in opposition to official initiatives, primarily the truth and reconciliation commissions. However, most ethnographic accounts of musical practices related to transitional justice show that traditional musical forms which local populations employ as vehicles of memory or tools for storytelling long predate the imposed, top-down truth commissions, or other mechanisms of transitional justice. These musical forms are the ones to which local populations turn for coping with and remembering a traumatic past. In this sense, music, and other existing local modes of not only remembrance, but also healing, reconciliation, and conflict resolution, should not be observed as alternative. By avoiding characterizing these local and cultural forms of remembrance, healing, and reconciliation as alternative, and providing ethnographic accounts about the history of their presence in societies affected by violence, scholars of music can contribute to emphasizing their centrality and importance over that ascribed to official transitional justice mechanisms.

I would like to offer two potential possibilities for accomplishing this: deeper engagement with the broader field of transitional justice, and public scholarship. While most of the reviewed scholarship on music and transitional justice refers to a relevant transitional justice literature, scholars of music are still primarily speaking to each other. In this sense, opening up to a larger interdisciplinary field of transitional justice in terms of a better representation of scholars of music in interdisciplinary publications, collaborative projects, and conferences outside of their respective fields could contribute to a greater visibility and awareness about local practices of and responses to transitional justice in music in this large field. On the other hand, public scholarship could potentially ensure the visibility of and awareness about these local musical engagements with transitional justice outside of the academic world and in the public sphere. Patricia Leavy defines public scholarship as "scholarship that circulates outside of the academy in accessible formats and is useful to relevant stakeholders" (2019, p. 5). Leavey lists several possible forms of public scholarship that can be utilized to share a specialized

scholarly knowledge with the public, such as opinion pieces, blogs, television appearances, podcasts, documents produced for NGOs, and even artistic performances (ibid., p. 6). All these forms can be used by scholars of music to direct public attention to the existence and significance of local musical practices in the context of transitional justice, as the general public, excluding the communities of survivors, is often unaware of such practices. For example, a commemorative *izvorna* repertoire of survivors' music in Bosnia-Herzegovina that I focus on in my research is hardly known to those outside the community of Srebrenica genocide survivors and the local population in Eastern Bosnia who are otherwise consumers of non-commemorative *izvorna* songs. So, sharing a knowledge about this practice publicly, whether through writing about it in accessible formats or by contributing to organizing public performances of this music that engage a wider public community, could contribute to a greater awareness about this practice.

Finally, I would like to point to a few other possibilities for engaging with the relationship between music and transitional justice that go beyond the present scholarly engagement with memory and reconciliation: demands for justice, reparations for the victims, and music that impedes with transitional justice efforts.

Demands for justice: One possible avenue of research could be to dedicate more attention to exploring how local communities affected by violence, human rights abuses, and discrimination utilize music and non-musical sounds to demand justice and direct attention to past injustices that still need to be addressed. By proposing this, I am especially referring to studying contexts marked by ongoing contestations over a shared and violent past, and contexts in which past injustices are suppressed or left un-addressed for specific purposes, such as nation building. Here, I can again draw from an example from my own research in Bosnia-Herzegovina, where certain groups of survivors utilize music to address the ongoing genocide denial. Similarly, ethnomusicologist Alyssa Mathias points to the power of sound in the Armenian community's efforts for the Armenian genocide recognition and democratization in Turkey (Mathias, 2017).

Reparations for the victims: Second, scholars of music can dedicate more attention to examining the relationship between music and reparations for the victims, especially in terms of the use of music in reparations projects or the use of musical pieces themselves as a form of symbolic reparations. For example, anthropologist Tony Shapiro Phim (2019) examined the creation and presentation of the 2017 dance drama *Phka Sla Krom Angkar*, choreographed by a Cambodian dancer and choreographer Sophiline Shapiro to bring to light stories of the survivors of the forced marriage policy during the Khmer Rouge regime in Cambodia. Literary and gender studies scholar Theresa de Langis was involved in the project by collecting oral histories of the survivors that formed the basis of *Phka Sla*. Being aware of the significance of Khmer classical dance in the Cambodian society and the fact that many survivors cannot read, de Langis was the one to propose this performance for a reparations project for the Extraordinary Chambers in the Courts of Cambodia (Eaton, 2017). Eventually, the Victim Support Section of the tribunal approved *Phka Sla* as a form of moral and collective reparations (Shapiro, 2019). This case is a great example of the way scholars of music could engage with similar projects in terms of their significance for the victims and a wider society, as well as the way they compare to other forms of reparations, such as financial ones. In addition, it is an excellent example of public scholarship, where specialized knowledge about the significance of local traditions and established relationships with and knowledge about the survivor community can contribute to a better inclusion of their voices and needs in official transitional justice mechanisms.

Music impeding with transitional justice efforts: Third, I would propose more emphasis be put on musical practices that obstruct or are against transitional justice efforts in societies affected by violence. While there exists a substantial literature on music, conflict, and violence (for example, Pettan, 1998; Longinovic, 2000; Goodman, 2010; O'Connell and Castelo-Branco, 2010; Fast and Pegley, 2012; Baker, 2013; Daughtry, 2014), which also addresses the use of music as a tool for propaganda, incitement to violence, and for violence itself, there is a lack of dedicated ethnographic accounts of musical practices of perpetrators or their sympathizers that surpass the duration of an armed conflict or mass violence. In particular, the scholarship would benefit from examining the post-conflict life of such practices, the contexts in which they are performed, the composition of groups who perform them and their motivations, as well as the way they obstruct existing transitional justice efforts. Once again, I will refer to an example from Bosnia-Herzegovina, where groups of Bosnian Serbs performed nationalistic songs on Christian Orthodox Christmas Eve in the town of Srebrenica where genocide occurred. These groups drove next to the Srebrenica-Potočari Memorial Center while playing these songs, which representatives of victims' associations and director of the Memorial Center interpreted as a provocation of genocide survivors (N1BiH, 2020). Examples like this, which are not specific to the Bosnian context only, obstruct transitional justice efforts and sustainable peace between conflicting parties. In addition, attention should be paid to such obstructions through music that are not necessarily performed by individual and/or marginal groups, but by the state against the possibility of transitional justice and against survivors' voices.³

³ I would like to thank an anonymous reviewer for raising this point.

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