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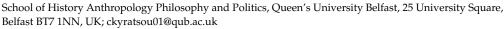
Between Estrangement at Home and Marginalization by the Host: Tracing Senses of Belonging through Music †

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Abstract: This article discusses the twofold role of music as a means to manifest border-induced (cultural) difference and simultaneously foster alternative modes of belonging. The author draws on her ethnographic research, consisting of participant observation, desktop research, and interviews, and reflects on her auto-ethnographic recordings of engaging with refugee musicians. The discussion unfolds around vignettes that exemplify moments of musical encounters among refugees and between refugees and people from the host society. The vignettes are narrated from the refugee interlocutors' point of view, who are engaged in the musicking instances as listeners and musicians. The article discusses how they devise music to cope with their estrangement from home and to articulate narratives of belonging. It illuminates how refugees challenge stereotyped representations of themselves, reinforcing the terms under which they can become "visible" and "audible." Finally, the article argues that refugees' narratives suggest understandings of reality as a continuum in ways that challenge the linear reifications produced by nation-state bordering practices and displacement-induced ruptures These understandings are embedded in music's mobilities and their intersections with human movement, informal networks, and the cultural industry.

Keywords: soundscape; belonging; estrangement; limbo; encounter; border-making; border-crossing; European refugee crisis

1. Introduction

How does the "host country" sound to someone arriving as a refugee? How do host settings resonate with the "homes" from which they fled? How do refugee musicians musically manifest their belongings in the host settings they find themselves in, claiming them as "home?" What could someone learn as a resident of European/Western countries —availing of a legitimate belonging, holding citizenship status, or any other permit— when they 'listen with' refugees (see Western 2020)? The questions above pertain to the conversations with the participants in my ethnographic research on refugees in Greece. Accordingly, the same questions led to the discussion developed in this paper.

Greece had been attracting international attention as a junction of migratory movements long before the recent "European Migration/Refugee crisis" due to its location "on the doorstep of Europe" (see Cabot 2014). In fact, people's (forced) mobilities across Greek territory underpin the establishment of the Greek state and its complex history and relations with neighboring countries. These mobilities can be heard in the sonic and musical repertoires associated with the specific regions. As such, sonic and musical repertoires outline the regions' boundaries as understood geographically and culturally and suggest their permeability and constant renegotiation facilitated by human mobilities. In doing so, they constitute what can be codified as the regions' "soundscapes." Schafer coined the term 'soundscape' to describe the sonic qualities of a place that deem it remarkable and,

thus, particular, and identifiable (Schafer [1994] 1997, p. 7). In other words, "soundscape" merges the spatial settings that can be visually perceived and accordingly represented (i.e., on a map) with the sonic dimensions of any activity unfolding within and across them, thus being intrinsic to place-making and reinforcing its dynamic and affective nature (see Feld 2015; Cobussen 2019; see Stokes 1994). As such, someone can "hear" the diverse migratory movements across Greek territory in the sonic and musical repertoires that constitute the local soundscape and, consequently, obtain insights into the region that tacitly blur its solid borderline as depicted on a map. Furthermore, by delving into the ways in which a soundscape is experienced, we can grasp people's relations with a specific place.

Despite the privileged insights one can obtain by assuming this approach, little attention has been given to the newly-arrived refugees' sonic experiences of living in Greece. Consequently, a fundamental part of their lives in the host settings is largely ignored. "Listening with" refugees would make it possible to understand their individual trajectories and experiences of displacement and enable us to grasp aspects of the societies hosting them from the refugees' perspective and, consequently, reconstruct the paradigm under which "home" and "host" are perceived (see Western 2020). "Unmuting migration" (Kyratsou 2022) by means of hearing refugees' accounts as mediated by their aesthetic agency has the potential to reconstitute them as agentive actors, active political beings, and, eventually, "rehumanize" them (Martiniello 2022) and see them as integral parts of their host settings. These insights into refugees' aesthetic agencies are enhanced by focusing on their multifarious active engagements with music, their 'musicking' as Small (1998) defines the multiple ways in which someone can actively engage with music, highlighting the participatory mode and the affectivity entailed.

Extensive research has illuminated aspects of the refugee/migrant condition of being in Greece before, during, and in the aftermath of the "European Refugee/Migration Crisis." The focus is largely on asylum/immigration policies and the respective bureaucracies (Cabot 2014), practices of "reception" and "hospitality" and the power relations underpinning them (Rozakou 2012, 2016, 2017; Witcher 2020), the reproduction of the "violence of the border" (Bampilis 2018; Tsimouris and Moore 2018) through the multiple exclusions faced by refugees in accessing the city, and so on (Tsavdaroglou et al. 2019). This article contributes to understanding the aesthetic dimensions of refugeehood and migration, offering insights into a largely neglected aspect of them. By focusing on music and refugees' narratives around distinct musical instances, this paper emphasizes the capacity of music to manifest border-induced (cultural) difference and to serve as a vehicle to explore and articulate alternative modes of belonging.

The discussion developed in this article draws on my PhD ethnographic research. The methods comprise participant observation of various musicking instances upon the participants' invitation, desktop research into the immigration and asylum policies, semi-structured interviews with the individuals participating in musicking, and reflections over my auto-ethnographic recordings of my participation in the various musicking instances I joined as participant observant.[1] More specifically, my research focused on the encounters occurring in the context of specific musicking activities, namely learning/teaching music, making music in informal (rehearsing) and formal (concert performance online and on-site) contexts, and listening to music in the diverse modes and settings in which this may occur (i.e., in public/private, by oneself/in a group, and so on). It looked closely into the emerging meaningfulness that these activities had for the participants, considering the particularities of each musical instance and the factors determining it. The interviews conducted were tailored to each individual and aimed at outlining their experiences as determined by the particularities of their (forced) migratory trajectory, life in legal limbo, and the subsequent meaningfulness of their musical engagements that extended beyond the specific musical instance and encompassed the modes in which they positioned themselves in relation to their home/host settings. Here I must say that given that people from the host society participated in specific musicking instances (which are not discussed in this article) in their capacity as volunteers/employees in camps, I also interviewed them as integral

participants of the musicking activities, though the focus of my PhD project has been on refugees. As a researcher and author with increased responsibility over the representations maintained through this article and the knowledge produced (see also Kölbl 2021), and given that, as a participant observant to the musicking instances examined, I was also affected by them, I kept ethnographic notes recording the events under examination and auto-ethnographic notes recording my participation.[2]

The ethnographic vignettes structuring the article outline distinct musical instances and are framed by refugees' extensive accounts of the meaningfulness they entailed. The distinctiveness of each musical instance and the diverse interlocutors' profiles aim at offering complementary views to a sonically experienced reality that emerges as continuous, carved by music's mobilities along and intersecting with human movement, informal networks, and cultural industry (Levi and Shedding 2010; Bohlman 2011; Appadurai 1996), and sharply contrasting with the fragmentations brought upon by bordering practices. What matters is not the interlocutors' particular cultural backgrounds regarding their specific engagements with music, but rather their perceptions of home and their host settings as sonically instilled and amplified by their refugeehood and asylum-seeking experiences. Furthermore, the article highlights the twofold role of music-making in establishing the modes of (in)visibility for the creative actors as displaced and marginalized subjects (see Damery and Mescoli 2019) who agentively choose to narrate or silence their experiences of displacement and marginalization through their art (see Chatzipanagiotidou and Murphy 2020).

The discussion begins with an extensive overview of the "European Refugee Crisis," situating it in its historical–political frames and outlining accordingly its predicaments for my interlocutors' circumstances as refugees and asylum seekers, regarding their lived exclusions and marginalization from the host society. Accordingly, two vignettes follow, elaborating on specific musical instances narrated from the point of view of my interlocutors (interview excerpts), in addition to my own as a participant observant.[3] The first vignette focuses on Saeid, an Iranian refugee professional musician in his 20s, and discusses his first encounter with music in Greece. Examining his testimony, the discussion presents the musical elements, namely musical instruments, timbre, and so on, that foster senses of familiarity, as the latter interlace with personal experiences, expectations, memories, and emotions. Key to this is music's affectivity and capacity to configure space, having its features projected upon it by means of evoking memories and suggesting narratives mediated by the individual's (aesthetic) agency. The second vignette shifts the lens on Javanmard, an Afghan-Iranian refugee professional musician in his 40s, and discusses the repertory he chose to teach in his music lessons in conjunction with the music he preferred to listen to. In both circumstances, Javanmard accounts for the common patterns between Greece and Iran, as exemplified by common patterns in the music repertory, arguing by extension for his ambivalent belonging. His argument emerges from a dense nexus composed of people's/musicians' mobilities and music's circulations through formal and informal networks, resulting in aesthetic appropriations and shared patterns. If hearing and/or listening to music facilitated initial encounters prompting specific ways of perceiving the home and host settings, my interlocutors, as musicians, were adequately skilled and knowledgeable to address audiences effectively through the music they chose to perform. Thus, the following section of the discussion focuses on the ways in which my interlocutors, as agentive actors, devised the musical features that initially instilled in them familiarity with the host settings and deployed them to pave their way across the targeted audience and manifest their belonging with them. Juxtaposing my interviewees' accounts and manifestations of cross-border sharedness and belonging to the continuities between their estrangement from their home-settings and the exclusions and marginalization they have experienced in the host-settings, the article argues for the contradictory forces of imposing non-belonging and building belonging, exemplified in the paradigm of nation-state (cultural) politics and policies and individuals' agentive creative practices.

2. "Refugee Crisis" "on the Doorstep of Europe"

Situating refugees sheltering in Greek reception centers amidst the historical and sociopolitical context is necessary to understand the gravity of their senses of (non)belonging, as the latter are fostered by actively engaging with music (see also Reyes-Schramm 1990). After all, the potentiality of music in shaping alternative modes of relating and belonging emerges at the counterpoint between the aspects of everyday life determined by the sociopolitical contexts of the given historic moment and the aesthetically mediated experiences of engaging with music.

The term "European Refugee/Migration Crisis"[4] was coined in 2015 to frame the radical increase in people fleeing their countries and entering European territory in the aftermath of the Syrian Civil War and the developments that followed the Arab Spring Risings in a series of countries in the early 2010s. Forced migrants originating from the broader areas of the Middle East, Africa, and Central Asia complemented them. Regardless of any changes in the total numbers and their composition, as documented in relevant databases and reports (AiDA: https://asylumineurope.org/ accessed on 4 September 2022), people have been fleeing to Europe long before the outbreak of the "crisis," and after its end. In short, despite the connotations of an unprecedented "emergency" that the term "crisis" suggests, signaling violent ruptures of a given order (Cabot 2015; see Agamben 2005; see Brekke et al. 2014), people's (forced) mobilities from these regions have been relatively consistent. Most importantly, the characterization of the crisis as "European" shifted the "critical point" from refugee bodies who have been fleeing deadly crises in their homes to the European countries. While the pressure put on the host societies to accommodate refugees is not underestimated, we cannot ignore the European-centered point of view that inevitably prioritizes the needs of populations deemed legitimately belonging within European territory over those who have just arrived. The notion of "crisis" further conceals the massive displacements that have shaped the European continent, fostering an imaginary static, sedentary European reality bounded within a specific geopolitical locus (see Favell 2014; Marfleet 2006). Consequently, someone can reasonably wonder over the historic and political shadows over the notion of "European Refugee/Migration Crisis", regarding the colonial past of certain European countries and its resonations in mainstream and official discourses, as well as its implicit and explicit interconnections with racist perspectives (see Balibar 2009). Interestingly enough, research in music offers viewpoints on Europe as emergent from people's mobilities, albeit these viewpoints often align with and tend to reinforce the European vision of the continent as a political and cultural unity bearing specific features and inevitably incompatible with others (see Clausen et al. 2009; also, Sassatelli 2009).

I must note here that, when my fieldwork took place between summer 2019 and winter 2020, the EU had long before announced the end of the "Refugee Crisis" that the 2016 EU-Turkey Agreement signaled,[5] drawing on the subsequent massive reduction in arrival numbers. However, the change in the official discourses and respective policies,[6] while reflecting the new reality shaped by the shift in external border policies and the control of people's cross-border (im)mobilities, obscured the continuation of the plight in refugees' home countries, resulting in the continuation of people's displacement and efforts to move towards Europe.

Being In-Limbo: Being Otherized by the 'Host' and Estranged from 'Home'

During my fieldwork in Greece, the majority of my interlocutors held the status of "asylum seeker", as the outcome of their asylum request was pending. Their refugee experience was not yet officially recognized as it was still under examination. As one of my interviewees eloquently argued, 'We are refugees, but it [our status] is undecided [pending]'. The contrast suggested in the interviewee's words highlights the ambiguity between the lived experience of refugeehood and the protracted asylum process, which entailed indefinite waiting and constituted a sort of conditional refusal of it. Inevitably, and particularly when considering the power relations within which "waiting" is embedded

(Khosravi 2014, p. 74), being in legal limbo reinforced the power relations between themselves as asylum seekers and those (citizens) handling their requests, as representatives of a (possible) host society. After all, becoming refugees entailed losing any privileges embedded in legitimately belonging to a specific nation-state, as this would be, for example, reflected in being endowed with citizenship (see Nyers 2006), and considering of course the conditionality of availing of such privileges (see Favell 2014; Balibar 2015). The importance of losing the right to avail of any privileges arising from legitimate belonging to a specific nation-state springs from the fact that within the "national order of things" (Malkki 1995), there is no legitimate way to exist as a human being without legal and political status (Khosravi 2010, p. 122).

To that end, my interviewees, by identifying themselves as refugees, were claiming an identity that was imposed on them as it reflected the life-threatening violence they escaped from. Furthermore, in this way, they were defending themselves and the experiences that determined the course of their lives against the uncertainty and precarity of "asylum-seeking." Throughout this text, I use the terms "refugees" and "asylum seekers" interchangeably. The reason for this choice is twofold: first, to stress my interlocutors' actual legal status and the ambiguity it involved in relation to their actual experiences; and second, to convey my interlocutors' perceptions of themselves and their positioning in relation to their host settings.

Their relations with "home" were forged by the factors that had hampered their living conditions and prospects, namely wars, conflicts, persecutions, and discriminations. Fleeing was the result of a well-instilled fear and alienation from home settings. Ahmed elaborates on the connotations of "home" as a place underpinned by a sense of safety, belonging, acceptance, and intimacy, which is primarily opposed to a "foreign" place, primarily resonating with a sense of "strangeness" (Ahmed 2000, chp. 4). Consequently, fleeing as refugees signified that they had been forcefully estranged from their home settings.

Their relations with the host settings were determined by the norms of asylum-seeking. Inevitably, "waiting" for the outcome of their asylum request served as a cornerstone of these relations and constituted the fundamental mode of pacing their life in limbo. Considering the relational character of 'waiting,' namely, who has the capacity and thus imposes on someone to wait (Jacobsen and Karlsen 2020, p. 7), asylum-seeking reinforced their inequal and underprivileged positionality. This was further reflected on the location of the reception centres accommodating them on the margins of the urban settings.

My interviewees had been sheltering in reception centers located at a considerable distance from urban settings and residential areas. As in all reception centers, fences and wires surrounded them, and security staff and police monitored the gates. Considering the power interplay around "asylum seeking" discussed above, apart from the alleged purpose of safeguarding the residing population, these arrangements could be seen as visually demarcating a territory inhabited by those desired to be kept separate (see Agier 2011; see Brown 2010).

Living in a reception center means being housed along with the rest of their family, or other families and/or individuals in one of the containers standing in straight rows and squares. The room available was inadequate, particularly as the allocation was subject to the number of people that needed to be housed, rather than the actual needs of those "hosted." The notion of being "hosted" is of particular interest, as in (Greek) official and colloquial discourses, the management of refugee populations is usually framed as "hospitality" (filoxenia).[7] The contrast between the discourses assumed and how they are "translated" in certain practices (namely, the spatio-temporal regulation of the person hosted) resonates with approaches to hospitality as a form of "temporary inclusion" of the "stranger" that eventually aim at their "categorical exclusion" (Ben-Yehoyada 2015, p. 186).

With this context in mind, we should now read the vignettes structuring the discussion in the next section. It is within this context that my interlocutors' argument for "shared" musical patterns and repertories acquires its significance, and, more specifically, in its counterpoint to the multiple exclusions they experience.

3. Home Reverberations: Where Does It Sound Home?

3.1. Vignette1-Hearing and Encountering at the City Centre of Athens

It was a mild February evening in 2020. Saeid, a refugee from Iran in his 20s, and I were standing in front of the metro station at Monastiraki Square, Athens, waiting for a friend to join us. We were trying to figure out where to head when a couple of musicians sitting outside a tavern on the other side of the square started sound-checking. They would start their shift soon. I stared at their side indifferently, prompted unconsciously by the volume of their sound. I felt annoyed at it, as we were indeed at a considerable distance from the tavern to hear it that much. Apparently, that was the purpose of playing that loud—to catch the attention of those passing and motivate them to sit in. The volume and timbre of bouzouki sounded to my ears merely as part of the loud, banal soundscape of the touristic city center as it did in the pre-pandemic era, when this particular part of Athens could not be imagined as sounding differently. However, it turned out that Saeid experienced it differently. What sounded "banal" to me evoked Saeid's memories of his first time in Greece and constituted a moment so powerful that he later recalled it in our interview, further elaborating on it. That time, he turned to me and said:

> 'Here I heard bouzouki, Greek music, for the first time, and I decided that I'm going to stay in Greece. My friends, we were five then-all of them left for other countries-, were asking me if I'm crazy, because I spoke English and I could go anywhere I wanted along with them. But I decided to stay here because of music . . . When I talked with my aunt -she lives in another European country-she told me "Greece is like Iran before Revolution. You will not find such music anywhere else. You'd better stay there if you want this . . . "'[8]

Feelings of familiarity with Greece were triggered by the timbre of the specific musical instrument—the (amplified) sound of which took over the public space, affecting anyone standing by. The volume of the sound caught Saeid's attention. However, it was Saeid's personal experiences and the respective filters they instilled in perceiving sound and projecting associations with certain places, historic eras, and the respective fashions of living and creating that determined the effect that this sound had on him. Reflecting on Feld, it can be argued that it was down to the sound's capacity to diffuse from the source of its production, "contest" the surrounding space, and "coordinate" it, fostering specific understandings of it for the hearing individual, who in turn would perceive and possibly prioritize certain sounds over others and would accordingly make sense of it (Feld 1996, p. 110). The capacity of sound to be felt bodily and foster emotions connected Saeid with the space, merging the currently lived sonic experience with past ones and enabling their emotional framing in manners that resonated previously lived instances regardless of the location where they had been actualized (see Feld 2017, pp. 86–89; LaBelle 2006, 2010; Augoyard and Torgue 2008, p. 89). Sound's capacity to constitute space by suggesting certain narratives around it and constructing it to reflect imaginaries of a given order, making it into place, has been due to the linking of sound to specific qualities associated with distinct socio-cultural formations (see DeNora 2011, p. 189; Stokes 1994). At a second level, the musical instrument itself, as a material object producing a sound bearing specific features and as a material object encouraging further comparisons due to its visual aspects, for example, its shape, fostered further comparisons, reinforcing senses of familiarity and cross-border sharedness. Saeid explicitly highlighted the similarities between the (Greek) bouzouki and the Iranian tar and sitar, further building his argument by acknowledging similarities in the scales, rhythms, and technique of playing specific instruments or even singing. While he explicitly avoided reducing the differences between the instruments and the long-established music traditions of which they had been integral parts, he saw the features of the musical instrument as encouraging specific techniques in music performance, entailing the potential to foster intimacy across each musical tradition.

Interestingly enough, Saeid was too young to have had a personal experience of Iran before the 1979 Revolution.[9] All he could account for in that era was mediated by his

parents' and older relatives' narratives and artworks (for example, music and poetry). These artworks salvaged fragments of a Past radically alternative to the lived Present, and fostered nostalgia for it and imaginaries of a home country within which he should have been able to fit (see Bohlman [2004] 2011). Saeid was forced to exile due to the long-term devastating effects of the socio-political change brought by the 1979 Revolution and expressed his resentment at the artistic expression regulations it imposed and any implications this had for his aesthetic preferences, creative practice, and accordingly social life. Not being able to listen to his preferred musical genres or artistically and politically express himself freely without being concerned about legal implications, he consistently felt like he did not belong. Eventually, fleeing was an act to defend his life.

Having crossed the borders of a country "strange" to him, Saeid's musical encounter at Monastiraki Square reinforced his sense of "home". In other words, the music he heard at Monastiraki Square displayed musical elements that, if not identical, were similar to the ones defining the music of his home country in the pre-Revolution era. Given Saeid's longing for this past era, a nostalgia embedded in imaginary representations of a Past that should have been inclusive of him, the type of music prevailing in the public space of his host settings encouraged him to imagine his possible belonging there. If contemporary Iran, his "home" country, had become "strange" and hostile to him, the public sphere of life in the host country, resonating across the square, the heart of public space, promised a new "home" similar to the one long gone. The feelings triggered by this music, further enhanced by his aunt's perspective embedded in her own lived experience, suggested that his country would have felt like "home" in an era other than the one that he was living in. The features of the sound of the bouzouki and the style of the performance, the scales used, the musical phrases performed, the rhythms structuring musical pieces, and so on, as Saeid outlined in our conversations, fostered a sense of familiarity. More importantly, regardless of any other reasons leading him to this decision, he devised music to structure his narrative. While moving across space enabled him to identify the common patterns, both he and his aunt's words evoked Greece and Iran in specific temporal dimensions that merged visions of a "lost" Iran of the Past with an existing Present in Greece. Juxtaposing the temporal imaginations of either country upon musical features was facilitated thanks to music's capacity to "organize something outside of [it]self", due to its "properties [being] projected or mapped on to something else" (DeNora [2000] 2004, p. 27). This process occurs, according to DeNora, because music has the potential to frame human experiences beyond the realm of itself. It does so through the socio-cultural discourses it enables and the ways individuals adopt them to align with specific aspects of their own experiences. Focusing specifically on the interrelations between music and place, Stokes argues for the capacity of music to mediate the musical construction of place through its elements and the boundaries they foster, reflecting a certain moral and political order (Stokes 1994, p. 3). In Saeid's case, music evoked notions of what "home" should feel like, which encompassed not only the music but also the emotional states it conveyed and communicated in public. These projections allegedly fostered his decision to remain in Greece by enabling him to project music's properties onto the place he had ended up in and envisioning it as a new possible "home".

Regarding the temporal dimensions of a certain place and, consequently, the making of the boundaries delineating it and their crossing, Hurd et al.'s (2017) work is valuable. Temporalities, as Hurd et al. argue (2017), are intrinsic to border-making and, consequently, to border-crossing, suggesting respective modes of belonging. More specifically, territories tend to be imagined and constructed by means of temporal modes that attribute to them qualities that differentiate them from others, thus making each side of the border and suggesting the respective imaginations of it (ibid.). After all, Time has been extensively used in constructing difference, imbuing imaginations of otherness with positive and negative connotations, suggesting a respective order of things in relation to the border set (ibid., p. 6; see Fabian 1983). In the case discussed, the spatio-temporal dimensions of borders, their crossing, and the articulation of respective belongings were encouraged by

the specific musical instrument and music that transcended and blurred borders, suggesting alternative orders of things. Music encapsulated spatio-temporal visions of each side of the border, suggesting respective (non)belongings and desires to belong that encompassed a spatio-temporal spectrum broader than the specificities of a given locus (Greece-Iran/Present-Past).

3.2. *Vignette 2-(Pop) Music Circulations, Boundary-Blending and Alternative Belongings*

It was a July afternoon in 2020, soon after the restrictions for curbing the pandemic had been lifted. I was invited by Javanmard, an Afghan-Iranian refugee, to attend his music lesson. I met him while he was delivering a piano lesson, which included teaching the theme of Beethoven's Ninth Symphony Movement 14 (Ode to Joy), the accompaniment of a poem with lyrics in Farsi, and exercises in major and minor scales, Phrygian, and Segâh modes. He had opted for the two pieces due to the symbolic meaning they had for him (the first one as a reminder of his memorable encounter with European art music, and the second one as the first piece he learned to play on the piano). Moreover, these options suggested familiarity with certain aspects of European music culture as well as a certain 'merging' of it with Persian poetry.[10] Moreover, practicing the aforementioned scales aimed at familiarizing the student, an Iranian woman in her mid-twenties seeking asylum in Greece, with the fundamental elements of each musical tradition. Considering the common use of these scales across the Middle East and Asia, (folk) traditions across the European continent, and the incorporation of some of them in modern European art music,[11] knowing these modes was a necessary tool to play the respective repertory, further entailing the possibility of navigating each tradition.

During the break, Javanmard asked me whether I had ever heard "Gole Maryam," a popular song in Iran in the 1970s, before the Revolution. He said:

‘The original is Greek. My friends here, told me. I have always listened to this music. But now, I know that this music is also from Greece. A singer in America, Shadmer Aghili [Iranian pop artist] says, "I don't play music from Iran, but from Greece". And I can hear this in the music. I don't know—the music that I have always listened, is it Greek? Is it Iranian? It's music . . . '[12]

I was able to identify the particular song, though I could not, of course, understand its lyrics in Farsi. The Greek version of it belonged to a genre that was widely popular in Greece in the 1970s and is still well-known, and that was distinguished for using the same rhythms and scales devised in Hindi music traditions.

Javanmard is of Afghan descent but lived all his life in Iran, having fled there in the aftermath of the Soviet-Afghan war, the following civil war, and the establishment of a religious political regime.[13] He told me that he had returned to Afghanistan for a short time, only to flee again due to being persistently harassed by the authorities. Despite having lived his whole life in Iran, he suffered from continuous discrimination (Adlparvar 2021; Tober 2007; Adelkah and Olszewska 2007), which, in conjunction with the worsening socio-economic situation, forced him to flee once more, this time to Europe. Apart from his socio-economic circumstances, he insisted on highlighting the tight regulations on his artistic expression and creative practice that he experienced in both countries, which eroded any bonds with either "home," while finally urging him to seek safety in Europe. He was finally relieved to be able to make music without any concerns, and he was proud to be able to teach music to his compatriots, among whom were young women, who, he emphasized, would not have had this opportunity back home.

Javanmard favored "Gole Maryam" in particular, as it symbolized an encounter with an aspect of "Greek music", cherished by his "Greek friends". This musical encounter actualized on Greek territory and embedded in specific social contexts became possible thanks to the specific song's circulation as a cultural commodity across formal (cultural industry) and informal (musicians lending or even copying each other) cross-border networks, further mediated by the available technologies facilitating these circulations (see Bohlman 2011; Appadurai 1996; Toynbee and Dueck 2011a). The similarities between the

two versions of this song exceeded the conventions of aesthetic "mimesis" or "translation," deemed crucial in the transfer of a musical piece across different systems of "conceptual" and "aesthetic" values so that it maintains its meaningfulness in the new contexts (see Toynbee and Dueck 2011b, pp. 8–9). Taking into account the affective power of music as well as its capacity to frame things outside of itself, qualities that I discussed previously, and focusing on the listener's end, the popularity of the same song across borders suggested a shared meaningfulness. In other words, listeners across borders appeared to be sharing similar conceptual and aesthetic values that enabled them to perceive the song and be affected by it in similar manners.

Although Javanmard could not understand the Greek lyrics—just as I could not understand the Farsi ones—he could nevertheless share the moment of enjoying listening to this song in both "homes". The realization of "sharedness" and the possibility of enjoying themselves in the present, listening to a song that had framed moments of their past across borders, constituted an "encounter" in the sense that it challenged existing differences (experience-based, language, and so on) and highlighted commonalities, releasing in turn the possibilities of becoming included that socially relating entailed. The song was still identified as originating from specific locations, as Javanmard wondered whether it was Greek or Iranian, suggesting that he understood the qualities of music of each place as distinct, capable of projecting each place in a certain order, describing it, and at the same time being named after it (see Stokes 1994). However, what really seemed to matter, as he argued, was that it was "music", and, as such, it entailed a shared affectivity.

4. Homemaking at Host: Performing Belongings

Saeid and Javanmard were well aware of the affective capacity of music and sound to articulate spatial narratives explicitly and implicitly and consequently foster place-making, bringing the listener into connection with the respective (social) nexus they fostered (see Small 1998). Their individual experiences of actively listening to the soundscapes of the places they had found themselves in provided them with solid proof for that. Moreover, being musicians and performers and having the required knowledge to process the structural elements of each musical tradition (scales, rhythms, and so on) and navigate the diverse repertories enabled them to actively engage with them, devise them to express their own narratives of belonging, and communicate them to their audiences.

In early March 2020, I met Javanmard at a rehearsal with his musicians. They were preparing to give a concert in Athens a few days later (which was eventually cancelled due to the newly introduced measures for the restriction of the pandemic). A couple of months before, they had performed on an online TV show popular across the international Iranian diaspora. Performing online aimed to address the Iranian diaspora and their compatriots "at home" and was seen primarily as an opportunity to demonstrate that, as exiles, they have succeeded in aesthetically expressing themselves freely. The concert in Athens was an opportunity "to get closer to Greek society by our art, music, and culture," as Javanmard and his guitarist argued.[14]

That was the reason that among the other pieces that they would perform, they had included pieces in major scales, whose lyrics were about "love" and "happiness". This was their attempt to appropriate their repertory, aiming at pleasing their audience and connecting with them. This choice reflected, of course, an assumption that was embedded in their reified visions of their "host" country and its residents. Seeking refuge in Greece entangled them with their chance to experience "love" and "happiness", states of being of which they were deprived in their home countries. The capacity of Greece to host them indicated in their eyes that people residing there should be living in "love" and "happiness". Despite the acknowledged challenges, they praised the living conditions there, comparing them to the ones in their home settings that had finally led them to exile. Furthermore, based on this assumption, they decided upon the "proper" musical features of the repertory to be performed. This choice further suggested their awareness of the emotivity encapsulated in musical features that would enable them to release the

affective potential of the music they would perform and would connect them with their audience. Being able to connect with the "host" audience reinforced them as "relevant" to them. Relating with their audience on an emotional level, and, most importantly, fostering through their performance "feelings of happiness", reinforced them as actors capable of providing an aesthetic experience that detached them from their refugee backgrounds and the relevant connotations underpinning how they would be usually perceived, and positioned them at an equal level with their audience. After all, emotions are key in experiencing and processing the world, with the capacity to produce relevant knowledge (see Milton 2005). As musicians generating this emotional experience, my interlocutors enabled their audience to produce knowledge not only about the music they performed but also, and perhaps primarily about themselves, about how refugees should be envisaged. In other words, relating on an intimate, emotional level with their audience suggested the terms of their visibility and audibility.

As Javanmard argued:

> ' . . . you can show your feeling with your music. It is the feeling that [music] shares between the people, and feeling is the same. Maybe the language is not the same, but the feeling is the same. So, we can show our feeling with the music. For example, in my country there is war. When I make a song, for sure it's sad. Maybe you don't understand the text at all, but you feel that it is a sad song from the melody . . . '[15]

Emphasizing music's capacity to trigger emotions that are regarded as shared, or at least can be similarly sensed and understood, suggests the existence of relatable points of reference and the capacity to evoke shared perceptions (see also DeNora [2000] 2004).

Apart from explicitly relating specific scales and respective emotions with the targeted audience, Javanmard used to actively listen to any kind of music in order "to explore," to become familiar with other (musical) cultures and, consequently, understand their human actors. He was able to identify the particularities enabling someone to talk about "Greek" or "Arabic" or "Iranian" music. While as a listener, he traced the common-patterns, as a musician, he followed the merging paths suggested by common patterns, and concentrated his efforts on blending them, composing music that would appeal to audiences across the two "homes," and showcasing his firm belief in music's sharedness and shareability. By incorporating into his music elements of both traditions, he aspired to convey the message that coexistence was possible. In his line of thought, as long as it was possible to blend elements constituting distinct musical traditions into a comprehensive, distinct musical piece, it should also be possible for people of diverse backgrounds to coexist. After all, humans have been the agentive actors blending the various musical elements, and, accordingly, they should be able to coordinate relations of coexistence with each other. At least, this has been his aspiration: to inspire through his music an alternative paradigm of human relations based on coexistence.

As he explicitly framed this, offering a humanist understanding and bodily grounding his argument: '[I do that] because I think that we [humans] around the world can have the same thoughts in our heads, and the same feelings in our hearts. We can mix our ways through music and show [what we share] with music'.

Saeid, in a similar line of thought, loved to include in his public performances of Gole Orkideh, the version in Farsi of McKennitt's "Tango to Evora", which he had known long before his arrival in Greece. As a professional musician, aiming at engaging with his audience (see Tsioulakis and Hytönen-Ng 2017), he had chosen this piece, aspiring to effectively connect with it, offering a memorable musical experience.

As he argued: This song is ideal. They [Greek audience] know the melody, and then they listen to the lyrics in Farsi. It strikes them . . . You always have to consider where you perform and do something more with music. It's not only the music.'[16]

Having attended his performance hosted at the metro station on Syntagma Square as part of a charity festival in September 2019, I can confess my surprise, as a member of the audience, when I heard him performing the aforementioned song, singing its lyrics in

Farsi. Many people standing around the room came closer to listen, confirming Saeid's view of the song as "ideal" to engage with the audience. Performing it documented an existing common point of reference and constituted Saeid as a facilitator of our musical experience, proving his awareness of how to "move" us. Seeing him and us as part of the musician-audience continuum (Tsioulakis and Hytönen-Ng 2017), the (simplified) dipole between the refugee-Other/guest and the audience-Self/host was significantly challenged. Saeid, in our conversations, further highlighted that the value of choosing to perform this piece was confirmed by the audience's reception of it any time he performed this song. More specifically, as he told me, every time he performed it, members of the audience approached him, asking him about it. This way, he was given the chance, or rather, created the opportunity for himself, to demonstrate his knowledgeability and situate himself amidst the home and host setting, emphasizing the shared patterns and the possibilities that they entailed for sharing affective (musical) instances such as the one outlined in this vignette.

5. Musicking Border-Making and Border-Crossing: Musical Encounters Blending and Challenging a Bounded Order

The discussion developed so far, evolving around the vignettes, and complemented by my interviewees' discourses, suggests a perspective of border-making and border-crossing that differs from the paradigm suggested largely by the (im)migration debates. More specifically, the (im)migration debates -inevitably underpinning the discourses around the recent "European Refugee/Migration Crisis" are usually entangled with ones about integration. In this sense, they are solidly embedded in imaginaries of (socio-cultural) difference and, consequently, are underpinned by the power relations shaping this asymmetric (social) order (see Rytter 2018). In this paradigm, migrants are, by default, portrayed as a "problem," challenging a given (socio-cultural) order, and, inevitably, they tend to be (purposefully or not) consistently excluded (Titley 2012; Lentin and Titley 2011). Reifications of "difference" not only transfer to the cultural field views of a spatially bounded reality, strictly aligning with nation-state borders, but they also tend to reproduce the hierarchies underpinning the world order. Stolcke heavily criticizes this approach as "cultural fundamentalism" (Stolcke [1995] 2021), acknowledging that it is reasonably emerging from the (cultural) politics and policies in place. Yet, as she also highlights, it is a worldview that is fundamentally challenged by the contestation of bordered spaces. This contestation results from the massive mobilities of people and goods, which reinforce continua (see Gupta and Ferguson 2002).

My interviewees' accounts and practices exemplified this ambiguity, which I conceptualize as "encounters." As Moisala et al. argue (Moisala et al. [2017] 2018, p. 1), drawing on Deleuze and Guattari, encounters refer to moments of contact with "something in the world that perplexes existing categorizations and already established ways of being. They are the moments where an object or a process refuses to be immediately recognized in the terms of the already given as similar or opposed to something familiar." Under this lens, an encounter, while suggesting the (perceived) pre-existence of distinct, bounded spheres that eventually merge, also challenges existing ways of being, proposes alternative ways of thinking, and encourages alternative senses of being and belonging.

Listening to music facilitated my interviewees' encounters with "others" and further influenced their individual music-making, constituting them as agentive actors that carve the terms under which they encounter audiences of the host society. The elements of music orient their ways of thinking in the first place. Versions and appropriations of pop songs exemplified the commonalities across distinct borders. Engaging with music (from the point of view of a listener as well as a musician) was embedded in emotions-evoked by the elements of music and by the individual meanings infusing them, and in them, music's affectivity lied.

The argument of shared modes of feelings instigated by specific musical prompts was attributed to people's and cultures'/music's mobilities across the regions of the Eastern Mediterranean and Central Asia. Sharing the space, listening to each other's music, and relating to it was seen as fostering a nexus of shared repertories within which my

interviewees' mobilities and encounters took place, further enhanced by imaginations and memories. To further ground their argument about their capacity to feel with "others," as constituted and understood in their across-the-border belongings, my interviewees recalled the common experience of having been forcefully moved and the emotional predicaments entailed. After all, as Svašek argues, humans' mobilities are, by default, infused with emotions, discursively expressed, practiced, and bodily experienced (Svašek 2012a), which can acquire additional layers of meaningfulness and emotivity through the mediations fostered by the material objects connected with them and symbolizing them (Svašek 2012b). The existing common patterns (musical elements, songs, and instruments) were seen as testifying to the common place of moving and sharing experiences and, consequently, fostered new encounters and interactions that were informed by the ability to become affected in similar ways. The capacity of certain sounds/music to induce common ways of feeling mapped the cross-border shared patterns onto the individual human body. "We [humans] all have the same heart," argued Javanmard.[17] With this phrase, he indicated the body organ that is primarily imagined as the epicenter of experiencing and processing emotions, which is a reasonable viewpoint, considering, for instance, the differentiating effect on heart pulse that distinct emotional conditions have (see Svašek 2005, pp. 12–13; Rosaldo 1984, p. 143). Songs facilitated senses of belonging by invoking a certain place and my interviewees' imaginations of and relations with it, and by fostering common emotions by instilling common bodily-felt experiences.

Focusing on the particular framings of their "refugeehood" and the mainstream representations of refugees as "fearful", "voiceless," and lacking agency as "Others" (see Nyers 2006), my interlocutors reinforced their own understandings of experiencing refugeehood through music. They largely "silenced" their forceful displacement for the sake of representing themselves as knowledgeable of the host society's cultural fashions and of "their" ways to musically feel and communicate. Referring to the homes from which they fled served their agenda of establishing themselves as "others" to what their "home" stood for and underlining their estrangement from it. Establishing themselves as knowledgeable of the diverse repertories and capable of affecting the audiences they were trying to reach further suggested a "cosmopolitan" musical self that could be easily seen as "frustrated" by being allocated specific social positions (Chatzipanagiotidou and Murphy 2020, p. 12; see Tsioulakis 2011).

My interviewees, as active listeners, received the indications of sharedness and interpreted them as such, an interpretation further embedded in their urgent need to make a home and to belong. My interviewees, as agentive actors, made music and performed to their audience pieces that they thought exemplified sharedness. In this sense, they further carved out the terms under which they became "visible" and "audible".

6. Concluding Remarks

To conclude the discussion, the article sheds light on the aesthetic dimensions of refugeehood by examining the multiple ways in which music manifests border-induced (cultural) difference while simultaneously helping to navigate this difference, tracing any common patterns, and facilitating senses and expressions of cross-border belonging. Furthermore, the article outlines the factors determining the ambiguous role that music plays in (aesthetic) border-making and border-crossing. Following the interlocutors' narratives, the article explains that this is achieved thanks to the dense network of people's and music's mobilities and circulations, which in turn has forged shared repertories and common, relatable patterns. The article further shows how, in addition to the ambiguous role of music in manifesting and navigating difference, my interlocutors devised music to manifest agentively their identity and senses of cross-border belonging, and to foreground their belief in cross-border sharedness. More specifically, my interlocutors consciously chose the musical pieces that they performed, sometimes incorporating and other times silencing their experiences of refugeehood. In doing so, they set the terms under which they became visible and audible to the audience addressed, regardless of explicitly identifying

themselves as refugees. The apparent inconsistency between self-identifying as refugees and selectively foregrounding it in their public performances resonates with the tensions underpinning their position. More specifically, it manifests and communicates their sense of belonging with the host audience, while it resonates with their experiences of estrangement from their original homes and their desires to reinforce their belonging to a new one. Finally, an important component of the discussion developed above is the common repertories and the complementary roles that consuming (via listening) and communicating (via public performance) have in producing and processing narratives of belonging. Specifically, this article showed that music fosters imaginations of possible belongings. By mobilizing claims of aesthetic belonging, music serves as a means to express, by extension, (the desire for) legitimate belonging to the host settings. This is achieved by highlighting the sharedness of creative expressions and, thus, the capacity to affect and be affected emotionally—to feel with others, transcending any borders.

Data Availability Statement: Research data is not publicly available to maintain the interviewees' anonymity in line with the ethical standards of anthropological professional bodies and in compliance with the relevant AHRC policies for postgraduate researchers.

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Notes

1   For an extensive discussion of the means and tools, that ethnographic research employs and the holistic scope it assumes, you may refer to Eriksen's work (Eriksen 2010).

2   For an extensive discussion over autoethnography as method you may refer to Reed-Danahay (1997), Wall (2006), and Ellis et al. (2011).

3   To ensure my interviewees' anonymity and considering their specific requests, pseudonyms are employed and any details that could compromise their anonymity are omitted.

4   In official and vernacular discourses the terms refugees/migrants have largely been used interchangeably, despite the fundamental differences in the connotations that each term has. While the definition and subsequent rights of a 'refugee' are determined by international conventions and agreements stemming from the UN 1951 Convention, and while 'immigration policies' regulate all non-nationals' movements towards a state, the term 'migrant' has no legal basis, despite being used as an umbrella-term for all people on the move (IOM 2019, p. 132). Consequently, the choice of either term (refugees/migrants) has implicit and/or explicit implications for refugees regarding the acknowledgement of the human experience and the relevant legal consequences (attribution of status, benefits, and so on), and it further suggests the scope of the ones choosing either term.

5   The 2016 EU-Turkey Agreement, notoriously known as 'the Deal,' was signed allegedly for the purpose of fighting 'irregular migration,' and for the protection of the most vulnerable. However, the Agreement has been heavily criticized on the exclusionary logics that underpinned it, and recent research has confirmed that the most severely affected are refugees themselves (Gabrielsen-Jumbert and Tank 2019). According to this Agreement, for every Syrian returned from the Greek islands to Turkey, one Syrian would be relocated from Turkey to the EU, on the basis of the UN Vulnerability Criteria (EU 2016, online).

6   For a concise overview of this shift as it was traced on the Greek islands, you may refer to Lafazani (2020).

7   For an overview of 'hospitality' in Greece, and its entanglements with refugees you may refer to Kyriakidou (2020).

8   Interview on 11 January 2020 and informal discussion on 1 February 2020, Athens.

9   Bastani provides with a comprehensive overview of the cultural implications of the 1979 Revolution in Iran (2020). For a comprehensive overview of creative practice and aesthetic expressions in post-Revolution Iran, you may refer to Nooshin (2017, 2015, 2009).

10 All interviewees who had lived and learnt music in Iran expressed familiarity with European Art music, as essentialized in piano and/or guitar accompaniment of Persian poetry. Considering that poetry is a cornerstone of Iranian culture (see Bastani 2020, chp. 2), European Art music's value could easily be seen, according to my interviewees, in its inextricable interrelation to accompanying Iranian poetry.

11 For a comprehensive discussion of 'Mode' as a relationship of intervals suggesting scale and melody type, see Powers et al. (2001).

12   Informal discussion at Javanmard's music lesson, 15 July 2020, Athens.

13   For a comprehensive overview of the political underpinnings to the (eventually exiled and diasporic) Afghan musicians' creative practice and aesthetic expressions throughout the turbulent 20th century, you may refer to Baily (2017).

14   Interview on 9 March 2020, Athens.

15   Interview on 30 September 2019, Athens.

16   Interview on 19 June 2020, Athens.

17   Interview on 30 September 2019, Athens.

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