



**Music learning in Costa Rica:  
A postcolonial institutional  
ethnography**



GUILLERMO ROSABAL-COTO

**68**

STUDIA  
MUSICA

SIBELIUS ACADEMY, UNIVERSITY OF THE ARTS HELSINKI 2016



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**✕ UNIVERSITY OF  
THE ARTS HELSINKI**

The Sibelius Academy of the University of the Arts Helsinki  
Studia Musica 68

Sibelius Academy Faculty of Music Education,  
Jazz, and Folk Music (MuTri) Doctoral School

Music learning in Costa Rica: A postcolonial institutional ethnography

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Printhouse: EDiNexo, San José (Costa Rica)

ISBN 978-952-329-025-9 (print)

ISBN 978-952-329-026-6 (PDF)

(ISSN 0788-3757)

# Abstract

Rosabal-Coto, G. (2016). *Music learning in Costa Rica: A postcolonial institutional ethnography*. The Sibelius Academy of the University of the Arts Helsinki. *Studia Musica* 68.

The purpose of this sociological, music education ethnography was to analyze how music learning is organized in postcolonial Costa Rica, through the experiential stance of nine young music educators. In the ontology of institutional ethnography, known as “a sociology for people”, I deemed these educators as experts in what was done in their everyday music learning socialization, as lived and felt in their bodily beings. The disjuncture that emerged in thoughts, actions, and choices, in such socialization, became a site for discovery of social practices. Music learning socialization already has been coordinated by extra local goals or agendas, often foreign to music learners’ local worlds. I resorted to Latin American postcolonial theories, which discuss the phenomenon of colonization of the Latin American context, among other things through the concepts of “colonial wound” and “epistemic disobedience”. Furthermore, I employed the theories of scholars Small and Freire to establish a framework for understanding the connections between colonization and schooling.

Procedures include interviews, participant observation, and artifact analysis. I collected each participant’s voice in a story of lifelong music learning socialization. I analyzed what social actors did, how, and for what purposes, in the stories, using theories and concepts from music education literature. In a second level of analysis, I interwove Latin American postcolonial thinking with institutional ethnography in a model of micro/macro relationships in music learning socialization that I call “postcolonial institutional ethnographic analysis” (PCIE). According to the first phase of analysis, the participants engage in music learning socialization in formal and informal settings, from what is familiar to their ways to be in the world. In addition, what is done and how, and for what purposes, is contingent on the interactional-based experiences of all participating social actors, such as their values, background, upbringing, or past education. However, a latent puzzle emerges in the

music learners' actualities, when those in control of knowledge or resources—parents, peers, teachers, or authorities—coerce them to give up or modify their local ways to engage with music, causing dislocation. The analysis through the PCIE model allowed me to establish connections between such puzzle and translocal structures that have shaped music education in Costa Rica. I mapped relationships of coordination between notions and practices that mediate music learning in the participants' local worlds, and extra local, social control.

Findings suggest that music learners might be constructed as inferior, illegitimate others, when social actors articulate the following notions, previously established by colonialist structures, such as government, education, or market: (a) the wrong traits or identity, (b) insufficient material or financial resources, (c) insufficient corporeal ability, and (d) insufficient Western Art Music background. Such construction can be understood through the theoretical framework established in this thesis, suggesting that music learners are socialized to become cultivated, Western Art musicians, modern and civilized citizens, or labor force for the developed global market. Learners may either embrace the oppressed site or resist it. The construction of this inferior other can be understood as proceeding from the coloniality that sustained the control and subjugation of the bodies and imaginary of the Amerindian peoples five centuries ago. It is based on the stereotype of the cultural superiority of the European ideal of progress and civilization and as sustaining the transmission of an imagined, White, European, Enlightenment-based Costa Rican national identity, through art music and music schooling, beginning in the 19th century. These ideas endure in contemporary times, in the form of a development discourse that organizes formal music learning that caters to interests of the global market. Post-research reflections suggest that PCIE is useful to decolonize macro-based constructs, theories, traditions, and practices in music learning and music education research, that make invisible or colonize learners' empirical, interactional worlds, as they experience them.

**Keywords:** sociology of music education; institutional ethnography; post colonialism; colonialism; coloniality; Costa Rica education.

# Tiivistelmä

Rosabal-Coto, G. (2016). *Music learning in Costa Rica: A postcolonial institutional ethnography*. [Musiikin oppiminen Costa Ricassa: Postkolonialistinen institutionaalinen etnografia.] Taideyliopiston Sibelius-Akatemia, Helsinki. *Studia Musica* 68.

Tämän musiikkikasvatuksen alan sosiologisen etnografisen tutkimuksen tarkoituksena oli analysoida yhdeksän nuoren musiikkikasvattajan kokemusten pohjalta, miten musiikin oppiminen on järjestetty jälkikolonialistisessa Costa Ricassa. Institutionaalisen etnografian ontologian eli ns. ”ihmisten sosiologian” nojalla arvelin heidän olevan asiantuntijoita jokapäiväisen musiikin oppimisen sosialisointiprosessissa oman elämänsä ja kokemustensa kautta. Sosialisoinnissa havaitut ajatusten, toimien ja valintojen epäsuhdut valaisivat yhteiskunnallisia käytäntöjä. Musiikin oppimisen sosialisointiin on tuotu mukaan paikallisia lisätavoitteita tai intressejä, jotka ovat usein vieraita musiikin oppijoiden kokemussympäristölle. Käytin ilmiön analysoinnissa Latinalaisen Amerikan postkolonialistisia teorioita, jotka käsittelevät siirtomaavallan vaikutusta Latinalaisen Amerikan todellisuuteen mm. ”siirtomaavamman” ja ”episteemisen tottelemattomuuden” käsitteiden kautta. Käytin myös Smallin ja Freiren teorioita rakentaakseni viitekehyksen kolonialismin ja koulutuksen välisten yhteyksien selvittämiseksi.

Menetelminä olivat haastattelut, osallistuva havainnointi ja artifaktien analyysi. Keräsin kultakin osallistujalta elämäntarinan sosialisoinnista musiikin oppimisessa. Analysoin tarinoista sitä, mitä yhteiskunnalliset toimijat olivat tehneet, miten ja miksi. Sovelsin tässä teorioita ja käsitteitä musiikkikasvatuksen kirjallisuudesta. Analyysin seuraavalla tasolla sovelsin Latinalaisen Amerikan postkolonialismia institutionaalisen etnografian ohella musiikin oppimisen sosialisoinnin mikro- ja makrotason suhteiden mallissa, jota kutsun postkoloniaaliseksi institutionaalisen etnografiseksi analyysiksi (PCIE). Analyysin ensimmäinen vaihe osoitti, että osallistajat toimivat musiikin oppimisen sosialisoinnissa sekä muodollisissa että epämuodollisissa yhteyksissä oman elämänsä ja omien tottumustensa mukaisesti. Se,

mitä tehdään ja miten, ja miksi, johtuu kaikkien asiaan liittyvien yhteiskunnallisten toimijoiden vuorovaikutuspohjaisista kokemuksista, mm. heidän arvoistaan, taustastaan, kasvatuksestaan ja aiemmasta koulutuksestaan. Musiikin oppijoiden kokemusympäristössä syntyy kuitenkin ongelmia silloin, kun tietoa tai resursseja hallitsevat tahot – vanhemmat, vertaiset, opettajat, viranomaiset – pakottavat oppijoita luopumaan paikallisista tavoistaan tai muokkaamaan niitä voidakseen opiskella musiikkia. Tämä aiheuttaa vieraantumista. PCIE-mallin mahdollistaman analyysin avulla pystyin tunnistamaan näitä ongelmia ja vieraantumisen rakenteita, jotka ovat muovanneet musiikkikasvatusta Costa Ricassa. Vastakkain ovat toisaalta käsitykset ja käytännöt, jotka ohjaavat musiikin oppimista osallistujien kokemusympäristöissä, ja toisaalta mukaan tuotuja paikallisia yhteiskunnallisen hallinnan rakenteita.

Tuloksien nojalla voidaan päätellä, että musiikin oppijoita pidetään vähempiarvoisina tai hyväksymiskelvottomina seuraavien yhteiskunnallisten toimijoiden käyttämien perustelujen nojalla (jotka muistuttavat kolonialististen instituutioiden kuten hallituksen, koulutusjärjestelmän tai markkinoiden käyttämiä perusteluja): a) väärät ominaisuudet tai identiteetti, b) riittämättömät aineelliset tai rahalliset varat, c) riittämätön fyysinen suosituskky, ja d) riittämättömät taustatiedot länsimaisesta musiikista. Tässä tutkimuksessa esitetyn teoreettisen viitekehyksen kautta voidaan tulkita, että musiikin oppijat on tarkoitus sosialisoida sivistyneiksi länsimaisiksi muusikoiksi sekä moderneiksi ja koulutetuiksi kansalaisiksi, tai toisaalta työvoimaksi kehittyneille maailmanmarkkinoille. Opiskelijat voivat joko hyväksyä alisteisen asemansa tai vastustaa sitä. Tämän alisteiseen asemaan asettamisen voi ymmärtää heijastuksena kolonialismista, jolla Amerikan mantereen alkuperäisasukkaat alistettiin ruumiillisesti ja henkisesti viisisataa vuotta sitten. Perusteluna tälle oli stereotyyppi eurooppalaisen edistyksen ja sivistyksen kulttuurisesta yliveraisuudesta, joka todentui myös 1800-luvulla alkaneissa pyrkimyksissä luoda Costa Ricalle valkoisten eurooppalaisten valistukseen pohjaava kansallinen identiteetti taidemusiikin ja musiikkikasvatuksen kautta. Nämä pyrkimykset näkyvät vielä nykyäänkin kehitysdiskurssissa, jonka nojalla järjestetään globaaleja markkinoita palvelevaa muodollista musiikkikoulutusta. Tutkimuksen jälkeinen pohdinta viittaa siihen, että PCIE on

hyödyllinen väline, jolla kyseenalaistaa musiikin oppimisen ja musiikkikasvatuksen makrotason rakenteita, teorioita, perinteitä ja käytäntöjä, jotka häivyttävät tai korvaavat oppijoiden empirisen vuorovaikutusmaailman.

**Avainsanat:** musiikkikasvatuksen sosiologia; institutionaalinen etnografia; postkolonialismi; kolonialismi; siirtomaavalta; koulutus Costa Ricassa.



# Acknowledgements

I first express my gratitude to the University of the Arts Helsinki. The Sibelius Academy Rector and the Sibelius Academy Foundation bestowed generous grants towards the completion and printing of my dissertation. The Sibelius Academy MuTri Department provided me with financial assistance to travel to Finland for advising and supervision during my doctoral studies, and to present research reports at international conferences.

I thank Professor Heidi Westerlund, my degree supervisor at Sibelius Academy, whose insights were always timely and crucial in the strategy and process of writing and publishing the dissertation.

I am grateful to peer doctoral students who provided helpful feedback to my ideas and drafts: Anna Kuopomäki, Cecilia Björk, Analia Capponi-Savolainen, Alexis Kallio, Minja Koskela, Tuula Jääskeläinen, Sigrid Jordal, Tuulikki Laes, Laura Miettinen, Sari Muhonen, Hanna Nikkanen, Albi Odendall, Alekski Ojala, Inga Rikandi, Olli-Taavetti Kankkunen, Heidi Partti, Eeva Siljamäki, Tuula Touvinen, Danielle Treacy, and others. I received invaluable scholarly advice from Professors Liora Bresler, Margaret Barrett, Sandra Stauffer, Ramona Holmes, Alexandra Kertz-Welzel, and Lauri Väkevä, at doctoral seminars in Helsinki. Ongoing encouragement from Hildegard C. Froehlich (Emeritus Professor, North Texas State University) was also very important to me to complete this research. In addition, I thank the two pre-examiners of this dissertation for their most valuable comments and suggestions: Professor Petter Dyndahl (Hedmark University of Applied Sciences), and Associate Professor Rubén Gaztambide-Fernández (Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, University of Toronto).

Academic advice from colleagues and administrative support from authorities at Universidad de Costa Rica (UCR)—my workplace—were very important towards making progress in my inquiry and writing. I am thankful to: María Clara Vargas (Dean, Faculty of Fine Arts), Manuel Matarrita (Director, School of Musical Arts), Eleonora Badilla (Director, Teachers' Information and Formation Network), Montserrat Sagot (Director, Women's Studies Institute), Patricia Fumero (Director,

Arts Research Institute), and Juan José Marín Hernández [1968-2015] (Director, Center for Historical Studies of Central America).

I owe much to Cecilia, Silvia, Sergio, Daniela, Fabiola, Julio, Roberto, Carlos, and Raúl, the study participants, who shared their experiences at interviews, and patiently undertook transcript reviews. In addition, the effort of my research assistants, Karla Sierra, Juan Andrés Montero, Juan Pablo Zúñiga, and Valeria Gamboa, at transcribing the interviews, was invaluable.

I am indebted to Roberta Lamb (Associate Professor, Queen's University; Docent, Sibelius Academy), my first advisor, for the insurmountable material, academic, and emotional support during the research process.

I thank deeply Sidsel Karlsen (Professor, Hedmark University of Applied Sciences; Docent, Sibelius Academy), my second advisor, for having always responded in a timely, patient, and critical but friendly way to my drafts, questions, and concerns.

Christopher Small (1927-2011), mentor and friend, did not live to see this research complete. Small dreamed of the decolonization of music education and urged for it throughout his work. He strengthened my convictions about decolonization of education within a short period of interactions, shortly before he passed away, and this had a profound impact in this study. I hope this research somehow contributes to materialize Chris' dream and legacy.

This research would not have been at all possible without the unconditional support, patience, and love from my life partner, Ricardo Ardón Villalta. You built a supportive and secure environment so that I could engage in endless reading, writing and reviewing, and trips for supervision to Finland and other distant destinations. In addition, you have been my everyday example of decolonization and border epistemology that inspires my teaching and research. I wish to dedicate this work to you.

**Note to the reader:** All English translations of names and quotes from Spanish language sources are my own.

Guillermo Rosabal-Coto

San José, Costa Rica, November 2015

# Contents

<b>1 Introduction .....</b>	<b>1</b>
1.1 Researcher's position .....	3
1.2 The problem of study .....	5
1.3 Colonialism in education, music, and music education in Costa Rica .....	9
1.3.1 European colonization and vernacular musics as subaltern .....	9
1.3.2 Cultural Europeanization of the imagined Costa Rican nation .....	11
1.3.3 Neocolonialism and music education .....	18
1.4 Research task .....	21
1.5 Structure of the thesis .....	22
<b>2 Theoretical framework .....</b>	<b>25</b>
2.1 Colonialism: definition and scope .....	25
2.1.1 Historical colonialism .....	26
2.1.2 Colonialism's discursive construction .....	29
2.2 Postcolonialism .....	34
2.3 Latin American postcolonial critique .....	37
2.4 Colonialism, education, and music in the Western establishment .....	44
2.4.1 Colonization of vernacular music practices .....	44
2.4.2 Musicking, music schooling, and invented tradition .....	46
2.4.3 Freire: Oppressive education .....	49
2.5 Institutional ethnography .....	53
2.5.1 Institutional ethnography operational concepts .....	56
2.5.2 Institutional ethnography and music education .....	62
2.6 Chapter summary .....	65
<b>3 Methodology .....</b>	<b>69</b>
3.1 Data collection procedures .....	69
3.2 Participant recruitment and role .....	70
3.2.1 Individual and group interview .....	74
3.2.2 Recording, transcription, and revision .....	75
3.2.3 Participant observation and artifact analysis .....	78
3.2.4 Data analysis procedures .....	79

3.3 Validity .....	84
3.4 Power issues and ethics measures .....	85
3.5 Chapter summary .....	88
<b>4 Music learning in the participants' micro webs of interaction .....</b>	<b>91</b>
4.1 Accounts of participants' micro webs-based music learning.....	92
4.1.1 Cecilia .....	92
4.1.2 Silvia .....	99
4.1.3 Sergio .....	103
4.1.4 Daniela .....	106
4.1.5 Fabiola .....	114
4.1.6 Julio.....	118
4.1.7 Roberto.....	121
4.1.8 Carlos.....	126
4.1.9 Raúl.....	130
4.2 Chapter summary .....	132
<b>5 Thematic discussion of participants' micro webs of music learning .....</b>	<b>135</b>
5.1 Cultural consonance in childhood, family-based webs .....	136
5.2 Cultural dissonance in childhood, family-based webs.....	139
5.3 Cultural dissonance in formal music-based webs.....	141
5.3.1 National hymns singing in school .....	142
5.3.2 Race- and gender-based differentiation in school.....	144
5.3.3 Dissonance in recruitment and assessment in school.....	145
5.3.4 Dissonance in recruitment and assessment in conservatory and college ....	147
5.3.5 Teacher's dissonant leadership in conservatory and college .....	149
5.4 Vocational choice-related disjuncture in family and school webs.....	152
5.5 Labor market-related disjuncture .....	153
5.6 Cultural consonance in self-directed and peer-based informal and formal music learning webs .....	155
5.7 Chapter summary .....	157
<b>6 Postcolonial institutional ethnography, an analysis of music learning.....</b>	<b>161</b>
6.1 Analysis according to Postcolonial institutional ethnography.....	162
6.1.1 Locating the standpoint.....	162

6.1.2 The problematic and interaction with texts.....	165
6.2. Low-order textual mediation of the problematic.....	167
6.2.1 The wrong traits or identity.....	167
6.2.2 Insufficient material or financial resources.....	171
6.2.3 Insufficient corporeal ability .....	172
6.2.4 Insufficient Western Art Music skills and background .....	175
6.3 High-order textual mediation.....	177
6.3.1 The problematic and coloniality as textual mediation.....	177
6.3.2 High-order textual mediation and re-colonization from within .....	186
6.3.3 Resistance and epistemic disobedience .....	193
6.4 Chapter summary .....	200
<b>7 Towards a sociology for music learners .....</b>	<b>203</b>
7.1 From the micro-constructed body, to macrosociology of music learning: PCIE and the research questions.....	203
7.2 PCIE and music education research.....	208
7.3 PCIE and music learning.....	214
<b>References .....</b>	<b>219</b>
<b>Appendix A: Number and duration of interviews, per participant.....</b>	<b>239</b>
<b>Appendix B: Informed consent form (English translation).....</b>	<b>240</b>
<b>Appendix C: Confidentiality agreement (English translation) .....</b>	<b>241</b>

## **Index of tables**

Table 1 <i>Banking education practices according to Freire (2000)</i> .....	50
Table 2 <i>General sociocultural background to participants' actualities</i> .....	73
Table 3 <i>Participant observation and artifacts for analysis</i> .....	79

## **Index of figures**

Figure 1 <i>Interview transcript heading (English translation)</i> .....	77
Figure 2 <i>Grid for sequence organization (English translation)</i> .....	81
Figure 3 <i>Grid for recording the text-mediated problematic (English translation)</i> ....	82

# 1 Introduction

*At the beginning of the semester [the pianist/composer teacher] left us a fingering exercise for homework. I practiced it and [then] played it in class the way I thought I should. He said to me, 'It's deplorable. Are you dyslexic, or what?' He said this in front of all the other classmates, none of whom I knew. I had to go to the washroom [and pull myself together]. I dropped the course and waited a couple years until my GPA was high enough to allow me to choose another class piano teacher (P1, 1, 9).*

The above is a short sequence from Roberto's story of lifelong music learning socialization<sup>1</sup>. It touches on Roberto's music learning experiences as a music education freshman, in a university in Costa Rica<sup>2</sup>. Leaning on earlier sequences of Roberto's music pathways—not addressed in this chapter—, Roberto's previous musics and music engagements are embedded in everyday life, in what is real or familiar to him, as opposed to sophisticated, cultivated, or foreign music practices (see Bohlman 2002; DeNora 2000; Small 1987).

It may be easy for teachers to assume that Roberto's micro interactions reflect his inadequacy to comply with legitimate, necessary practices in institutionalized formal learning. It would also be tempting to conclude that Roberto overreacted to what happened in class, or simply to speculate that he failed to exercise agency. However, Roberto is an expert in his own experiences in interactions, about how he participates in institutional processes of socialization. His narrated bodily experiences could be approached as a micro site of social organization. Roberto's body is not fully autonomous or independent; constituted socially, it bears the imprint of interactions with teacher and classmates, with whom he did not necessarily choose to have physical or symbolic proximity (see Butler 2006). He

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<sup>1</sup> Roberto is one of nine participants in this research. The full story of Roberto's lifelong music learning socialization can be found in 4 Music learning in the participants' micro webs of interaction. In addition, I analyze this and two other sequences in Roberto's experiences, as a full case study, in Rosabal-Coto (2014).

<sup>2</sup> Costa Rica is my native country, where I have taught music for more than 15 years.

experiences tensions in his bodily self when a figure of authority/bearer of knowledge—a performing artist—publicly utters an able-ist stereotype that underestimates his previous unsophisticated, self-directed, everyday-based music background.

The utterance of the notion “Roberto as unable or insufficiently developed”, by the performing artist who taught the course, puts Roberto in a symbolic position as dispossessed inferior, in need of enculturation by a bearer of the performing arts tradition (see Freire 2000; Hobsbawm 2000; Illich 1971; Small 1977, 2010). This norm does not address music and music engagements in the ways that are familiar to the first-person bodily realities of learners—in this case, Roberto (Rosabal-Coto 2014). The norm emphasizes the teacher’s experience, more specifically, that of a performing artist who teaches a course for music education majors who are not who are not Western performance majors. Such experience upholds notions of excellence and practices of student scrutiny by the Western performing arts traditions (Small 1977, 2010). Roberto’s reaction, as he utters it, speaks of dislocation between the selves and experiences he has constructed outside formal learning situations, and the macro notions and practices upheld by the educational establishment, as enunciated or performed by the teacher. Thus, the incident may be regarded as a regulator of interactions within music learning socialization in this piano class. It establishes a difference between those who can, and those who cannot.

Roberto’s sequence of dislocation is very similar to my own story of split of consciousness as a young, gay, Western Art musician-in-the-making, more than twenty years ago (Rosabal-Coto 2006). Tensions emerged in the form of physical and emotional constraints, as I was encultured in Western Art Music learning in the music conservatory. I had difficulties balancing the values and practices of the conservatory and my informal everyday music experiences. I repressed any visible or audible signs of my gay sexuality, like my close relationship to my physical body expression and my taste for some pop-rock music and dances, to comply with the standards of classical woodwind playing. These standards included very controlled phrasing and expression, equal balance between voices in ensemble performance, and following teacher’s or conductor’s instructions and cues without questioning. I subjected my bodily ways to engage with music, according to these established

rules, because I longed for the modern symbolic capital I could gain if I became a Western-based, cultivated, and developed musician. When I visit this story, I find a very similar social coordination as in Roberto's experience as a music education freshman: The Western Art Music tradition, mediated by normative notions and embedded in the experience of bearers of knowledge, organized what was legitimate for me to do, in order to find a place in Western Art Music formal learning socialization. In light of this, I deepen in my own disjuncture in webs in music learning, to better understand why I approach a particular problem of study.

## **1.1 Researcher's position**

I had to give up my informal ways to be and engage with music, to be able to engage successfully in formal music learning. I participated in the construction of myself as an inferior. I did so through silencing my gay sexuality as a music learner, in order to become in the image of a heterosexual, White, European-based classical musician (see Rosabal-Coto 2006, 2014). I somehow embraced a colonial-based stereotype of superiority of High European Art culture. We can trace the roots and impact of such stereotypes back five centuries to Spanish colonization. The impact continues through music and education into 19th century Costa Rican national identity and into recent, neocolonial times. Embracing such stereotypes in my music learning was an outcome of both my middle-high class upbringing, and my socialization in elite, Catholic, private formal schooling. The latter granted me access to Western scientific and artistic culture, through European- and US American-based educational models.

However, not only did I force my music learner self to become distant from my identity; I attempted to transform my school and college music students, too, through the uncritical acceptance of philosophical and pedagogical frameworks that made universalistic claims about music, education, and learning. These frameworks

were at odds with Costa Rica's history as a postcolonial nation<sup>3</sup>, and antagonized the ethnicity, material realities, and worlds of the learners I encountered on a daily basis. This is how I came to articulate artistic and education values very similar to those wielded by Roberto's group piano teacher. We can explain the above instances of control and othering of learners within Western Art Music teaching, through the metaphor of the eagle and the chicken, as elaborated by Brazilian theology of liberation scholar Boff (2002). This author theorizes oppression and liberation of socially constructed inferiors, especially the poor and dispossessed in contemporary societies. He uses a parable of an eagle by Ghanaian pastor and educator Aggrey (1988). The story is about a badly wounded baby eagle rescued by a naturalist. When it healed, it lived in a yard with chickens. As she grew up, the eagle behaved like a chicken, until she was encouraged to fly away by experiencing the sun into her eyes, on the top of a hill.

In his theorization of this story, Boff contends that numerous institutions in Western society deprive individuals from opportunities for attaining consciousness, knowledge, and material and spiritual development, for the sake of colonization-based goals, wielded by "superiors". The eagle metaphor in *The Parable of the Eagle* serves to illustrate in very simple terms how an individual or an institution controls or obliterates agency for learning, despite the capacity of many "inferior" people to grow, think, know, create, and develop fully, according to their ways to be in the world. Following Boff (2002), this parable is relevant to the geocultural context of my research because the structural basis and violent enslavement in Ghana's colonization were similar to those of the colonization of the Indigenous in Latin America. In addition, Aggrey's thinking as an educator presaged that of Brazilian popular educator/philosopher Freire (2000, 2009), whose thinking about "the work of liberation in the minds of the oppressed" in education (Tuck & Yang 2012, 20). I will explain more in the next chapter.

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<sup>3</sup> I use the term *postcolonial* in association with the expression the "post-independence state" (Ashcroft, Griffiths & Tiffin 1998) in the "historical period after the territories and people that had once been colonized became nations in their own right" (Rizvi, Lingard & Lavia 2006, 251).

“Researchers are what we research”, contends Bresler (2008). As a music learner and teacher constructed through colonialist stereotypes and as an ethnographer, I have a certain sensitivity that comes with the understanding of oneself as not having complete agency (see Kyker 2014). For this reason, the dislocation I experienced in formal music learning was the perfect context for awareness and free-flowing thinking that lets us “move beyond the restricted confines of a familiar social order” (hooks 2003, 2) Hence, my interest in exploring colonial-based organization of music learning that I encountered in the lives of music education majors on a daily basis.

## **1.2 The problem of study**

As a study of sociological nature, this research pays attention to relationships that make music a social phenomenon. Since the mid-point of the 20th century, prominent scholarship concerned with music and its social coordinates, has addressed these issues: (a) Role of music in society, (b) music as a mode of human communication, and (c) musics’ position within established social structures. Adorno, whose work focused on Western Art Music (1976), analyzed the formal characteristics of music and their relation to the context of music production and reception. He developed a critical theory of the ideological role of massive, cultural commodity production within the context of industrial capitalism (Shepherd & Devine 2015).

Partly due to emerging multidisciplinary perspectives since Adorno (e.g., cultural studies, ethnomusicology, and feminism), a shift of interest in academia towards non-Western Art Music occurred. The scholars did so by paying close attention to cultural production of non-Western Art Music traditions that were embedded in a range of material and symbolic realities (e.g., DeNora 1995; Frith 1978; Shepherd, Virden, Vulliamy, & Wishart 1977; Small 1977). The interest then turned to addressing how the dynamics of the economic, political, and institutional structures shape Western Art Music practices (see Finnegan 2007; Leppert & McClary 1987; Lipsitz 1994; McClary 1991, Raynor 1976; Stokes 1994). Shepherd & Devine

(2015) agree that there is an increasing awareness of the plurality of musics, of their meanings and functions, and of the situatedness of musical agency and identity, specifically when considering social class, ethnicity, and/or difference between peoples and cultures.

Broadly speaking, the ontology and epistemology of much of that scholarship often focus on (and thereby privilege) the “art” over the “art maker” and/or consumer, operationalizing and highlighting Western musicological notions like “style” and “genre” in the analysis. A representative example of this approach may be Becker’s (1982) concept of “art worlds”. He defines art worlds as “all the people whose activities are necessary to the production of the characteristic works which that world, and perhaps others as well, define as “art”. The activities involved entail “a body of conventional understandings embodied in common practice and in frequently used artifact” (34). Finnegan (2007) adopts Becker’s concept and defines “musical worlds” as art worlds, because they entail distinctive styles and complex social conventions within which people variously live. These worlds comprise the people who take part, their particular values, “their shared understandings and practices, modes or production and distribution, and the social organization of their collective musical activities” (32).

In contrast to the works cited, my research is about the locality of learners in postcolonial contexts. This purpose moves the focus away from “art” as an object and the use of epistemological tools like “style” or “genre”, to center on geocultural, interaction-based connections around institutionalized music learning. It addresses with particular attention how institutionalized notions and practices coordinate dislocation, misrepresentation, differentiation, exclusion, and inequality as social practices in music learning, in forms of colonization. In order to understand these sorts of social practices, I intend to pay attention to first-person experiences of learners as subjects in the processes of colonization. Such subjects are non-hegemonic or non-elite individuals who have been dispossessed of agency, voice, and representation according to the worldviews or agendas of hegemonic elites or institutions. Within this dynamic, they are constructed as different *others* through practices and notions in socialization, where conversion or domestication occurs, for the sake of becoming what a cultural tradition or an institution deem one must turn

into (Spivak 2010; see Sousa Santos 2010). Often this subject is constructed through the enforcement of racial or cultural stereotypes devised by the colonizers (see Fanon 1963, 1967). For instance, their ways to live, know, and learn are considered barbaric, primitive, irrational, or unworthy in the eyes of an imperial or colonial ontology and epistemology. Such dynamics guided the construction of antagonistic concepts that underpin long-standing givens of Western world-view, such as, First vs. Third Worlds, or developed vs. undeveloped countries (Mignolo 2007, 2011; Sousa Santos 2010).

According to much recent Euro-American music education literature, especially in cultural psychology of music a gap between music experiences in school and the student's locally based experience out of it is likely to occur in music education settings that operate under this rationale of domination (see e.g., Hargreaves, Marshall & North 2003). Not only music schooling may be unfamiliar and unrelated to the learner's world, but it may also overlook the most important functions of music in the lives of learners (Boal-Pahleiros & Hargreaves 2001). Such educational experiences cause frustration and alienation in the local world of learners (Renwick & Reeve 2012) and fall short in promoting their progress and development (Green 2010). Music education researchers broadly understand this as *cultural dissonance* (see e.g., Boal-Palheiros & Hargreaves 2001; Green (2010); Mansfield 2002; McPherson, Davidson & Faulkner 2012; Stålhammar 2006).

On the other hand, literature in the music education webs of social justice and difference (e.g., Bradley 2007, 2012; Gould 2007, 2008; Gould, Countryman, Morton & Rose 2009; Vaugeois 2007, 2009) would explain differentiation mainly through the categories race, gender and sexuality, and social class. According to Gould (2011), the relationships that perpetuate asymmetrical relationships between those who organize and control music education and those who are the object of such education may often be overlooked by discursive institutional operations within colonialization. The above markers of difference may be very useful to describe broadly some social interactions around music learning in informal and formal contexts. However, they may somehow subsume specific experiences of bodily dislocation into conceptual abstractions. In addition, they may not be fully coherent

within the macro context of inequality in a Latin American postcolonial context, like Costa Rica.

We cannot study Costa Rica (and Latin America) through the same lenses used in European and North American contexts. Numerous economists and sociologists have agreed that, as a whole, the Latin American region features the most unequal distribution of wealth and income in the world (Cuenca 2012; Comisión Económica para América Latina 2010; Portes & Roberts 2005; Sojo 2009; Souza Silva 2011). This region is very different from highly industrialized and materially developed countries in Europe and North America when it comes to provisions and structures for education, too. For instance, Latin America allots less GNP percentage to education than developed countries and its educational agenda is different from these countries (Ledesma 2002). There is consensus that the increasing lack of access to housing, primary subsistence services, material goods, and job opportunities in the 21st century are the main framework for educational inequality. In turn, colonial-based cultural and educational practices that can be traced back to the Spanish colonization contribute to perpetuate socially constructed inequality in relation to how Costa Ricans see themselves and others, as cultural and political individuals and communities (Sojo 2009).

The state, school, and market as part of mostly Spanish-based, and more recently, United States-based colonialism have coordinated music and education in Costa Rica institutionally. Colonialism can be understood as the discursive framework that distinct colonial powers and projects mobilize to justify acts of colonization. Such acts take the form of external or internal colonialism. External colonialism entails the conquest and control of other people's territories (Bignall 2010), and the extraction and expropriation "of fragments of Indigenous worlds, animals (and) plants" (Tuck & Yang 2012, 4), as well as the subjugation of human bodies (see Anzaldúa 2007; González Stephan 2001). External colonialism utilizes the colonized lands, and the material and human resources to "build the wealth, the privilege, or feed the appetites of the colonizers" (Tuck & Yang 2012, 4). Internal colonialism, on the other hand, is "the biopolitical and geopolitical management of people, land" and natural resources "within the "domestic" borders of the imperial nation" (4). It uses modes of control such as schooling and policing "to ensure the ascendancy of a

nation and its white elite” (5). In order to achieve its goals, colonial power needs to silence people (Rodriguez-Silva 2012; Trouillot 1995), and dominate or eradicate their culture (Mignolo 2007). Colonialism began in Costa Rica when the Spanish Empire emissaries landed on the territory in 1502, and it continues to endure. Here *the colonial* becomes a useful concept to explain vital experiences of those who occupy an *other* place beyond the line of the official and legitimate (Sousa Santos 2010). While some colonial experiences can be located in the one-way relationship between center to periphery, others need to be analyzed against the backdrop of contemporary material conditions characterized by more complicated networks “of global movements of capital, people, and ideas” (Rizvi, Lingard, & Lavia 2006, 254). In this light, in the following section I will provide a historical and geocultural backdrop to the above issues in music and education, framed in three historical periods of colonialism in Costa Rica.

## **1.3 Colonialism in education, music, and music education in Costa Rica**

### **1.3.1 European colonization and vernacular musics as subaltern**

Upon their arrival to the territory that would become Costa Rica, the Spanish encountered native groups of Mesoamerican and Southern origin, of about four hundred thousand (Solórzano Fonseca 2013), scattered mostly on the North Pacific region and Central Valley of the territory. Their life was arrayed in exuberant nature and was subject to a tribe-based, stratified, socio-political organization that the Spanish called *chieftainship*. These groups had their own economic, sociopolitical, and religious organization, rituals, and activities in which music played important roles (see Cervantes 1995; Flores 1978; Flores & Acevedo 2000). These included harvesting, funerals, and spiritual purification, as well as festivities and recreation.

We need to understand subalternity of Indigenous musics in pre-Hispanic Costa Rica against the backdrop of the Spanish material and ideological colonization of the Indigenous and of the later imported Afro-Caribbean labor force. Intrusion of the colonizers initiated the so-called era of conquest and pacification, which entailed

genocide. It entailed physical and material domination that subjugated the physical integrity, economic, social, and political structures, and culture of the Indigenous societies. The economy during this period was based on the so-called *encomienda* regime: a servile relationship through which the natives were forced to provide products and work to the conquerors. The native population was highly resistant to this imposition. Severe diseases brought by the Spanish decimated the population. Slaves of African descent imported from Caribbean islands compensated for the workforce shortage in the *encomienda* (Molina & Palmer 2009).

During this period, schooling was established and carried out in churches, chapels and homes, under the control of Catholic priests, with financial support from municipalities. It comprised learning to read and write using the *Catón*<sup>4</sup>, as well as the study of the colonial narration of the history of the province Costa Rica, and the Catholic catechism. For more than a century, only the Spanish and their descendants received schooling, while the Indigenous received indoctrination in the Catechism, but were not taught to read or write. The pupil/pedagogue hierarchy was unquestionable by virtue of a sort of priesthood of teachers as absolute bearers of knowledge. Such hierarchy justified the use of violence in the colonial schooling model. For instance, if the pupil failed to comply with instructions, or misbehaved, he/she would undergo physical punishment, like being hit by the teacher with a ruler (Sojo 2009).

The material and ideological colonization involved the imposition of several music practices in precarious geographical, weather, and material conditions:<sup>5</sup> (a) Military music to enforce the political control by the Spanish Crown<sup>6</sup> (Vargas Cullell & Madrigal Muñoz 2008), (b) Catholic liturgical and non-liturgical music

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<sup>4</sup> The *Catón* is a Spanish-based, beginners' reading book with periods and phrases.

<sup>5</sup> The territory remained geographically isolated and was less important than other colonial territories because of its adverse terrain. The climate was arid and a lack of precious metals did not promise a wealthy land to the Spanish.

<sup>6</sup> This included music to commemorate the birth, death, or marriage of the Spanish royal family members, their victories at armed conflicts, as well as the welcoming of Spanish bishops or religious representatives (Blanco 1983; Vargas Cullell 2004).

(Blanco 1983),<sup>7</sup> and (c) Secular Spanish music<sup>8</sup>. Culture and musical practices of both the native Indigenous and the Afro-Caribbean population were marginalized by the colonial structures (see Monestel 2005; Meléndez & Duncan 1972; Rosabal-Coto in press).

There are instances of secular music socialization considered by the imperial authorities as pernicious or sinful (Blanco 1983; Vargas Cullell & Madrigal Muñoz 2008). There were gatherings that brought together *Mestizos* (the mix between European White and Indigenous), *Mulattos* (the mix between Black and White), and some impoverished Spanish-borne settlers, where dance and music took place in a secular atmosphere. Felony records from colonial times often labeled non-liturgical or non-military (Spanish-encultured) musicians as good-for-nothings, who underwent punishment or imprisonment for making secular music publicly (Vargas Cullell & Madrigal Muñoz 2008).

### **1.3.2 Cultural Europeanization of the imagined Costa Rican nation**

#### ***National identity and education***

The independence of most former Spanish colonies, in the first decades of the nineteenth century, did not bring an emancipation of subaltern Indigenous and Afro Caribbean populations, but rather a perpetuation of former colonial relationships through new institutions (see Quijano 2000; Wong 2011). Upon Costa Rica's independence<sup>9</sup>, a new, non-physically violent, ideological form of colonialism became the landmark for the foundation of the Costa Rican nation, that we may call *Cultural Europeanization* of the Costa Rican citizens. It consisted of the political act of imposing a representation of a national community based on Eurocentric colonial notions and structures, for the sake of social control.

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<sup>7</sup> It comprised the Ordinary of the Mass, Mass for the Dead, Te Deums, Vespers, patron saint feasts, Christmas services, Holy Week services and processions, and devotions like the Rosary (Vargas Cullell 2004).

<sup>8</sup> E.g., sarabandes, fandangos, or *saraos*, and music for parades, bullfighting, and drama (Vargas Cullell 2004).

<sup>9</sup> The Spanish Crown granted independence without armed conflict in 1821.

The entry of Costa Rica into the world trade market, as a small producer and exporter of coffee beans to Europe, allowed the local bourgeoisie to access high European culture. Like similar elites in Latin America, the bourgeoisie perceived themselves as heirs to European political systems and culture, including the doctrine of Liberalism and the discourse of the Enlightenment. Under the influence of the order and progress motto-based Liberal ideology, and the experiences of consolidation of European states like Germany and Italy, these elites longed to become rational, self-interested, self-made, hygienic, educated, patriotic, civilized, law-observant, and autonomous citizens of a modern, developed nation in the image of Europe (Álvarez, 2006; Bignall 2010). To become a citizen meant that a person became part of a civilized tradition by leaving behind barbaric ways of living and settings, like for instance, the village. In doing so, this individual would enter an orderly, productive life, coordinated by a schedule in the workplace, and not by dawn, or any other natural phenomena inherent to nature (Cuevas Molina 2006). Within this view, “the real” deeds and advancements took place in Europe, that is, outside the local, geocultural setting of the newly independent peoples. In other words, bourgeois subjects who remained colonized psychologically by former Spanish structures, eventually were able to become colonizers of non-elite individuals, who longed for Whiteness, notwithstanding they would never become White (Fanon 1967; see also González Casanova 2003).

The articulation of the Liberal doctrine and its notion of citizenship allowed the assimilation of individuals under a common measure of essential, neutral human nature that remains indifferent to group affiliations and individual concerns (Bignall 2010). The production of such difference contributed to the domination of subordinate, popular social groups under a preventive strategy of social control (see Hobsbawm 2000; Molina & Palmer 2003). The strategy was to disseminate an *imagined* national community—as opposed to a community bonded by shared lived experiences (Anderson 2006). The elite, Costa Rican intellectually based, so-called Olympus Group headed this project. Such action aimed to promote the vision of a consensual, societal conflict-free political system organized in the territorial unity described by the nation. It ideally represented a cultural unity of homogeneously identified, equal citizens. Paradoxically, the agro-export economy already produced

differentiation and inequality between those who were landowners, producers, and traders. More specifically, peasants suffered under the privatization of common lands, and Indigenous communities were dispossessed of theirs (see Cuevas Molina 2006; Molina & Palmer 2009).

Geocultural traits selected and articulated by intellectuals as the meaningful tradition or past became the basis for “the national community” (Cuevas Molina 2006). They imagined a mystified, colonial-based, rural democracy comprised of small and medium agricultural producers—mainly coffee growers—who as landowners were considered the fundamental group in the nation’s history. This tradition claimed White, European roots of the Costa Rican people (Álvarez 2006; Torres & Pino 1983)<sup>10</sup>. The overall population was “bleached” and misrepresented as homogeneous. For instance, the Indigenous were transformed into *Ladinos* to make the bridge. *Mestizos* were called White (Álvarez 2006)<sup>11</sup>. This racial mixing was idealized as a democratizing force. However, in practice, it served to suppress opposition to White supremacy (see Rodríguez-Silva 2012). This is how the deliberate articulation of the political category nation naturalized racial and territorial boundaries imposed during the Spanish colonization (see Bignall 2010). As Castro-Gómez (2008) explains, all sectors immersed in a colonial society are likely to aspire to an imaginary Whiteness yielded by a discourse of racial purity. This is so because both colonizers and colonized desire to partake of colonial power. To be White does not mean to have a specific skin color, but to participate in “a cultural imaginary constituted by religious beliefs, forms of dress, customs, and ...

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<sup>10</sup> Coincidentally, a considerable part of the population was ethnically homogeneous, because they shared a Spanish/Catholic based culture.

<sup>11</sup> According to Sojo (2009), the idea prevailed for many years that there had been almost no *mestizaje*—racial and ethnic blend—between the Indigenous, the Africans, and the Spanish in colonial times, because there were very few Indigenous, and that the presence of non-Whites owed to mix of locals with inhabitants from neighboring Central American countries. The supporting arguments came mostly from the biased, racist accounts of European or North American chroniclers who traveled through Costa Rica before the 20th century. These ignored what genealogical studies later confirmed: Costa Ricans, at least until the 19th century, were a general mix among Indigenous, European Caucasians, and Africans. Much later lineage studies of Mulatto female slaves who gave birth to children of the Conquistadors and their offspring (see Meléndez Obando 1997), in the 20th century, allowed the demystification around *mestizaje*.

forms of producing and disseminating knowledge”, all of which become “a sign of social status, a form of acquiring, accumulating, and transmitting symbolic capital” (282; see also Quijano 1992).

The Costa Rican state disseminated the national identity mostly through national symbols, like the National Flag, the National Crest, national heroes, the Costa Rican National Anthem, and other national hymns. The latter term refers to “hymns, marches, songs, or fanfares used as official patriotic symbols” (Grove Music Online).<sup>12</sup> These symbols were rendered in philosophy, historiography, arts, literature, and of course, public education (see Carvajal 2011, 2013; Molina & Palmer 2004). They offered the masses epic, protagonist roles in national history, reenacted day by day in public schools, newspapers, and the *plazas* in the country. As can be gleaned so far, the aim was to instill social consensus, as convenient to the economic and political needs of the oligarchy, in line with the aspirations of the Liberal state (see Molina & Palmer 2003; Pakkasvirta 1997).

The state engaged in educational enterprises less costly than using expensive military means, to persuade acceptance of a national-based system of norms for the Costa Rican Liberal state (Álvarez 2006). These entailed imposing manners, habits, and morals through a series of disciplined undertakings upon the body, in order to outline and control the boundaries of citizenship within civilization and modernity (González Stephan 2001). Firstly, education reforms between 1885 and 1889 institutionalized secular, universal, public school education (see Fischel 1990; Molina & Palmer 2003). Secondly, a massive program taught modern principles of hygiene, especially to the rural, working class population. It made sense to the state to strive for racial purity and cleanliness of the population in order to favor productivity and a healthy economy, crucial to the accomplishment of modernity (Molina & Palmer 2003).

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<sup>12</sup> The application of the English term “anthem” to such a piece became current in the early 19th century (Oxford Music Online). However, in Spanish the custom is to use *himno*, corresponding literally to the English “hymn”.

### *Music and music education*

Music and music schooling were instrumental in the Cultural Europeanization process that underpinned the formation of the Costa Rican imagined national community. Already established within public education in 1849, school music seemed appropriate to the formation of a citizen, given music's influence on individuals and their character, and its potential to instill messages clothed in attractive melodies.<sup>13</sup> Teaching songs would be a means to instill love for the motherland, a disposition to study, and virtuous, noble actions (see Vargas Cullell 2004). In the service of the nation-state identity project, public school music focused largely on the singing of national hymns and songs to instill moral and civic feelings associated with the humanistic and democratic values of the French ideal of the republic. Since then, this repertoire has served the function of mobilizing citizens-to-be into a symbolic site characterized by stability and commonality, on the grounds of morally and politically laden notions that underpin tradition and modernity (see Bohlman 2011; Stokes 1997). In addition, school music education construed the Indigenous and Afro-Caribbean cultures, and their vernacular musics, as inferior or uncivilized, thus, reproducing the pre-independence, racist, exclusionary colonial practices (Rosabal-Coto in press)<sup>14</sup>.

The state strengthened its music education project by publishing textbooks focused on music theory rudiments, reading and notation, and songs that dealt with hygiene norms or contained civic and moral messages (Chacón Solís 2010). The government also made provisions in the major provinces for stable appointments of music teachers and music school inspectors. The latter would supervise both teaching music and repertoire choice at schools. According to accounts by

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<sup>13</sup> Music, which was first compulsory only in the education of girls, later became mandatory in both elementary and secondary school education, in the form of the subject Singing (Chacón Solís 2010).

<sup>14</sup> The Afro-Caribbean cultural legacy includes African-derived folklore, Protestant religious practices, a language based on Jamaican English, and of course, music practices. It is important to mention that more Afro-Caribbean people arrived to the port of the Caribbean province of Limón in the early 1870s, as workforce for the construction of a national railroad. Later, when banana and cacao plantations increased in the region and a greater workforce was needed, they definitely became established in the province (see Monestel 2005).

inspectors, teachers often preferred to teach very complex songs, such as choruses from Spanish zarzuela or other “mundane” genres, unsuitable to the tessitura and performing capacities of young children, as opposed to melodies of easier retention, of lyrics more in accordance with noble values and the high Western aesthetic culture (see Vargas Cullell 2004).

Instruction in Western Art Music was officially institutionalized in the 1890s, when the Costa Rican state decided to subsidize the creation of the National School of Music. Its main goal was to train instrumentalists to establish the first symphony orchestra in the country. In addition, a military music school of ephemeral duration was established in the capital city, in 1909. An indirect motivation for developing a symphony orchestra was the fact that the construction of the National Theater—a performing arts house modeled after the European standards—was already in progress. By the end of the 19th century, Western Art Music already featured at drama and poetry performances at theatres, hotels, clubs, and elite homes, for activities such as film exhibitions, balls, sports, and picnics. Small salon ensembles played mostly European-based music: opera, operetta and zarzuela arrangements, as well as marches, waltzes, mazurkas, and other dance music. Several public and private musical instruction projects also emerged then and into the first half of the 20th century, namely, modest conservatoires, philharmonic societies, music academies, and chamber music ensembles and concerts (Flores 1978; Vargas 2004), most of them of ephemeral duration.

On the other hand, the military band ensembles, “comprised of well-dressed musicians, with sonorous and brilliant instruments, gained relevance as a visual and aural spectacle of great impact that reinforced the image of grandeur and power that the state needed to consolidate” (Vargas Cullell 2004, 208). Its duties comprised performing military music, the National Anthem, and national hymns and songs at civic and state ceremonies, as well as providing live music at weekly community social gatherings and some religious feasts in major cities.

In the early 20th century, a government-mandated quest for the national music reinforced Western Art Music enculturation and colonial cultural stereotypes, through a group of influential, male, mostly European-conservatory educated Costa Rican composers, performers, and music teachers who toured the Costa Rican

territory during the late 1920s. They were driven largely by a similar quest for national roots, already taking place in other Latin American nations around that time (Vargas Cullell 2004). The adoption of *Latinity*, a racial and cultural-based, transnational identity embraced by local elites of the former Spanish and Portuguese colonies as alleged heirs of the French political-philosophical tradition inscribed this quest. This notion allowed these former colonies to differentiate themselves as Southern, Latin-Catholic, Hispanic America, in opposition to Northern, Anglo-Saxon, and Protestant America (Mignolo 2007). Most likely, in the absence of a recognized *national* music style, the Costa Rican composers claimed that the Indigenous music did not reflect the nature and feelings of the Costa Rican people. Instead, they decided that *the* national music was the folk music of the northern province of Guanacaste, which was inspired by Spanish and European rhythms, dances, and costumes<sup>15</sup> (Cervantes Gamboa & Flores Zeller 2007; see Vargas Cullell 2004). This act is tied to the national identity political project of the local elites of the former colonies, clearly supported by racially based imperialistic narratives (Mignolo 2007). It denigrates Indigenous and African-based culture as polluted, primitive, or out of place in the desired national mix (see Stokes 2004).

During most of the 20th century, the above colonial-based and state-endorsed discourse permeated Art Music composition and music study in terms of the representation of the national music and the Costa Ricans. Such discourse also endured in school music curricula, university instrumental music and music education programs, and overall educational practices in school music and instrumental tuition (Rosabal-Coto in press). Higher education institutions founded in the mid-20th century to train musicians in Western Art Music include: Escuela de Artes Musicales (School of Musical Arts) at Universidad de Costa Rica (1942) and a music faculty at Universidad Nacional Autónoma (1974). The National Symphony Orchestra of Costa Rica began to operate its own school for instrumentalists in the early 1970s. It was initially led by all-non-Costa Rican professional musicians who

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<sup>15</sup> Some of these dances included "shoe-tapping and choreographic steps similar to those of the fandango, jota of Aragon, *paso doble*, polka, mazurka, minuet and waltz" (Cervantes Gamboa and Flores Zeller 2007).

were brought from abroad (mainly the United States of America) by the Ministry of Culture, Youth, and Sports, to start a brand new national symphony orchestra.

The government passed a new public education act in 1957. This act reinforced the predominant educational ideology shaped after the ideals of European liberalism that legitimated a singular citizen identity. In broad terms, Costa Rican education aimed to produce citizens “loving of their homeland, aware of their fundamental duties, rights, and freedom, with a deep sense of responsibility and respect of human dignity”, and “preserving and broadening cultural legacy, imparting knowledge about history of man, the great works of literature and fundamental philosophical concepts.” Schooling would provide “the affirmation of a worthy family life, according to Christian traditions, and the civic values of democracy” as well as “development of the productive capacity and social efficiency” (Asamblea Legislativa de la República de Costa Rica, 1957).

### **1.3.3 Neocolonialism and music education**

*Neocolonialism* is a more recent, contemporary form of colonialization. It organizes unequal financial and political relationships between less developed, and imperial/wealthy, industrialized countries, around the latter's agendas, through global economic policy (Sousa Santos 2010). Neocolonialism can be traced back to the 1990s, when the inability of many postcolonial nations to deal with debt and economic domination became overwhelming, and continues to this day. In the case of Costa Rica, the state previously began to implement so-called “structural adjustment programs”, which aimed to put finances in order, according to the demands of the International Monetary Fund. The latter conditioned providing funds to an already, highly indebted nation (Cuevas Molina 2006). This took place during the Cold War, when Latin America became part of the so-called Third World and main target for the implantation of (mostly) United States-based, neoliberal models of development. The claims that the Central American region needed to be spared from the “threat” of communism, and that the local, benefactor state model was in crisis, supported this scenario.

Neoliberal policy involves free trade agreements that make commercial trade more “equitable” (tax-free) and competitive between the small economies in Latin America and the economies from developed countries. The neoliberal structure entails less state, trade and market freedoms, while the social development goals are subordinated to economic criteria. Neoliberal policy aims to advance growth and production/service volume, but not equitable distribution of wealth or better life conditions. The outcomes of the neoliberal models in Latin America are “less growth, deindustrialization, income concentration, and precarious employments” (Ibarra 2011, 238). The International Monetary Fund, the World Bank, and the White House often proclaim rhetoric of neoliberalism entailing militarization, control of sexuality, and knowledge. The old colonial matrix of power then endures through the appropriation and control of physical and intellectual resources. This is why the image of Latin America and the Caribbean as a vast sub-continent with rich nature and exotic destinations that welcomes travelers and investors prevails. Over the last two decades of the 20th century Latin America (along with Africa and some regions in Asia and the Middle East), continues to be a place where natural resources and cheap labor force are exploited. This is colonization. As austerity measures intensify in the wake of the most recent global financial crisis and the free market categorically fails to produce peace, prosperity, or a harmonious global village, neoliberalization exhibits a distinct relational connection with violence (Springer forthcoming). This is how the neoliberal, free-market economy has increasingly colonized almost every dimension of life, in the so-called Third World countries (Mignolo 2007).

The impact of neocolonialism most evident in Costa Rican education reflects more attention and resources given to allotting substantial teaching time to English-as-a-second-language and computer literacy. These were supposed to develop the necessary skills for Costa Rica to participate more successfully in productive, globalizing processes (see Rosabal-Coto 2010). Simultaneously, fully or partly state-funded instrumental music programs, bloomed as municipal schools of music for children and teenagers. The rationale of these programs is that participation in instrumental ensembles helps students build discipline and accomplish social consensus. In this way, music making also “saves” the children and young people

from escalating impoverishment that could lead them to commit crimes and embrace violence. Impoverishment is itself an outcome of the free-market economy in the neoliberal period (Rosabal-Coto in press). The largest project of this kind is the *Sistema Nacional de Educación Musical* (SINEM)<sup>16</sup>, modeled after the Venezuelan project *El Sistema*, and established in 2007 by the Costa Rican Ministry of Culture and Youth.

SINEM was founded as part of a strategic measure within the National Development Plan 2006-2010 proposed by the Costa Rican Ministry of Planning and Financial Policy. The Plan is geared towards an efficient use of state funds to address a gamut of government priorities: (a) Reduce poverty and inequality; (b) Increase economic growth and employment; (c) Increase the quality and coverage of education; and, (d) Fight rise in crime, drug traffic, drug addiction, and citizen insecurity, among others (Ministerio de Planificación y Política Económica 2007). It has been partly funded by the Costa Rican state and the Inter-American Development Bank. An institution that models itself after *El Sistema*, contends ethnomusicologist Baker (2012), “reconfirms time-honored, orthodox cultural assumptions like the innate superiority and universality of the masterworks of the European canon and their civilizing effect on the masses” (6). According to Baker (2012, 2014), this kind of educational project teaches individuals in a disciplinary macrostructure claiming that a new, democratic society is being forged through the practice of orchestral performance; however, this is a contradiction.

In the name of modernity, order, progress, and citizenry, it might seem that a larger and more diverse population gaining access to instrumental music tuition constitutes a kind of cultural democratization, thanks to the foundation of SINEM. However, this project perpetuates Western Art Music through massive training of a potential work force, into teamwork skills that are much needed to the success of the politics of the global market in developing countries. The fact that the International Development Bank and the local government partly fund this project, most likely

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<sup>16</sup> Acronym for “National Music Education System”. See the program’s website: [www.sinem.go.cr](http://www.sinem.go.cr).

conforms to the need to offer a smart, obedient workforce to attend the needs of the many transnational investors in the neoliberal marketplace.

This is how the goals that inform SINEM relate to the goals of external and internal colonialism. European colonization through *encomienda* and conversion to Catholicism for the sake of the agenda of modernity, and the recolonization by local elites in the name of establishing an imagined national identity, all aim at some kind of social control, whether it is the land and the body, or the mind that is appropriated and subjugated. Instrumental music education shares an interest with these other colonizing processes in producing individuals capable of sustaining a predominant social order already imagined by political or financial elites. This neocolonization process modernizes the agenda of converting individuals into civilized citizens for the goals of capitalism (Cuevas Molina 2006). Neocolonization takes place against the backdrop of a society that displays growing inequality in various forms: crime, citizen insecurity, urbanization, impoverishment, and less access to basic goods, nourishment, health services (Molina and Palmer 2005, Proyecto Estado de la Nación 2013), and education (Ledesma 2002). Inequality ultimately relates to older and more recent processes of colonialism and colonization.

## **1.4 Research task**

I analyze macro coordinated social practices in webs of music learning socialization, from a first-person stance in this study. It pays particular attention to how geoculturally-situated individuals construct their position in relation to colonialist stereotypes and processes in music learning. The study tackles the rationale, dynamics, and outcomes of colonialism processes in music education that cannot be equated to the materiality and socio-historical developments in music and education in Euro-American contexts. I develop an analytical approach to address power and oppression in relation to the colonialism-based process of the specific Costa Rican, postcolonial context. Thus, the main research question: *How is musical learning in postcolonial Costa Rica organized from the standpoint of young music teachers?*

With the intent to locate social practices in the lives of the study participants beyond previously established theories and concepts, I explore the everyday perceptions, feelings, actions, and choices around music socialization and musical pathways of music learning, through the following related question: *What is done in regard to music learning in everyday social interactions, according to the accounts of the study participants?* I address this task through interviews, participant observation, and artifact analysis. I take the ontological stance of the study participants as a methodological start. I allow the participants to tell their stories and I share their voices. I then identify their webs of music learning.

I seek to understand how knowledge about oneself, others, and music is discursively shaped in relation to the ways of music learning and in the participants' bodily-experienced social interactions. I frame this explicitly in the second related question: *How do music learners develop perceptions about themselves, others, and music in their interactions in music learning?* Since I wish to understand how the study participants' music learning is organized in particular ways due to a context-specific materiality, the third related question involves mapping the relationships between micro interactions around music learning and broader social macro structures in the context of study: *What relationships in music learning are affirmed, explored, or celebrated between the local world of learners and the translocal structures of postcolonial Costa Rica?* I map such connections in relation to different forms of colonialism in the three historical periods already analyzed in the second major section of this chapter, though postcolonial concepts (Anzaldúa 2007, Fanon 1963, 1967; Castro-Gómez 2008, Mignolo 2007) and institutional ethnography theory (Campbell & Gregor 2004; DeVault 2013; Smith 1975, 2005;) relevant to processes of colonization.

## **1.5 Structure of the thesis**

Seven chapters comprise this thesis. This first chapter posits the problem of study in relation to issues in my own webs of music learning and webs of my own music students. I introduce the problem in theoretical terms, against the backdrop of

colonization-based constructions and practices in music education in Costa Rica in three historical periods. This chapter also describes the rationale and purpose of the research. The second chapter, 2 Theoretical framework, provides the theoretical frame and explains theories and concepts of postcolonial thinking, with particular attention to Latin American critique to the European modern civilization project. Theoretical connections are made to two approaches in education (one refers to music and education), and to the theorized method for social discovery called institutional ethnography. The third chapter, 3 Methodology, provides a rationale and detailed description of the methodology, including ethnographic data collection and analysis procedures. Chapter 4 Music learning in the participants' micro webs of interaction, presents the accounts of lifelong music learning by the nine study participants. A thematic discussion of the participants' stories through the lenses of music education literature, in terms of webs of empirical selves and webs of interaction, ensues in 5 Thematic discussion of participants' micro webs of music learning. Postcolonial institutional ethnographic analysis of the relationships that coordinate music learning in the experiences of the study participants comprises the sixth chapter. The last and seventh chapter presents the conclusions of the study, emphasizing potential contributions to music education research and challenges postcolonial institutional ethnography poses to music learning and music education research. This chapter moves us towards engaging in a sociology for music learners.



## 2 Theoretical framework

In this chapter, I discuss theories and concepts by the main theoretical bodies of knowledge that inform this study: postcolonial thinking and institutional ethnography. Five sections comprise this chapter. In the first section, I define colonialism, and frame the two major historical discourses that have served to discursively construct individuals to sustain colonization processes in the geocultural context of the study. In the second section, I define postcolonialism and briefly explain its main strands (Said 1979; Bhabha 1994; Spivak 2010; Fanon 1963,1967). I discuss one specific, Latin America postcolonial critique: the Modernity/(De)coloniality project (Castro-Gómez 2008; Mignolo 2007). The latter provides the following concepts that theoretically frame colonialism and colonization in close connection with the macro, Costa Rican context described in 1 Introduction: (a) Coloniality of power, (b) hubris of point zero, (c) colonial wound, (d) epistemic disobedience, and (e) border epistemology.

In the third and fourth sections, I discuss critiques to: (a) Western Music and music education (Small 1977, 1987, 1998, 2010), (b) musicology (e.g., Bohlman 2011; Nettl 2007), and (c) micro webs of capitalist education (Freire 2000, 2009). The last major section discusses the origins, goals, and concepts of institutional ethnography (Campbell & Gregor 2004; Smith 1975, 2005). I define the following institutional ethnography concepts: (a) Work-in-actualities as experience, (b) textual mediation, (c) the problematic, and (d) the ruling relations. I conclude this section outlining meaningful connections between the purpose and political commitment of postcolonial thinking, and the focus and research agenda of institutional ethnography, in relation to the music education issues tackled in this research.

### 2.1 Colonialism: definition and scope

As mentioned in 1 Introduction, colonialism is the discursive framework that colonial powers articulate to justify acts of conquest and control of territories

(Bignall 2010), bodies (Anzaldúa 2007; González Stephan 2001) and culture (Mignolo 2007), and/or to silence individuals, and communities (Rodríguez-Silva 2012; Trouillot 1995). Colonialist projects entail that hegemonic ethno classes impose their own universal descriptive statement of *the human* in order to reproduce their own status and the social order that sustains it (Wynter 2003). Historically, colonialism traces back to the 16th century expansion and associated material and ideological conquest of the Atlantic by powers like England, Holland, Portugal, and Spain (Mignolo 2007). Colonialism has sustained the rule or domination by Western European states, or settlement by Western Europeans over peoples of Asia, Africa, Australia, and Latin America (Bignall 2010).

According to Ribeiro (2007), early historical colonialism institutionalized asymmetric power relations with the goal to re-order the entire world according to European criteria and interests, namely, its ideals of richness, power, and associated notions of civilization, or Christian sanctity. The imperial control of economy and politics in the Atlantic has shifted hands over the centuries, such that between the 19th and 21st centuries, colonialism has extended further to secularism and empires or nation-states (e.g., England, United States, and the Soviet Union), but under the guise of civilizing mission, socialism and proletariat dictatorship, or market democracy (Mignolo 2007). Colonialism decontextualizes the complexity, diversity, and differences in the colonized territories, individuals and communities, and deliberately ignores their autonomy to imagine and negotiate their own future (Mignolo 2000, 2007; Quijano 2000; Souza Silva 2011). Wynter (2003) calls this phenomenon “coloniality of being/power/truth/freedom” (5).

### **2.1.1 Historical colonialism**

Colonialism has not been a phenomenon exclusive to the “New World” or non-European contexts. It has also taken place in Europe, for instance, in the form of the English rule over Ireland, and the German domination of the Czechs between the 17th and early 20th centuries. However, these scenarios would differ considerably from the 16th century colonization of what became the New World.

In the specific case of Latin America, early colonialism began in the late 15th century. The Indigenous who inhabited and spoke the autochthonous languages of the territories known as Anáhuac, Abya-Yala, and Tawantinsuyu were forced by the European colonizers to shape their material and symbolic structures, according to “the modes of thought and action characteristic of civilized life”, in order to be liberated of their condition of “minors” (Castro-Gómez 2008, 281). In turn, the colonizers had neither to rescind their imperial languages and epistemology, nor to assimilate the Indigenous culture. The local Indigenous forms of knowledge were deprived of their legitimacy and subsequently made into subalterns (Castro-Gómez 2008; Quijano 1992). According to Mignolo (2007), altogether such processes entailed control of four domains of human experience: (a) the economic domain, including the appropriation of land, exploitation of labor force, and control of finances; (b) the political control of authority; (c) the social domain, through the control of gender and sexuality; and, (d) the epistemic and subjective/personal dimension, which have to do with the control of cognitive and affective structures. According to Wynter (2003), such primary, “large-scale, one-sided accumulation of lands, wealth, power, and unpaid labor” by Western Europe (295), “was to lay the basis of its global expansion from the fifteenth century onwards” (291). It was carried out “on the basis of a truth-for, or system of ethno-knowledge” (295). The process of early colonization ultimately aimed to transform the Indigenous into new beings in the image and likeness of the Western, modern White man. The price paid for such transformation was cultural genocide (see also Quijano 1992, 2000, 2009).

Colonialism in what would become Latin America was based largely on a racist discourse of the cultural superiority of the modern, cultivated, Western, European, White, Christian, rational citizen, differentiated from the non-White, barbaric, non-Christian, nature-centered people of a “discovered” continent. The principles of knowledge that governed this kind of colonialism, anything from Christian theology to European secular philosophy and science, all traced back to the Renaissance. Deep down, this rationale articulates the idea “that knowledge is independent of the geohistorical (Christian Europe) and biographical conditions (Christian White men living in Christian Europe) in which it is produced” (Mignolo 2011, 1-2). The associated Renaissance descriptive statement of Man (sic) privileged the criterion of

rational perfection over the medieval statement based on spiritual perfection. Such a statement was foundational to the new order of modernity, “enacted by the dynamics of the relations between Man—overrepresented as the generic, ostensibly supracultural human—and its subjugated Human Others (i.e., Indians and Negroes)”, together with new categories of subhumans (Wynter 2003, 287-8). Quijano (2000) refers to this as the *racism/ethnicism complex*. Quijano demonstrates that the phenomenon of race, “as a new, extrahumanly determined classificatory principle and mechanism of domination was first invented” (Wynter 2003, 296). The construct “race” enabled “the now globally expanding West to replace the earlier mortal/immortal, natural/supernatural, human/the ancestors, the gods/God distinction”, and provide the answer “that the secularizing West would now give to the ... question as to the who, and the what we are” (264). This rationale would be in place, in this form, in the colonial structures of what is now Latin America during the three centuries that preceded the independence of the colonies.

In the early 19th century, as former Spanish colonies gained political independence, the colonial projects shifted, from colonies of extractions to settler colonialism. The national liberation and independence movements in Latin America would perpetuate and disguise old colonialist structures within culture, mentalities, and subjectivities, in public and private socialization. The means were the formation of modern nations with their own national cultures on the grounds of the European Enlightenment ideas about citizenship and the ideals of modernity and progress (Álvarez 2006; Rodríguez-Silva 2012). Fanon (1963, 1967) understood such dynamics as “recolonization from within”, because the local elites used similar structures to those that colonized them in the first place in order to control property and the minds of others existing outside the hegemonic structures. I discussed such process of internal colonialism in relation to music and education in 19th century Costa Rica, in 1.3.2 Cultural Europeanization of the imagined Costa Rican nation.

Moreover, after the Second World War, when the United States and some of its allies emerged as imperial forces within the global financial market, Latin American countries would be approached from the interests of wealthy, more industrialized countries. This is neocolonization, a *new* kind of colonization. According to Souza Silva (2011), neocolonization mainly aims at continuing the accumulation of wealth

that makes visible the colonialist ethos in the mission and actions of many contemporary, Western economical-political institutions. Neocolonialism operates through transnational and supranational rules and institutional arrangements, defined outside the realities of the so-called underdeveloped countries. According to Sousa Santos (2010), contemporary colonialism without colonies creates difference and exclusion directly upon those *others* that remain behind the orderly or legal line. That which is not understood by governmental or official civil institutions is appropriated or regulated, usually with the use of violence, in the name of order, legality, emancipation, human rights, and democracy.

### **2.1.2 Colonialism's discursive construction**

Colonialism entails the construction of subaltern categories through hegemonic ideological discourse, in order to justify the exploitation of bodies, land, and subjectivities. Such discourse is meant to justify economic, political, religious, or cultural colonial agendas. Colonialism needs to produce notions of an *other*, often on the grounds of stereotypes of racial or cultural superiority of an alien minority over a majority regarded as inferior (see Bignall 2010; Fanon 1963, 1967; Said 1979; Souza Silva 2011). Historically, Western humanities (especially philosophy and theology) and social sciences, constructed a triumphant discourse of European historical progress, sustained on an imaginary about the social world and forms of producing knowledge of the Blacks, the Peasants, the Indigenous, the Afro-Caribbean, and other politically mute voices. According to Castro-Gómez (2008), the subaltern articulates world visions and knowledge that are popular, lay, plebeian, peasant, or Indigenous, such as beliefs, opinions, idolatry, and intuitive understandings. Since this knowledge was not elaborated by the technical/scientific rationality of modern Europe, Western rational epistemology regards it as illegitimate. This act of constructing subalterns produces personal and collective identities of colonizers and colonized in centers and peripheries. For instance, the racial-based rationale for modernity that guided the European colonization in the Renaissance, privileged the opposition between supracultural (European) humans and (Indian, Negro, Mulatto) subhumans, towards “the expropriation of New World

lands and the subsequent reduction of the indigenous peoples to being a landless, rightless, neo-serf work force” (Wynter 2003, 290).

Gramsci (1978) first spoke of “subaltern” as a social category of analysis, in political theory, to challenge colonizing categories like “(sovereign) subjectivity, agency, political representation”, as well as rigid definitions of class (Pesram 2010, 1340). Gramsci was concerned with peasants, slaves, women, religious groups and races, and the proletariat in Southern Italy, who were subject to the hegemony of ruling classes. He was interested in the historiography of subaltern classes due to the mainstream interest in the history the dominant classes, because the history of the latter was usually deemed the “official” history (Ashcroft, Griffiths & Tiffin 1998).

The category of subaltern was adapted to postcolonial studies from the work of the Subaltern Studies group of historians, led by Guha (1988), whose goal was “to promote a systematic discussion of subaltern themes in South Asian Studies” in terms such as class, caste, age, gender, and office (Ashcroft, Griffiths & Tiffin 1998, 216). The group addressed the imbalance of elite South Asian historiography, which suggested that development of a nationalist consciousness was an exclusive achievement of an elite. Such position excluded the contributions “made by people *on their own*” (e.g., peasant uprisings), and the associated locus of political action. Even though subaltern groups differed, “the one invariant feature was a notion of resistance to elite domination” (217). Therefore, in order to make the subaltern visible and distinct from the elite, this work addresses “several kinds of political and cultural binaries”, such as colonialism vs. nationalism, and imperialism vs. Indigenous cultural expression (217-18).

Spivak made subalternity a theoretical position within postcolonial studies. She criticized the assumptions of the Subaltern Studies group in *Can the subaltern speak?* (2010) —first published in 1985—, because the group did not ask this question, which is crucial for understanding that the subaltern is historically defined “by its difference from the elite” (218). Spivak focused on the gendered and racialized Indian peasant or sub-proletarian of the global division of labor (see Spivak 2010). In contrast with common interpretations of the goal of this work, Ashcroft, Griffiths & Tiffin (1998) suggest that Spivak’s target was “an unproblematically constituted subaltern identity, rather than the subaltern subject’s

ability to give voice to political concerns”. According to Ashcroft, Griffiths & Tiffin (1998), Spivak’s main point was that “no act of dissent or resistance” takes place “on behalf of an essential subaltern subject” completely separate “from the dominant discourse that provides the language and the conceptual categories with which the subaltern voice speaks” (219).

Edward Said’s *Orientalism* (1979) exemplifies the discursive construction of subaltern cultural categories. Said analyzed a model of thinking based upon ontological and epistemological distinctions made between the Orient and the Occident. The Western representation of Orient is exotic, deviant, and different. It is inextricably connected to domination, restructuring, and gaining authority over the Orient (Subedi & Daza 2008). It becomes a distribution of a Western-based geopolitical awareness through historical discovery, philological reconstruction, psychological analysis, landscape and sociological descriptions, through which the West expresses, controls, and manipulates what is different, alternative, or novel to it (Said 1979). According to Castro-Gómez (2008), Said’s critique exemplifies that any economic or sociological explanation of the colonial dominance over the subaltern would be incomplete without the analysis of imaginary representations and worldviews of European and non-European, not as geographical locations, but as ways of life and of thinking that produce concrete subjectivities. Two examples of discursive subalternity are in place in relation to the geocultural context of this study, one associated with the discourse of civilization and the other with the discourse of development. I will address them next.

### *The civilization discourse*

The Indigenous inhabitants of what would become Central and South America were denied a human nature because they did not possess a soul (see Paul III, 1537, May 29). According to Sousa Santos (2010), the resulting legal gap justified the violence that guided the occupation of the Indigenous lands, appropriation of natural resources, and forced labor supply to the European colonizers. Souza Silva (2011) points out that an alliance between the Catholic Church and the Spanish and Portuguese Empires, through the Treatise of Tordesillas, signed on July 7, 1494, first legitimated the process of colonization of the Indigenous to save their souls in the

name of civilization. Civilization then rose as the single, natural, and progressive path to perfection, and was used to organize discursively the exploitation and colonization of supposedly inferior, subhuman bodies and their territories and natural resources in what would become Latin America. To Souza Silva (2011), Europe was at the end of the journey of civilization, but felt the moral imperative to extend it to the primitive, savages, and barbarians, to support them in their long way to a superior state of progress. To be civilized meant that one had to feel, think, do, and speak like those superior Europeans, engaging gratefully in a path constructed by them, following their orders, and replacing one's imaginary for the superior's (see Blaut 1993; Galeano 1998). The Treatise of Tordesillas confirmed Rousseau's premise that the superior race had a right to domination; while the inferior races had to be conquered and dominated through physical and symbolic violence, to learn they had the obligation of obedience (see Rousseau 1762; see also Souza Silva 2011).

### *The development discourse*

After the atomic bomb massacre in Hiroshima and Nagasaki in the World War II, the idea of progress through civilization lost credibility (Mignolo 2011). The geocultural region where legitimate scientific and industrial knowledge and development were produced—First World—constructed many former European colonies (including Latin America and therefore Costa Rica) as Third World, a world associated with an inferior natural state. Such discursive invention was because industrialized countries needed to bring poor countries into the Western commercial system, in order to obtain their abundant, inexpensive, raw material and natural resources, as well as docile minds and bodies as the labor force that developed capitalist and communist countries were already attempting to access. First World countries then instituted projects of colonization based on a new discourse: development.

Countries in Asia, Africa, and Latin America began to consider themselves as subaltern territories when First World politicians and experts conceived their colonial-based historical conditions as a problem. This process opened a new field of thought, which emphasizes strategies of development involving systematic

intervention by the First World governments and agencies. Labels like modernization, international development, globalization, or local initiatives for rural improvement disguise this discourse. It supposedly aims to solve structural problems, like hunger and poverty, through strategies like loans and co-operation, but without really accomplishing promises of prosperity and world peace (see Escobar 1998). Based historically on the progress/civilization notion, which sustained the exploitation of what was constructed as the New World; however, this time the development discourse does not seem to maintain visible colonies. Development sustains power-based relationships in which (largely) industrial-oriented institutions undertake material and ideological actions that destroy the relationships between people and their territories, for the sake of market-based agendas of domination and expansion (Souza Silva 2011).

According to Souza Silva (2011), the imposition of this discourse results in the “developed-undeveloped” dichotomy. This dichotomy renders a natural classification of individuals, communities, and nations in terms of inferior and superior, without critical reflection or mutual influences between them. It also sustains a hierarchical structure in which the superior ones are powerful generous who want to help the inferior to become in their image. The superiors usually resort to one-direction transference of knowledge as an intervention strategy, so the inferiors adapt, in a mechanist way, to views of the world, epistemological paradigms, and domination agendas. This development discourse naturalizes one reality that everyone should perceive as the most relevant reality possible, which justifies the right to domination and the obligation of the inferior to obey. When the inferior individuals, nations, or communities do not accomplish development as conceived in this scheme, they are considered unable, and their history, knowledge, potential, and aspirations are ignored or transgressed. In the end, violence, inequality, and injustice are inevitable for underdeveloped societies to undergo in order to perfect themselves, and access a superior stature.

## 2.2 Postcolonialism

Colonialism is the subject of study of postcolonialism, as an academic project. Postcolonialism is thus concerned with the exercise of colonial power by European empires in the Atlantic, mainly England, France, Holland and Spain, on the grounds of the capitalist economy (Mignolo 2007). Postcolonial studies encompass multi-disciplinary scholarship, from literature, history, sociology, anthropology, geography, politics, and economics (Ashcroft, Griffiths & Tiffin 1998). Postcolonialism is used in relation to many different kinds of historical oppression (Slemon 1990). While some postcolonial scholarship focuses on cultural analysis of the practices that create or sustain colonial influence during periods of colonization, other work pays attention to the forms in which the agency of the colonized contest and disrupt colonial ideologies (Bignall 2010). This is how postcolonialism helps to both reaffirm “historical and geographical contradictions and differences”, and draw “historical and geographical links, structural analogies and openings for agency and resistance” (Shohat 1992, 112). Therefore, postcolonialism is by definition a trans-historical and unspecific concept (Slemon 1990).

Several authors (Ashcroft, Griffiths & Tiffin 1998, Rizvi, Lingard & Lavia 2006, Slemon 1994, Subedi & Daza 2008) acknowledge that the term “postcolonial” led to both theoretical and political confusion and debates from the beginning. Its use and meanings have not escaped criticism from both left and right, largely due to how it describes “a remarkably heterogeneous set of subject positions, professional field, and critical enterprises” (Ashcroft, Griffiths & Tiffin 1998, 188). For instance, the term stands for a “category or literary activity which sprang from a new and welcome political energy” within what was called ‘Commonwealth’ literary studies, while it also portrays “a critique of totalizing forms of Western historicism, or even “the inevitable underside of a fractured and ambivalent discourse of colonialist power” (Slemon 1994, 16-17). In this research, I use the term postcolonial to frame music socialization within colonial conditions brought by Western European modernity, that have not ceased, but rather endure and take different forms in contemporary neocolonial conditions (Subedi and Daza 2008).

It is important to draw a conceptual distinction between postcolonialism and two related concepts: anti-colonialism and decolonization. According to Ashcroft, Griffiths & Tiffin (1998), anti-colonialism denotes “[t]he political struggle of colonized peoples against the specific ideology and practice of colonialism.” It “signifies the point at which the various form of opposition” come together to resist “the operations of colonialism in political, economic and cultural institutions”, thus emphasizing “the need to reject colonial power and restore local control” (14). On the other hand, decolonization “is the process of revealing and dismantling ... the hidden aspects ... “of institutional and cultural forces that had maintained the colonialist power” and remain after political independence is achieved (Ashcroft, Griffiths & Tiffin 1998, 63).

Postcolonial studies are worth explaining here because they lay theoretical ground for the geocultural-related postcolonial theories and concepts that inform this study, which I will discuss later on. Marxism largely inspired early analysis. Such work emphasized that no matter where it took place, colonization essentially entailed economic class exploitation (Bignall 2010). This early analysis “contributed to revolutionary resistance movements and liberation struggles. Revolution involved the return of power to the people, repatriation of land, and gaining control of the means of production. This was the case of the text, *The wretched of the earth* (1963) by Frantz Fanon, about his experience in the anticolonial movement of Algeria. Fanon’s struggle aimed not only at removing the colonial structures of authority, but also at dismantling the capitalist system imposed through colonization (Bignall 2010).

Countering Marxist economic reductionism, other early work attributes a prominent role to culture in both the maintenance of colonial power and resistance by the colonized. This most prevalent postcolonial culturalist strain is well represented in Said’s books, *Orientalism* (1979) and *Culture and imperialism* (1993). As implied earlier, Said analyzes how cultural practices in religion, literature, and advertising are manipulated to construct colonized people as exotic, uncivilized, and inferior in relation to the colonizers (Bignall 2010). Other thinkers address how cultural categories, like “nation”, support colonialism, and how culture is a potential tool for mobilizing the colonized to liberate themselves. For instance,

in *Black skin, white masks*, Fanon (1967) asserted that the racially colonized (Black) individuals had the potential and option to respond to cultural colonization by embracing and acknowledging their Blackness in order to be able to liberate themselves from colonial oppression.

A more recent strain of postcolonial studies leans on constructivist thought and elaborates aspects of Said's argument in *Orientalism* (1979). The most prominent is the work by Indian-born and raised, and American-based literary critic and theorist Homi Bhabha. Bhabha draws not only from post structuralism and deconstruction, but also on psychoanalytic theory. He attends to the psychological effects of colonization on the self-concept of colonized people. In *The location of culture* (1994) Bhabha identifies dissonance in the colonial discourse of *the other*, which makes colonialism unstable: the colonizer desires to appropriate the attractive (exotic, alluring), but repels the other, so that the division between colonizer and colonized is not broken. Bhabha proposes *mimicry* as a strategy for disobedience and resistance by the colonized. The colonized mime the colonial subject "by taking on the pretensions of the 'superior' culture and affecting the speech, values, system of production, and fashion of the colonizer, and so is at once recognized as similar or assimilated, yet disturbingly dissimilar" (Bignall 2010, 1090). The colonized returns the colonial gaze on the colonizer and the ambivalence is obvious: the desire to assimilate and the desire to differentiate. This allows resistance and disobedience, but no reconstruction of the asymmetrical relationship underneath.

Within the same strand, Indian-born Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak (2010) warns that the subaltern might exercise agency in one system of representation, but this agency is simultaneously erased or obliterated by other systems of representation, such as the hegemonic categories "the West", "Third World", and "nation", which naturalize the territorial boundaries imposed during colonization. Spivak is aware that the subaltern site is never a stable resistance agent, because it is multifaceted and involves often-contradictory sites of identification, which include, prominently, gender, and economic class (Bignall 2010).

The above-described strands of mainstream postcolonial thinking are foundational concepts and theories around colonialism, crucial to this study. However, they do not address what the Latin American postcolonial critique has

identified as foundation for the discursive rationale of colonization in the Latin American geocultural context, namely, the rationale of the epistemology that sustained the material and ideological construction of the European modernity project. I will next expound on this theory, as developed by the main Latin American postcolonial thinking strand.

## 2.3 Latin American postcolonial critique

The field of cultural studies produced most scholarship in Latin American postcolonial thinking. According to a cultural studies taxonomy by John Beverley (2002), the work of semiologist and cultural critic Walter D. Mignolo and the so-called *Coloniality of Power* group (Castro-Gómez 2008) comprise Latin American postcolonial studies, which owe much to Quijano (2000) and Wynter (1995, 2003). Postcolonial thinking in Latin America has more recently been advanced by the Modernity/(De)coloniality project, originating in the Andean Region of South America, and headed by Mignolo.<sup>17</sup> The central issue to current Latin American postcolonial debate is how epistemological Eurocentrism created what can be called a subaltern, in what is now Latin America, through a discourse of ethnic superiority of Europeans, their scientific and religious epistemology, and world system (Mignolo 2010; Quijano 2009). This debate centers specifically on the economic, political, and ideological project, intricately tied to modernity, called conversion<sup>18</sup>-Castilianization<sup>19</sup>, sustained by Christianity and the monarchic Spanish Empire beginning in the 16th century.

According to Modernity/(De)coloniality thinking, modernity was not an exclusive European phenomenon that resulted from an internal superiority accumulated during the European Middle Ages, and expanded “through inter-European experiences such as the Italian Renaissance, the Protestant Reformation,

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<sup>17</sup> See Mignolo (2008) for a systematization of this thinking. See also Mignolo & Escobar (2009); Schiwy & Ennis (2002); Walsh, Schiwy & Castro-Gómez (2002).

<sup>18</sup> Often called “evangelization”.

<sup>19</sup> Castilianization denotes the process of linguistic expansion of the Castilian language and its substitution for the vernacular Indigenous languages.

and the French Revolution” (Castro-Gómez 2008, 270). European modernity was built on materiality which had been specifically created after the Spanish 16th century territorial expansion, and “generated the opening of new markets, the incorporation of new resources of raw materials and a workforce that allowed for what Marx called the ‘originating accumulation of capital’” (272). Modernity was the effect of the discovery, conquest, colonization, and submission of Indigenous. This means that if there had not been exploited transatlantic colonies that became peripheries, Europe would not have been conceived as *the* world system. It follows that capitalism is then the outcome, and not the cause of this connection between the European expansion around the world, and the centralization of the world-system (Dussel 1995). There could not have been modernity without coloniality of power propelling colonialism (Mignolo 2007; Dussel 1995; Quijano 2009). Modernity/(De)coloniality thinking uses the term *coloniality of power* to explain this matrix of domination imposed by the Spanish Empire since 1492.

A relatively new classification of knowledge production constructed on a discourse of racial purity was inherent to coloniality. The inhabitants of Europe believed themselves to be more educated and civilized than those in Asia and Africa. The American continent was conceived as an extension of the isle of Earth “assigned to man by God as the land he must inhabit after his expulsion from Eden” (Castro-Gómez 2008, 275). Thus, the legal stature of the Amerindian inhabitants--constructed as subrational humans *others*— could not be legitimate (see Wynter 2003). This discourse appropriated and modified the aristocratic Christian mentality of Whiteness in the Middle Ages, under the dogma of the fundamental unity of the human race (see O’Gorman 1991). Thus emerged a global, ethnic, and religious classification of populations according to their position in the international division of labor “that legitimized the exchange of personal goods and capital on a global scale” (Castro-Gómez 2008, 276). This discourse assumes not only the superiority of some human beings over others (who are not considered humans at all), but also legitimates one form of knowledge over others. The idea of considering knowledge independent and disembodied from its location of production, and that one kind of knowledge is superior to other, is called geopolitics of knowledge by Modernity/(De)coloniality scholars (Mignolo 2007).

The notion of ethnic superiority of Europe over the colonized populations, advanced since the 16th century, became the first universalistic discourse of modern times and the first geocultural imaginary of the world-system. This racial/religious epistemic rationale served as “the foundational act of the modern world-system” (Quijano & Wallerstein 1992, 549). This is how the worldview of an ethnic (and biological) subaltern was “taxonomized according to a hierarchy of space and time” (Castro-Gómez 2008, 279). Due to the above dynamics, Latin American postcolonial thinking considers coloniality as *the dark side of modernity* (Mignolo 2007).

As already suggested, this form of knowledge took for granted that the observer was not part of what is being observed, and that knowledge was disembodied and independent from the location where it was produced. The point of observation of the object-colonized would become the modern history that shaped and invented the American continents, as an idea or construction by European subject-colonizers (Mignolo 2007). Europe was the main and central producer and distributor of culture, while the subaltern continents were sites of reception. Thus, the place of enunciation of the subaltern became invisible. As Castro-Gómez (2008) asserts, a local site of enunciation converts into a place without a place (or a place without a people) into a universal. To Castro-Gómez, the tendency to convert local history into global design goes parallel to establishing that particular place as a center of geopolitical power and knowledge.

This relationship sustained an ontology of totality central to European civilization: That which did not belong to this totality—European history and modernity—was absent barbaric or absent of being. It subjected human beings to a notion of man coherent with capitalist accumulation, under an epistemological scale that ranged “from the traditional to the modern, from barbarism to civilization, from the community to the individual, from tyranny to democracy, from the individual to the universal, from East to West” (Castro-Gómez 2008, 283). Castro-Gómez calls it the *hubris of point zero*, based on the sin of overconfidence that Greeks identified with the arrogance of men who wanted to elevate themselves to the level of gods. These gods could see without being seen, and could observe the world without having to prove to anybody, not even to themselves, the legitimacy of that

observation (Castro-Gómez 2008). This epistemological act can be seen broadly in philosophy of modernity, a necessary practice of civilized people, which undertakes praxis of conquest through the subject-object relationship created by modern thought, a relationship founded on exteriority and asymmetry (Dussel 1995).

The term *abyssal thinking*, coined by Brazilian Sousa Santos (2007, 2010) is a useful metaphor to denote the Eurocentric epistemology at stake, because it theorizes the experiential and epistemological distances, absences, and silences that result from the articulation of this epistemology. Abyssal thinking defines a radical, unilateral line to place and differentiate visible, intelligible social experiences, actors, and knowledge at one side of the line, while those invisible, unintelligible, forgotten, or dangerous, remain on the other side.

In addition to its critique of the dark side of modernity per se, the Modernity/(De)coloniality perspective considers that the Eurocentric postcolonial epistemology becomes insufficient to understand the contextual specificity and scope of colonialism in Latin America (Castro-Gómez 2008). This flaw owes largely to the influence of Marx's particular vision of history. Marx considered that colonialism was nothing other than an additive or collateral effect of modernity, through the European expansion and its resulting global market. Colonialism was then a necessary path to the rise of communism, and would disappear altogether with the global crisis that would allow the advent of communism. Marx missed the centrality of knowledge and subjectivity as macro elements in the consolidation of Europe's imperial domain. Marx explained colonialism in terms of philosophical categories (false conscience), economic categories (modes of production), and sociological categories (class struggles) (Castro-Gómez 2008, 264).

Moreover, as Castro-Gómez (2008) warns, Marx considered Latin America to be "a grouping of semi-feudal societies governed by large landowners that wielded their despotic power without any organized structure." To Marx, Latin America was not yet capable "of developing socioeconomic structure that would allow it to be incorporated into a global revolutionary process with any measure of success" (262). Castro-Gómez considers that Hegel's vision of universal history can be read underneath, too. He points out that, to Hegel, Latin American nations were outside of history because they had not developed the institutions and philosophical thought

that would have allowed them to belong into the progressive movement toward liberty characteristic of Universal History. Hegel considered these peoples of weak culture perished when they got in contact with peoples of superior and more intense culture and elevated means. Souza Silva (2011) points out that in Hegel's vision, only the following subjects would qualify as members of historical humankind: (a) A Greek instead of a barbarian in the fifth century, (b) a Christian instead of a Jew in the Middle Ages, and (c) a European instead of an Indian in the 16th century. Within the Modernity/(De)coloniality project, other concepts emerge to explain the outcome of coloniality of power, as well as venues for resistance to coloniality. I address them next.

### ***The colonial wound and epistemic disobedience***

Mignolo (2007) coins the term *colonial wound* to denote a direct outcome of coloniality of power upon bodies and subjectivities in the Latin American context. More specifically, he asserts that a wound has been inflicted upon the colonized, as they experience the dislocation that comes with having to see themselves through the self-notion of inferiority imposed on human beings that do not fit into the predetermined racial-based World system that sustained the European narrative of modern civilization and colonial expansion. Mignolo drew from two important postcolonial analyses to propose the notion colonial wound: First, from Fanon (1963, 1967), who referred to this wound as "suffocation". Secondly, from Anzaldúa's enunciation of the Chicana locus on the 20th century border of the United States with Mexico. Anzaldúa (2007) spoke of "an open wound". To both authors, the wound constituted a new placement of being, a transformation to geopolitics, and body politics of knowledge. In Mignolo's view, accepting life in coloniality in order to numb the colonial wound and resulting pain is common in Latin America, because the dynamics of racial discourse and inferiority complex endure. This is why Latin America has not yet been able to heal its colonial wound or liberate itself from colonialism and imperial dependence (Mignolo 2007).

However, according to Mignolo (2007), the pain, humiliation, and indignation imposed by constant reproduction of the colonial wound can also be a potential site for radical political projects, new kinds of knowledge, and social movements. This

could be the site for a new type of knowledge that responds to the needs of the colonized for liberation. Such knowledge can be the outcome of engaging in *epistemic disobedience*. The term “epistemic” refers to the Western, Eurocentric principles, conceptualization, and norms of knowledge as they have been transmitted as natural, for instance, in social sciences and humanities in the last five hundred years. “Disobedience” calls for delinking knowledge from unjust and oppressive social structures arrayed in imperial processes. Becoming epistemically disobedient is praxis for decolonization, broadly understood as the process of revealing and dismantling colonialist power in all its forms. Such forms include the hidden relationships of those institutional and cultural forces that have sustained colonialist power (Ashcroft, Griffith & Tiffin 1998; see also Césaire 1955; Duara 2003). To Fanon (1967), decolonization was a way to unlearn what had been instilled through colonization. Broadly understood, decolonization entails individual and collective responsibility, and involves invention, intervention, and action towards the awakening of a political consciousness (see Walsh 2009).

As a political concept, decolonization is the most important legacy of the 1959 Bandung Conference, where 29 countries from Asia and Africa gathered to discuss a common ground and vision for their future, in a time when the international three-world division of scholarly and intellectual labor was collapsing. Decolonization was envisioned as an option, rather than an imposition to the supremacy of Western, Eurocentric epistemology. Decoloniality did not come forth as a universal or correct macro-based narrative that superseded previous or existing paradigms or epistemes, or as a third way. It rather changes the terms and content of the conversation between Eurocentric epistemology, and other epistemologies, because it embraces a diversity of local histories and different times in which Western imperial forces interfered with such histories (Mignolo 2011)<sup>20</sup>.

Epistemic disobedience may result from the exercise of *border epistemology*—also known as *border thinking* or *border gnosis*—named by Gloria Anzaldúa in her

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<sup>20</sup> According to Mignolo (2011), the decolonial option in Latin America had already been foreseen by Mariátegui (1971), first published in 1928. More on the decolonial option in Sánchez Lopera (2008).

work, *Borderlands/La frontera: The new mestiza* (2007). Anzaldúa embodies a specific, radical epistemic position that delinks and moves forward from the geopolitics of knowledge centered on universal, racial, and cultural homogeneity constructed by colonialism, through the prototype of the White, heterosexual, European man. She names the conscience of being a female Mestiza in an Indigenous struggle, standing in the middle of a borderland. The critical consciousness that comes with the site of enunciation of the Mestiza operates in favor of decolonization of knowledge and of being. While it challenges the philosophical basis of modernity, it envisions the active consciousness and action by subjects of knowledge that are not White, heterosexual, male, and European. The Mestiza locus is not mere awareness or antagonism, or resistance, but an active act to delink and look to other possible, co-existing worlds (see Mignolo 2007).

According to Mignolo (2007), border epistemology is the epistemology of *the other*, who does not exist ontologically, but is rather an enunciation, a discursive invention of those who construct the same. The enunciators—agents or institutions—impose *the other* in the collective imaginary by virtue of their control of verbal, visual, and auidial discourse. For instance, the category Third World is a notion of *other* invented and imposed by institutions in the First World. This concept originates in *the other* consciousness, implicit in the routes of dispersion traveled through migrants from the Third World to the First World, to think geo- and body-politically (see Gaztambide-Fernández 2014; Mignolo 2007, 2011). By definition, border epistemology entails thinking in exteriority, because it turns its attention to the reservoir of the ways of life and modes of thinking that have been disqualified by Christian theology since the Renaissance, and which continue to expand through secular philosophy and the sciences, as opposed to the reservoir of modernity—Greece, Rome, the Renaissance, and the Enlightenment. In doing so, border epistemology delinks from imperial epistemology grounded on theological (Renaissance) and egological (Enlightenment) politics of knowledge, grounded on the suppression of sensing and the body, and its geohistorical location.

Boff (2002) voices a concern similar to Anzaldúa's, as he addresses to the oppressed in very hopeful, empowering terms: “liberation begins in your conscience and the recuperation of your own dignity”. Only through liberation, “the oppressed

regain their self-esteem, recuperate their denied identity, reconquer their dominated motherland and are able to construct an autonomous history...” (18). In order to save his/her identity, the oppressed individual needs to self-improve, namely, to overcome fear, open his/her eyes to the sun, try out the open wings and take risk and fly high away. Such liberation may lead to healing the colonial wound. Bluntly, Mignolo speaks of healing as “the process of delinking, or regaining your pride ... assuming your entire humanity in front of an un-human being that makes you believe you were abnormal, lesser, that you lack something” (Gaztambide-Fernández 2014, 207).

## **2.4 Colonialism, education, and music in the Western establishment**

In this section, I expound theories and concepts against the Western music establishment as a site of control and subjugation of vernacular musics and practices, for interests of the capitalist mode of production. I then outline the oppressive relationships in the Westerns music establishment, according to cultural critic Small (2010).

### **2.4.1 Colonization of vernacular music practices**

Understood broadly, vernacular musics are practiced by non-elite people, and are accessible to such people because of their familiarity with their forms and functions “and because they are able to acquire knowledge of it through everyday practice, that is, without any specialized skills” (Bohlman 2002, 2; see also Small 1987). Due to geocultural specificities, the scope of vernacular musics may vary<sup>21</sup>. The notion of music as cultures-specific may produce the notion that each society has its own music and may not always understand others (Nettl 2007). Western Art Music influences include the following: (a) the introduction of Western harmony and

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<sup>21</sup> See Bohlman’s (2002) distinction of vernacular musics, specifically between American-music historiography, European folksong scholarship, and Asian cultures.

notation into non-Western musics; (b) rhythmic control and simplification of non-metric music through meter notions; (c), the predominance of thorough composition over improvisation; (d) the introduction of Western instruments and ensemble; (e) business and industry; and, (f) mass media for production, circulation, and consumption purposes (Nettl 1986).

Colonialism in music promotes the appropriation and reinterpretation of musical sounds, structures, concepts, and artifacts from colonized societies, by Western Art Music and popular musics. Within this scenario, the adoption of concepts and sophisticated technology and artifacts from Western music by colonized peoples is likely to denigrate non-Western traditional musical systems, with the aim to enter an international musical system, or just as a mere syncretic device. However, this dynamic does not exclude the possibility that such adoption sometimes enriches or even creates new forms. This may have been the case of the music from Guanacaste in the early 20th century. The government declared it as “the” national music due to its similarity with European and Spanish musics, at the expense of making Indigenous musics inferior and marginal. As an additional outcome, traditional music from the other non-Western may decline and be relegated from central ritual and social functions, “to ‘native’ and ‘tribal’ social contexts, such as entertainment of tourists or celebration of the past” (Nettl 2007, 2), a sort of “hegemonic folklorization controlled by outside parties” (Keil & Feld 1994, 2).

Historical development of paradigms, mainly in ethnomusicology and the writing of music history—at least as practiced in North America and Western Europe—has in fact embraced colonialist paradigms and attitudes (Nettl 2007). For instance, before ethnomusicology became a scientific field, it explained “traditional music minus the tradition”, because it juxtaposed traditional music and cultural identity (Bohlman 1988, 28). Other current, potentially colonizing practices in musicology include the collection and analysis of music of non-Western cultures, the notion of comparative study, the view of the world of music in terms of distinct musics, and the willingness to separate musical sound from its social contexts (Nettl 2007). Notation and analysis serve this act of colonialism. By rendering all musics—many of them of oral transmission—in Western notation, one creates a universe of music “and then succeeds in controlling it”, while keeping “the transmitters of oral

tradition from acquiring the same measure of power” (424). Notation can be appealing to the colonizer because it is likely to underscore “the integrity of another musical system by establishing its relation to the Western symbolic system” (426). Furthermore, the use of rational analysis to demonstrate abstract, sound-related decisions in music composition denies the body and keeps it out of Western music.

#### **2.4.2 Musicking, music schooling, and invented tradition**

In the 1980s, New Zealander composer, music educator, and cultural writer Christopher Small interrogated the foundations and agenda of the Western-based music industry and music teaching institutions that produce, transmit, and disseminate (mainly Art) Western Music (see Small 1977, 1987, 1998, 2010). The establishment deems the social, affective, and cognitive dimensions of musical experiences beyond the meaning of sounds as extra-musical, and advocates listening and performing works of music as the desirable and legitimate experiences to learn music. To Small, “both Western classical musicians and those who listen to classical music in traditional venues are celebrating music primarily as a sonic object created by a composer, while the performers simply render service to those objects” (1987).

Small (1998) challenged this: “What does it mean when this performance (of this work) takes place at this time, in this place, with these participants?” (10). In responding to his own question, Small envisioned ideal relationships that are part of musical experiences with ritualistic meanings (Froehlich 2007). He used an active verb, and not a noun, to capture the meanings of such relationships, and coined the term *musicking*: “To music is to take part, in any capacity, in a musical performance” (9). Small (1998) stated that “[t]he act of musicking establishes in the place where it is happening a set of relationships, and it is in those relationships that the meaning of the act lies” (13). Such relationships include “a person’s whole body experience of music-making, relationships that occur with others, and contextual elements related to the performance in his concept of musicking” (Cohen 2010, 135), such as the parameters and limitations imposed by a particular space (Small 1998). A social dimension becomes the center of the act of musicking. This implies that the nature of such relationships is not necessarily unanimous among those

participating in the act of musicking, and brings together many webs of interaction (see Small 2010).

These relationships transcend connections between Western Art Music works and people (composers, performers, and audience) passed down by Western tradition as natural, relationships. It also challenges dualistic categories that frame such relationships, like mind/body and composer-performer/audience. This is how the “social, affective, and cognitive aspects of musical performances” could no longer be considered as extra musical (Cohen 2010, 132). Since Small’s thinking focuses on human action and participation, he avoids using abstract, formal categories or viewing music as an autonomous object or mere compositions (Cohen 2009). He rather emphasizes process, experience, and action, in relation to music performances in specific contexts.

At the core of Small’s thinking (Small 1977, 1987, 1998; see Kallio & Odendaal 2013) is the notion of musicking. Small used musicking to understand musical engagements against the backdrop of his own criticism to Art Music transmission-based institutions in industrialized societies. These institutions, themselves natural representatives of modernity and Westernization, transmit the sort of phenomenon that Hobsbawm (2000) calls *invented tradition*. Tradition is not to be understood as “custom”, mainly because custom, even in traditional societies, does not necessarily aim at invariance. Custom, however, is the action around which traditions are centered (Hobsbawm 2000). An invented tradition comprises a set of fixed, formalized practices that aim at invariance and habit. They are usually “governed by overtly or tacitly accepted rules and of a ritual or symbolic nature, which seek to inculcate certain values and norms of behaviour by repetition, which automatically implies continuity with the past” (Hobsbawm 2000, 1). Through means like its vocabulary of exclusivity, they attempt “to create a new reality”, while they claim to “represent the essence of a people, nation, or culture” (Cohen 2009, 322-23).

In his last work, more than two decades after theorizing the notion musicking, Small (2010) criticizes the crucial role of institutionalized education socialization for the perpetuation of invented traditions. To Small, music schooling institutions incorporate students into knowledge, belief, and custom, with the aim to instill the values of punctuality, obedience, toleration of boredom, standardization, and

competitiveness required by post-industrial labor organization (see Baker 2012, 2014), often conveyed by means of a hidden curriculum. In addition, Small (2010) contends that dominant classes in Western society engender power relations through schooling, and impose their own traditions and values upon the background and expressions of non-legitimate or culturally marginalized communities or social classes, eradicating the latter's culture. If musicking is a means to explore, affirm, and celebrate "one's sense of who one is ... the way of musicking that explores, affirms and celebrates" the identity of the provider of education (and not the user) "is classical music" (287).

The epistemology that supports such education socialization urges that the mind be cultivated in the high culture/symbolic inheritance that shapes the history of a nation (e.g., time-honored art and literature), through formal schooling. In this way, individuals acquire an elevated cultural capital, comprised by rites, customs, or gestures of a canonically selected common culture, which tell people what to do, feel and think whenever the individual encounters ethical dilemmas (Scruton 2000). Such practices set the tone for social relationships of citizenry (see Batt-Rawden & De Nora 2005; Karlsen 2011) and entail "an uncritical acceptance of belonging as well as exclusion" (Vaugeois 2009, 16). This epistemology is very close to the one used by local Costa Rican bourgeoisie to instill High European Culture, as a distinctive trait of the educated citizen, as discussed in the second major section of 1 Introduction.

According to Small's late thinking, school music is a fraud (Froehlich 2015). Small meant that music schooling associated with the Western epistemic notions of progress and modernity, seeks to control cultural voices that lie outside the tradition cherished by the education institution. Those in control of the curricula, policies, and practices "shape perceptions of musical authenticity", promoting one single way to know, be, and engage with music (Cohen 2009, 308). Bluntly, music schooling has the potential to create uncritical recipients and reproducers of the capitalist values – chickens in light of Aggrey's 1998 parable— in the name of a tradition upheld by an elite.

### 2.4.3 Freire: Oppressive education

#### *Relevance of Freire's ideas to this ethnography*

The theory by Brazilian Paulo Freire about education as an exercise of domination (Freire 2000, 2009) is crucial to this study. Freire was a Latin American educator who worked with the material conditions of the poor and illiterate in Brazil. Freire analyzes the dynamics and oppressive nature of a perceived asymmetrical relationship between teachers and students. Freire (2000) contends that (school) teachers *fill* the students with the content of their narration. The latter often becomes talk about reality “as if it were motionless, static, compartmentalized”, because this narration is detached from the students’ reality (71). Such narration is made from words, but such words are inert, and do not have any transforming power upon the students’ life. This is undertaken mainly through “[v]erbalistic lessons, reading requirements, methods for evaluating ‘knowledge’ ... (and) the criteria for promotion” (76).

Within this educational scheme, students become containers or receptacles. Success of this unidirectional transmission of content is measured on how passive the receptacles act to the narration, and to what extent filling students takes place. Knowledge is bestowed by those sanctioned as knowledgeable, upon those ignorant, under the biases and restrictions of those knowledgeable, and for their agendas. This act makes education an act of depositing that creates alienated learners. This is the context of Freire’s seminal concept *banking education*.

#### *Banking education*

Freire’s banking education theory addresses how local worlds of learners are dominated through micro interactions with the narrator/teacher. Banking education entails two stages in the act of teaching. In the first stage, the teacher cognizes a cognizable object, due to his/her ability as the knowledgeable subject. In the second, the teacher expounds to students about that object (Freire 2009). The students will not practice an act of cognition, because the object is property of the teacher, rather than a medium for learning or reflection. Banking education is modeled after Locke’s *Tabula Rasa* metaphor, in which the student (*alumnus*) does not know anything, while the teacher—in his/her status of enlightened—knows it all (see

Souza Silva 2011). The following Table outlines the schooling practices that sustain asymmetrical relationships in banking education.

**Table 1**

**Banking education practices according to Freire (2000)**

<b>Teachers</b>	<b>Students</b>
Teach	Are taught
Know everything	Know nothing
Narrate	Listen meekly
Discipline	Are disciplined
Make choices	Comply with mandates
Act	Are made believe they act
Embody authority	Submit their freedom to authority
Are subjects	Are objects

In the light of the above practices, the student is not a conscious being, but a possessor of an empty mind “passively open to the reception of deposits of reality from the world outside” (Freire 2000, 75). The individual is “abstract, isolated, independent, and unattached to the world” (81). Boff’s metaphor (2002) about Aggrey’s 1998 parable of the chicken and the eagle reminds us how the eagle was initially prevented from being in touch with his concrete reality and beings like him, in order to be a true eagle. Banking education dynamics of teacher-student scrutiny holds much resemblance with the concept hubris of point zero, purported by Modernity/(De)coloniality thinking. The hubris involves the observation and domination from exteriority without being observed, and without having to explain to the observed, dominated pupil the reason for the scrutiny.

As can be gleaned so far, banking education conceals facts that explain how people are in the world. It also mythicizes such knowledge. It resists dialogue and

domesticates—if not destroys—the intentionality of consciousness, by isolating it from the world. Embracing the resulting self-ignorance and passivity leads students into accepting the world as it is, and numbs their critical consciousness as well as their capacity to intervene and transform the world. Examples from music education are in place here. When music learners are overwhelmed with “notation and theory divorced from listening and practical application” they are not likely to learn what to do with them on their own, but rather abstract knowledge in the form of “the names of musical procedures and elements”, unaware of “what to *do* with them independently” (Green 2010, 206). In other music education instances, learning will be centered on the contents, instruments, genres, and realities that are familiar to the teacher, but not the students (see McPherson, Davidson & Faulkner 2012).

Banking education comes with a paternalistic social apparatus that treats learners as subjects of welfare or assistance (Freire 2009). The students are bestowed the label of incompetent or lazy. This bestowed student handicap justifies the mission of the teacher. Due to their unfit condition, students require integration or incorporation into the healthy society. Students are instilled this lowly self-image to the interests of the oppressors, who intend to change the consciousness of the oppressed, not the context and social dynamics that oppresses them, with alleged humanitarianism. Being educated, here means to be able to adapt, and therefore a better fit for the world, because these individuals (a majority) will not question the world created and taught by the oppressors (a minority).

Banking education transforms the organic into the inorganic; it values memory over experience, and having over being. It impedes people from thinking, acting, creating, and intervening in reality. As music educators McPherson, Davidson & Faulkner (2012) discuss, this kind of educational scheme causes tension in the learner’s life because it misaligns with their social, biological, and psychological experiences. To Freire (2000), a major outcome of this is a view of conformism and even fatalism about the learner’s situation. Freire explains the meaning of oppression in virtue of the humanity of the oppressed: Since human beings are uncompleted beings, they have the vocation to become or to be more. Oppression kills life when domination immobilizes the drive for searching and the power of creation. They may experience, under oppression, the contradiction that they are not

being true to themselves. In line with Boff's thinking (2002), banking education produces bunches of chickens that spend time head down, eating seeds from the ground, instead of leading eagles close towards sunlight, on top of a hill, to let them be themselves, and act autonomously. By virtue of the above discussion, we could say that banking education allocates difference in relation to their allegedly inferior, learner beings

### ***Liberation from banking education***

Freire (2009) warns that, eventually, the displacement and contradictions in the consciousness of the oppressed will lead them to turn against the oppression by banking education. This occurs when the oppressed realize that their vocation to *be more* is obliterated. Who better than the oppressed can understand the effects of an oppressive society in their bodily beings? Who else can understand the need for liberation? The capacity of the oppressed to exercise liberation from the site of a colonial wound reminds us of Anzaldúa's border epistemology notion (Anzaldúa 2007). According to Anzaldúa, the oppressed need to acknowledge the border location in which they lay, a location enunciated and deformed through oppression..

Freire theorizes liberation of oppression: Liberation does not mean to invert the terms or poles of the education system contradiction. Since liberation by its nature should not embrace that which it opposes, it cannot recur to depositary actions in the name of liberation. Liberation will not come by coincidence or by donation, but by the knowledge and the acknowledgment of the need to struggle for it. Echoing Freire, Souza Silva (2011) proposes a macro-based reflection by oppressed learners, to underpin any liberation action. To him, the oppressed ought to unveil premises, promises, and inadequate solutions through committed questioning of the unequal, violent, and unjust reality. Liberation becomes praxis: "action and reflection of (people) upon their world in order to transform it" (Freire 2009, 56).

Tuck & Yang (2012) caution against equating Freire's metaphor for "oppression" with "colonization", and the idea of liberation in the minds of the oppressed with "decolonization". Both "oppressed" and "oppressor" are ambiguous abstract categories. They are not positioned in the particularities of colonization, "in the specific structural and interpersonal categories of Native and settler". To the

liberation that Freire proposes, “the future is simply a rupture from the timeless present” (20), accomplished through mental emancipation. Freire’s banking education concept remains a useful metaphor for critical pedagogies and “practices of educators committed to social justice” (19) to identify disjuncture in webs of interaction in an abstract way. In the context of this study, it provides a useful metaphor for a dual, hierarchic, asymmetrical model that can assist in identifying disjuncture in webs of music learning. In order to transcend the metaphor and translate it into analysis of colonization processes in the framework of this research, it will be necessary to make connections between disjuncture of historically-situated individuals and structurally-based discursive practices.

## **2.5 Institutional ethnography**

In this section, I explain institutional ethnography, the second theoretical body that informs this study, with particular attention to its relevance to the exploration of colonial-based structures that produce subalterns. Institutional ethnography is both a social ontology and a theorized practice of discovery of the ways institution-based orders create the conditions of individual experience in people’s everyday life (Campbell 2003; Campbell & Gregor 2004; DeVault 2006, 2013; Hart & McKinnon 2010; Smith 2005, 2006a). It is interested in how people acquire social practices without being aware of it, for purposes that may not be relevant to their local (micro) worlds. Such practices are purposefully coordinated with professional standards, family expectations, or organizational norms, across space and time (Campbell 2003; Campbell & Gregor 2004; DeVault 2006, 2013; Smith 1975, 2005). For instance, there is coordinated, social organization in mundane activities like grocery shopping, library book loaning, and interacting with bureaucracies that request services or reports information about us (Campbell & Gregor 2004).

Its theorization and practice began with the experience of its main pioneer, Canadian feminist sociologist Dorothy E. Smith, as a woman scholar in a Canadian university. Institutional ethnography became a theoretical counter-discourse and methodological alternative to the overly objectifying and generalizing conceptual

frames, theories, and methodological practices of Western sociology—especially those built up in the United States. Smith considered that such sociology subsumed forms of knowledge in the local world of those individuals under scrutiny, and perpetuated hegemonic discourses over actualities of experience (see Campbell 2003; DeVault 2006; Smith 1975, 2005).

Institutional ethnography pays attention to and begins with everyday experiences of disjuncture in institutional orders. For institutional ethnography, *institution* refers to “coordinated and intersecting work processes and courses of action” (Holstein & Gubrium 2011, 351). Smith looked at her own experience as a woman and scholar, and became aware that women’s location in society was outside the organizational work that orders the everyday world of their experience, and excluded from the local and global as a site of knowledge (Hart & McKinnon 2010; see Smith 1975). Smith reflected on her own dislocation in her bodily connection to knowledge in the world of academia controlled by men (DeVault 2006; Hart & McKinnon 2010; Smith 2005). In her home and family web, as a mother and wife, she had to engage in knowing within experience that related to bodies (e.g., feeding, bathing and clothing children), which were apparently an illegitimate basis for knowledge in her *other* world (Campbell 2003; see also DeVault 1996; Wolkowitz 2009). Meanwhile, in the realm of academia “[i]ntellectual work was done in the head world, as if bodies didn’t exist” (Campbell 2003, 17).

Smith noticed that not only did women attend to men’s bodily domestic needs at home, but they also performed “analogous functions in professional and managerial settings”. Thanks to women’s work, men were “lifted out of the immediate, local and particular place in which they reside in their bodies and are allowed to act as if they are living in their heads” (Campbell 2003, 14). For this reason it was not useful in the web of academia to know in the ways women were authoritative knowers. After demonstrating that women were not appropriately represented by the forms of knowledge that claimed to speak about them, Smith concluded that to conceptualize everyday knowing and doings “in the standard scholarly manner was to repudiate experiential knowing” (Campbell 2003, 13; see DeVault 1996). She began to develop a sociology whose methodological start would be the standpoint of women. “Standpoint” is not understood as a socially determined position or category of

position, gender, class, or race in society. Neither should “standpoint of women” be interpreted as feminist standpoint. Women’s standpoints are comprised by the local particularities of bodily existence that have been suppressed from the local and particular, as site of knowledge. Such standpoints become ontological starting points to make visible the complexity of the coordination of social relations. They are a site open to anyone, and therefore, a *standpoint of people*. This is how institutional ethnography became *a sociology for people*, alternative to the starting point of the objectified subject of knowledge in much Western social science (DeVault 2006; Smith 2005).

Institutional ethnography recognizes “ideology, beliefs, concepts, theory”, spoken or written ideas, and so on, as doings of actual people, in their particular local place, at specific times, and not “as is they were essentially inside people’s heads”. These doings manifest in the body, understood as a “site of consciousness, mind, thought, subjectivity, and agency as particular people’s doings” (Smith 2005 25). Institutional ethnography’s concept “discourse” refers to translocal relations that coordinate and constrain such actions. People participate in discourse, and through their actions, they reproduce, remake, and modify discourse. Institutional ethnography’s approach envisions discourse as “a field of relations that includes not only texts and their intertextual conversation”, which is fundamental to Foucault’s concept of discourse; however, its discourse also envisions “the activities of people in actual sites who produce them and use them and take up the conceptual frames they circulate” (Campbell & Gregor 2006, 40).

Institutional ethnography makes the everyday world the site of sociological inquiry, because it focuses on a knower that is located in the everyday world, and finds meaning there (Campbell & Gregor 2004; Smith 1975). It is in the world where we are located physically and socially and experience directly objects, conditions, occasions, possibilities, relevancies, and presences. Inquiry does not begin in ideological discourse, theories, or categories, but in what people *do* in the world. Locating inquiry in the everyday world does not mean confining the inquirer to the everyday world, but encourages the inquirer to be aware that this world is organized by social and material relations, which cannot be discovered in it. This maintains the subjectivity of those whose experience we problematize in inquiry

(Campbell & Gregor 2004). Institutional ethnography practice is not interested in explaining people's behaviors (Campbell 2003; Smith 2005). Neither does it collect objectified accounts of "how something is" as objectively as possible, or use triangulation to test the accuracy of what informants say (Campbell & Gregor 2004).

### **2.5.1 Institutional ethnography operational concepts**

I explain the following institutional ethnography concepts that frame the discovery of social organization in institutional-based practices: (a) Work in actualities as experience; (b) institutional-based texts; (c) the problematic; and, (d) the ruling relations.

#### ***Work-in-actualities as experience***

According to institutional ethnography, the organization of social life can be unveiled in daily life *work*. Work comprises anything people do, that requires time and effort that they think about. Work can be voluntary or involuntary, paid or not, visible or invisible. *Actualities* are points of entry into the coordination of social practice because the perception of rules, norms and discourses is already locally incorporated into people's work, and the coordination of this work. When people talk and reflect about work, they speak about what they think, feel, plan, and organize. They speak about actualities that make social organization possible (Campbell 2003, 2006; Campbell & Gregor 2004; DeVault 2006; Smith 2005).

Actualities comprise the broad world where both study participants and ethnographer are immersed. In this way, "actualities" is a term that resists being restricted by description, name, or categorization (Smith 2005). People's actualities refer the researcher to experience. Experience is not something that already happened. It emerges in the course of its utterance. Experience denotes what people come to know that originates in their bodily being and action, in their everyday webs of interaction. People know through having a body, a consciousness, and by acting (Campbell 2003; Campbell & Gregor 2004; Smith 1987, 2006). They are expert practitioners of their own lives and work, or what they "are actually doing as they participate, in whatever way, in institutional processes" (Smith 2005, 229).

Experience is determined by discourses, so, it “cannot be claimed to be an uncontaminated representation of some original state of affairs or event” (126). The experience uttered in dialogue with an ethnographer in turn refers to *lived experience* as a location of “interchanges of awareness, recognition, feeling, noticing, and learning going on between body and world that are prior to and provide sources for experience” (Smith 2005, 224). When people know from inside what is happening, there is no separation between the micro and macro of social life (Campbell 2003).

In this study, I will resort to two concepts from music education sociology to emphasize the interrelationships between the micro and macro coordinates of work-in-actualities in music learning. First, *music pathways* (Finnegan (2007) denotes interactional routes through which people enter and leave, in which they make choices to learn, perform, and organize music. According to Finnegan (2007), people travel through recursive informal or formal-based pathways in their personal and collective engagements with music in which relationships and symbolic meanings are constructed. Such pathways allow for

self-expression in many senses, for drawing on personal networks, for growing up through the various stages of life, for achieving a whole series of non-musical aims in the locality, for sharing with others, and, not least, for providing meaning for personal action and identity (2007, 307).

Secondly, the concept *webs of interaction*, first used in music education by Froehlich (2007, 2009) after Kaplan (1966), denotes the dynamics of the many roles—called *empirical selves*—that we play at several contextual levels in music education interactions. The first level includes “each individual’s own different empirical selves”, while the second is formed by “the many empirical selves in those groups that make up a particular school”, and the third comprises “networks of empirical selves in groups that make up a specific ‘public’, including educational institutions and organizations in the music and education establishment (Froehlich 2009, 92). According to the notion of webs of interaction, “[e]ach network connects with any of the others on an ongoing basis, shaping the context not only of the school environment in which one works but also one’s own personal space and relationship to each individual’s own different empirical selves” (Froehlich 2007,

92). According to Froehlich, this notion also helps researchers and educators to become aware of multiple micro and macro relationships—often unknown—that emerge among what, how, why, and for whom we teach.

The notion of *work*—what people do, and what goes on in everyday doings from a first-person experience in actualities—, is both ontologically and methodologically suitable to this study. It makes it possible to access work in actualities, as lived and narrated by the protagonists, rather than as imagined by concepts, theories, or even the researcher’s own perspective. This is how institutional ethnography’s focus on actualities can be potentially helpful to avoid an abstract objectification of experience by research theories or categories. Understanding work in actualities in pathways or webs of interaction, from the standpoint of the study participant teachers, frames the first research supplementary question: *What is done in regard to music learning in everyday social interactions, according to the accounts of the study participants?*

### ***Textual mediation***

People are connected with other people into translocal social relations in time and space through texts that are present in their everyday life (DeVault 2006, 2013; Smith 1987, 1999, 2005, 2006b; Turner 2006). *Texts* are customized practices “to produce standardized local states of affairs or events corresponding to the standardized texts” (Smith 2000, 1147). Texts become materials in forms that can be replicated, from abstract categories, to paper, print, and electronic forms, and so on, that can produce the stability and replicability of organization of an institution. The materiality or replicability of a text allows it “to turn up in identical form wherever the reader, hearer, or watcher may be in her or his bodily being” (Smith 2005, 166). Textual mediation can make policy legitimate and can regularize managerial and professional action in webs of health care, social services, education, and all other human services (Campbell & Gregor 2004; Turner 2006). Some examples are: (a) The coordination of the organizational routines and paid efforts of employees in the interest of organizational objectives, (b) the regulation of organizational decisions on funding through service assessment, and (c) the coordination of assessment of people’s material or health needs.

A text has the capacity to carry a particular idea or meaning across sites, and perpetuate it. However, in order to have that effect, people who know how to do so must activate the text in socio-material practices (Campbell & Gregor 2004; Smith 2005, 2006b). The capacity of texts to rule depends “upon carrying messages across sites, coordinating someone’s action *here* with someone else’s *there*” (Campbell & Gregor 2004, 33). Texts become people’s doing in the text-reader conversation, understood as an actual interchange between a readers’ activating of the text and their response to it (see e.g., Nichols & Griffith 2009). People learn to participate in a textually mediated world without necessarily being aware of it, or meeting the other actors involved. Discursive knowledge and power come together systematically in everyday webs of interaction without people’s awareness and outside their interest, through text mediation (André-Bechely 2005; Campbell & Gregor 2004; McCoy 1998; DeVault 2006; Gerrard & Farrell 2013; Smith 2005, 2006b).

Some research in institutional ethnography unveils text-mediated relations in very specific educational practices, such as assessment. Tummons (2010) concluded in his study that the complexity and contingency of assessment practices are masked by discourses of quality assurance and managerialism that override learners’ locality. Rankin, Malinsky, Tate, & Elena (2010), examined evaluation practices that ended up working against students. They raised thorny ethical concerns: Do students understand how these processes work? Are these processes fair, transparent, and organized in the interests of students or universities and colleges?

Texts mediate people’s lives and consciousness to control and mobilize their work to sustain structures of power (Campbell 2003; DeVault 2006; Hart & McKinnon 2010; Smith 2005, 2006b). Texts can therefore become technology for social control (Smith 1999). The identification of texts is helpful to explore colonial-based discursive relationships in the webs of interaction of students and teachers (see, e.g., Tummons 2010). For instance, Grahame & Grahame (2009) studied how an insider ethnographer’s experience could be shaped by a bureaucratic discourse rooted in colonialism, while exploring how the same relations coordinated learning in a school setting in Trinidad and Tobago. Texts can also mediate the relationships that coordinate the work practices of educators towards economic or political

interests (Slade 2012, Smith 2000). Slade's study of adult education employment programs unveiled contradictions between the actual, high skill-qualifications of immigrant workers and the local employers' discourse that viewed them as a risk due to their lack of local work experience and credentials. She wanted to know why immigrant professionals experienced difficulty finding appropriate employment. Gerrard & Farrell (2013), on the other hand, examined how people enact policy texts in classrooms and schools, through a national-based curriculum in Australia.

According to institutional ethnography practice, there are two kinds of interdependent texts: micro-based (low-order) texts, and (usually) one single predominant macro-based (high-order) text. The lower texts are located in the micro worlds of human doings, while the higher belong to macrostructures (Smith 2005). This classification is useful to this study because the lower texts are activated in local, micro webs of music learning, and are interdependent with high texts, located in institutions that organize social organization. The three historical periods of Costa Rican colonization already explained in the first chapter provide a framework for high order texts in this study. The elucidation of text-mediated relations around social practices frames the second supplementary, research question: *How do music learners develop perceptions about themselves, others, and music in their interactions in music learning?*

### ***The problematic***

Institutional ethnography proposes the concept *the problematic* to direct attention "to a *possible* set of questions which may not have been posed or a set of puzzles which do not yet exist in the form of puzzles but are 'latent' in the actualities of the experienced world" (Smith 1975, 368). It is used at the level of concept or theory rather than at the level of experience and action. The use of the term is far from technical terms from other analytical approaches such as variable or triangulation. The problematic is neither the formal research questions, nor the problem as an informant might tell it (Campbell & Gregor 2004; Smith 2005). The problematic constitutes the "abstraction of the organization of the everyday world and its location in externally structured and differentiated social relations" (Smith 1975, 371; see DeVault 2013).

The problematic can be identified in disjuncture that occurs in people's actualities around text-mediated relations. As Smith (2005) explains, "[i]ntentions, desires, opportunities, impediments, blockages, and powerlessness arise within" the relations that organize the social (183). When something goes unaccountably wrong, or out of step, "we stop and notice the organized complexity of our lives that we otherwise navigate so easily" (Campbell & Gregor 2004, 31). When someone's knowing is subordinated by organizational practices, this moment of disjuncture becomes the place for a problematic or a hidden puzzle. The issue of disjuncture lies between different versions of reality, a ruling perspective versus an experiential one.

In terms of empirical inquiry, the problematic "sets out a project of research and discovery that organizes the direction of investigation from the standpoint of those whose experience is its starting point" (Smith 2005, 227). The social organization and determination of the everyday world may be constituted as "the problematic" in the course of inquiry, and not earlier. The actualities of people's doings are translated "from forms of organization implicit in the everyday world into forms of discursive representation in which they can be subjected to inquiry" (Smith 2005, 40; see Nichols & Griffith 2009; Tummons 2010). The discursive construction of the problematic does not stem from what is particular to an individual (although it may start in individual experience), but it brings awareness of relations that are not peculiar to that individual.

### ***The ruling relations***

Institutional structures produce series of actions through rules, norms, and discourses embedded in texts, which organize people's work, and thus coordinate their social life in pre-determined ways. This is how power can be exercised in local settings through textually mediated social organization, to accomplish extra local interests. A ruling occurs when the agendas or interests of those who rule dominate what others do in local settings (Smith 2005). This is called *ruling relations* or *relations of ruling*. Smith uses the notion of "ruling" "to name the socially-organized exercise of power that shapes people's actions and their lives" (Campbell & Gregor 2004, 32; see also DeVault 2006, 2013; Hart & McKinnon 2010; Smith 2005, 2006a). Ruling relationships rely on people knowing how to take and activate

texts, and act in the appropriate way. The ruling relationship has already begun outside the encounter of people with the text, in a translocal dimension (DeVault 2006, 2013; Smith 2005).

Institutional ethnography analysis of the problematic intends to go “beyond what people know to find out how what they are doing is connected with others’ doings in ways they cannot see” (Smith 2005, 225). It seeks to uncover the macro foundations of a micro sociology, from the local to extra local, from processes to forces (Burawoy, Blum, George, Gille, Gowan, Haney, Klawitter, Lopez, Riain & Thayer 2000). The ethnographic analysis looks at two sides of interest: (a) The local setting where life is lived and experienced by actual people, and (b) the extra- or trans-local that is outside the boundaries of one’s everyday experience (Campbell & Gregor 2004; Campbell 2003; Turner 2006; see also Nichols & Griffith 2009; Tummons 2010). The resulting analysis, metaphorically speaking, is like a map that can guide us through a complex ruling apparatus (see Campbell & Gregor 2004; Smith 2005; Turner 2006). Institutional ethnography’s interest in elucidating micro/macro relationships in the organization of people’s experience inform the third research-related question: *What relationships in music learning are affirmed, explored or celebrated between the local world of learners and the translocal structures of postcolonial Costa Rica?*

### **2.5.2 Institutional ethnography and music education**

Institutional ethnography-based research in education is recent, and has been mostly undertaken in North America, especially in nursing education in Canada<sup>22</sup>. However, institutional ethnography is still foreign to music education research. In fact, the online database search of sources undertaken during this study located only one institutional ethnography research in music education in English, namely, a doctoral thesis in Canada, by Edwards (2010). It was based on the work of three band directors in British Columbia, and sought “to understand more about the disjuncture

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<sup>22</sup> For a discussion of recent institutional ethnography research in these contexts, see DeVault (2013).

between the balanced music education band directors want to deliver to their students and the need to prepare and present performances that bring positive notoriety to a band program” (iii). This study explored micro-based instructional decisions and practices, but seemingly, it did not address in considerable depth the macro relations that organize the educational processes under scrutiny.

As can be gleaned so far, institutional ethnography has the potential to guide methodologically the elucidation of the organization of music learning, as institutionalized practice, in a postcolonial context. Institutional ethnography shares with postcolonial thinking a practical interest to unveil the relations that organize the control of human undertakings—including educational research and educational practices—around power-based agendas and discourses associated with modern capitalism. Souza Silva (2011) is the first scholar to use institutional ethnography to theorize ruling relations of power-based inequality in historical colonialism in Latin America. He describes such relationships in terms of discourses of civilization and development, which I explained earlier. He terms his analysis *critical institutional ethnography* (sic). Souza Silva is able to acknowledge the outcome of banking education, and emphasizes the historical macro foundations of micro-based pedagogical practices.

There are practices in institutionalized music schooling that may operate in dynamics similar to colonization as problematized by postcolonial thinking, and in line with the specific instances discussed by Small and Freire. For instance, when learning is centered on the contents, instruments, genres, and realities that are familiar to the teacher, but not the students (see McPherson, Davidson & Faulkner 2012), the student might be unrepresented and alienated in the learning process. Another example is the emphasis on learning notation and theory in the form of the names of musical procedures and elements, divorced from familiar listening and practical applications (Green 2010). These may decontextualize informal-based music abilities and knowledge and may not engage the student in actual music making. Students may also become oppressed in their condition of objects of observation and scrutiny, through pencil-and-paper tests (see Elliott 1995). Practical music examinations and music performance itself are also likely to isolate learners from embodied, familiar knowledge (McPherson, Davidson & Faulkner 2012). The

emphasis on assessment and on measuring artistic ability through grading itself stimulates mobility and competition that may not be relevant to the students' goals, but to the broader goals of institutional-based education, such as becoming fit to the capitalist mode of production (see Freire 2000, 2009).

These and other practices may perpetuate and advocate the preservation of Western Art culture and knowledge, modernity, progress/civilization and development, at the expense of the vernacular musics and familiar worlds of music learners (see Small 2010). Institutional ethnography is useful to identify institutional, discursive practices. It is potentially useful to establish relationships of coordination between such micro-based practices and macro historical processes associated with civilization and development, that have guided historical colonialism in Latin America and Costa Rica, as discussed in 1.3 Colonialism in education, music, and music education in Costa Rica.

Despite institutional ethnography's potential to challenge how traditional social research approaches the discursive organization of institutionalized, discursive practices, Walby (2007) emphasizes that institutional ethnography operates with its own ontological framework, which organizes institutional ethnographic discourse. This approach is not fully exempt from being theory- or category-driven, and is therefore not completely centered on "experiencer's authoritative practice" (Smith, 2005, p. 139). According to Walby's (2007) critical assessment of institutional ethnography, its framework has "a constitutive impact on the hermeneutic exchange between researcher and participant", and on "how the participant's talk is actually made into a different form than that in which it could originally have been articulated" (1021-22). In light of this, he urges the institutional ethnographer to be careful not to "truncate aspects of the social, making them unintelligible within the frame provided by ontology-driven theory" (1023).

In his critical analysis, Walby (2007) also warns that institutional ethnography cannot fully support its claim to preserve the presence of the subject, because it is "less focused on its own social relations of research" (1009). Institutional ethnography does not seem to explore enough the "face-to-face and textual practices beginning in the construction of ontology and continuing in data collection, coding, analysis, and the writing of social scientific texts", that enable "relations between

ourselves as researchers, others as participants, and our audiences continue in our text work involving case selection, representation, and manuscript preparation” (1009). This means that social relations of research will always entail some degree of objectification, which may bring about misrepresentation of participants or the data, and this is a form of violence. It is also possible that the ethnographer produces an entire new subject in the interpretation. I will address the implication of the above concerns in relation to the data collection and analysis in this research, in 3.3 Validity and 3.4 Power issues and ethics measures.

## **2.6 Chapter summary**

Postcolonial theorization (Bhabha 1994; Fanon 1963, 1967; Said 1979; Spivak 2010) allows understanding colonialism as the discursive framework that legitimates the historical domination and colonization of bodies, and material and symbolic undertakings, for the sake of macro interests forged outside the locality of colonized bodies. Colonization entails the disqualification and disempowerment of bodies/others and their construction as inferior/illegitimate subjects, under stereotypical notions that underpin discourses of progress/civilization or development, wielded by “the superior”. The Latin American-based postcolonial strand called the Modernity/(De)coloniality project (Castro-Gómez 2008; Mignolo 2007) emphasizes that the Spanish colonization of the New World constructed Amerindians as subalterns that ought to be converted to civilization and Christianity, on the grounds of Europe’s racial and cultural superiority. This process was necessary to launch and consolidate modernity (and capitalism) as material and ideological projects, even though mainstream postcolonial thinking—perhaps in the steps of Hegel and Marx—seems to overlook it. This colonization rationale is called coloniality of power. This rationale endures in a more recent colonization discourse, based on the need of non-industrialized countries to enter the path of development prescribed by the global, international market. Such discourse constructs Third World countries into subalterns in order to justify the appropriation of material and

human resources of the former for macro-economic and political interest of wealthy countries.

According to Latin American critiques, when the colonized are forced to submit their material and symbolic resources to the oppressors, and see themselves as inferior in need of conversion/betterment, they are inflicted a colonial wound in their subjectivity. The colonized may, on the one hand, speak, think, feel, and act from the site of the colonizers (hubris of point zero) to colonize themselves and others. They may also resist being and learning as the colonial apparatus prescribes or dictates, and engage in liberation or decolonization processes, like epistemic disobedience and border epistemology (Anzaldúa 2007; Boff 2002; Fanon 1963, 1967). These concepts allow for new interpretations of domination and resistance/liberation in the Western Music and education establishment analyzed in this chapter:

(a) Colonization of non-Western vernacular musics, through the historical hegemony of the Western Art Music tradition (see e.g., Bohlman 2011; Nettl 2007); and,

(b) Oppression of the minds of learners through narrative, indoctrinatory banking education, (Freire 2000, 2009; Sousa Santos 2010; Souza Silva 2011) including music education (Small 2010).

If we interpret the three periods of historical colonialism in Costa Rica analyzed in the first chapter, in the light of the above postcolonial thinking, it is possible to suggest preliminarily that the organization of music and music education in Costa Rica has been undertaken under colonialist structures.

The theorized practice for social discovery called institutional ethnography is interested in mapping macro-based relations that rule and organize institutionalized social practices in capitalist societies. Institutional ethnography social ontology becomes relevant to this study because it can help to trace and dismantle colonial imaginaries and structures embedded in music learning socialization. In addition, institutional ethnography inquiry is epistemically disobedient to traditional, colonizing research rationales, because it begins in the experience (work—what people do) of the participants, as felt in their narrated, everyday location. It allows the identification of discursive constructions (texts) that organize how these people

speaking, thinking, feeling, and acting, in relation to colonialist, hegemonic constructions. At a theoretical level, institutional ethnography allows using the conceptual tool “the problematic” to capture the disjuncture that emerges from colonial-based construction through textual mediation, in other words, a colonial wound. The overall relations are called ruling relations. In the next chapter I will describe in detail the methods and procedures for data collection and analysis that institutional ethnography contributes.

I tailor a specific theoretical and methodological framework to approach the problem of study. I use postcolonial thinking to theorize and conceptualize the colonization of music learning in the Costa Rican geocultural context. In general, postcolonial thinking describes, explains, and disrupts the history and legacy of colonization in former European colonies. It allows me to identify notions and practices that create or sustain colonialism and colonization. It also gives me room to pay attention to the forms in which the agency of the colonized individuals contest and disrupt colonial ideologies. This is congruent with postcolonialism’s political commitment: to resist and transform colonial structures and power in order to forge more socially social structures (Ashcroft, Griffiths & Tiffin 1998; Bignall 2010; Rizvi, Lingard & Lavia 2006).



## 3 Methodology

In this chapter, I explain the ethnographic data collection and analysis procedures. The first section explains how I recruited a specific pool of participants, how data was collected, and what roles researcher and participants fulfilled. Three specific data collection procedures are discussed: (a) interviews, (b) participant observation, and (c) artifact analysis. In the second section, I describe the procedures in my two-phase ethnographic analysis. The first one was an outcome of ethnographic dialogue, and allowed assembling nine stories of music learning in webs of interactions, and their thematic discussion. This is how the following research question was addressed: *What is done in regard to music learning in everyday social interactions, according to the accounts of the study participants?*

Spivak (2010) warns that it is not simple to grasp the nature of phenomena behind subalternity, and suggests encompassing a wide array of theoretical postures for this purpose (see Sharpe & Spivak 2003). In line with this epistemological claim, in the second phase I customized an analysis. I intersected postcolonial theory/Modernity/(De)coloniality thinking, and institutional ethnography, to interpret colonialism and colonization in this particular geocultural context. This analysis addresses the following research questions: *How do music learners develop perceptions about themselves, others, and music in their interactions in music learning?* and *What relationships in music learning are affirmed, explored and celebrated between the local world of learners and the translocal structures of postcolonial Costa Rica?* This chapter closes by addressing issues of validity, power, and ethics in the last two sections.

### 3.1 Data collection procedures

This institutional ethnography does not aim at grasping human behaviors or what is going on out there in social life and describe it as an objective account (Campbell & Gregor 2004). Therefore, it does not begin methodologically with theoretical

assumptions or categories about the study participants or their experiences (Campbell 2003; Smith 2005). In fact, there is no single way to conduct institutional ethnography. Neither is a fixed sequence of procedures prescribed. For this reason, institutional ethnography is rarely planned out fully in advance. Researchers do not always identify research sites, the informants, the texts for analysis, or the questions to ask informants in advance (DeVault & McCoy 2006).

Overall, the analysis of social organization of experience is complex, and “so are the methods of analysis that can adequately address its complexity” (Campbell & Gregor 2004, 113). In the light of this challenge, I engaged in empirical data collection through unstructured individual and group interviews, participant observation, and analysis of artifacts. Using these qualitative procedures simultaneously allowed a broad gamut of data in order for me to become more fully aware of the participants’ actualities.

These procedures were carried out in a spiral manner, informing each other, because ethnography is a recursive process. I learned where or what to do, or ask, as I listened, watched, and analyzed and went back to the field, listened, watched, and analyzed again. Thus, the data collection phase melded with analysis. For instance, a narrated experience would lead me to confirm some facts against history or demographic sources, or another sort of relevant files. This means, too, that the research questions and sources changed during the data collection and analysis (Campbell & Gregor 2004; Smith 2005). In general, this required me to play multiple, fluid and simultaneous roles beyond a data gatherer: from a seeker, analyzer, and interpreter to a creator of knowledge, sometimes fluctuating between outside and inside researcher positions (see Grahame & Grahame 2009). I will next describe the research procedures in detail in two separate sub-sections.

### **3.2 Participant recruitment and role**

My choice of young music teachers as study participants is a methodological decision indebted to a particular research interest that has shaped my teaching goals, research questions, and frameworks (Henry 2001; Bresler 2008). I am a researcher

who knows about him/herself and other music learners/teachers through tensions and discords experienced in the body in institutionalized learning and teaching experiences (see Rosabal-Coto 2006; 1.1 Researcher's position). I decided to target teachers I knew as students in the past. Some of these potential participants had previously shared stories with me by virtue of my position as teacher or advisor. All participants affirmed that they felt no reservations about deepening these stories of dislocation they had shared with me long ago, due to a great degree of mutual familiarity. This allowed for fluent conversation about what had been done, how, by whom, and with what resources in the participants' lifelong music learning. Despite this helpful rapport, I noticed at times that it was easy to remain overly sympathetic to particular accounts that shared some affinity with my own self-dislocation. Following institutional ethnography criteria, I valued my potential participants' agency as creators of knowledge, experts in what they do or have done in their learning and teaching, and experts in their actualities of dislocation (Campbell 2003; Smith 2005). By virtue of such agency and knowledge construction, and in order to prevent rapport from interfering, I had to remind myself to remain open to unknown experiences, and perceptions of their sociocultural context, that differed from my own previous understandings. I asked the participants if my understanding of the narrated experiences matched theirs as closely as possible, and suggested to come back to some issues, whenever more explanation it was necessary.

I introduced the research to potential participants by describing its purpose and ethnographic nature. I explained my personal and professional connection with the research and that my intention as ethnographer was to be a newcomer to their world, a colleague, and researcher eager to listen, learn from them, and understand about their musical experiences from their first-person perspective. I then described the research procedures, and how data would be systematically treated. I emphasized that there were no rights or wrongs in the data they would provide, only experience reflective of particular people—experts—in particular situations. After answering any questions they might have, I explained how I would address potential difference and power-based issues, through ethical measures to protect them as participants, as well as the data.

I was able to gather nine participant teachers, four female, and five male. They were between 23 and 31 years old at the time of the study. The pool of participants shared several traits: (a) They had an undergraduate degree in music education from a Costa Rican university, (b) they had been employed as teachers for at least one year, and, (c) they were willing to share stories about their life musical pathways. My participants could be located and were accessible in a number of ways. In addition, they agreed with the following consent parameters (Kirby, Greaves & Reid 2006): (a) Their participation in interviews and transcript reviews is voluntary and negotiable, (b) ethical measures protect both data and participants, and (b) there is no risk of harm during the study (see Appendix B). This is how the participants ended up exemplifying the characteristics of interest for an in-depth study, and at the same time resembled a strategic sample (Hammersley & Atkinson 1995). I identify participants' general sociocultural information in Table 2, because it denotes a range of empirical selves and webs of interaction that interact in micro and macro socialization relationships. It is important to acknowledge the "status" because: a) immigrant, non-Costa Ricans do not necessarily have the same access to formal education and other webs of social provisions as local citizens do; and, b) the traits and identity that non-Costa Ricans bring may vary from those that conform to the Costa Rican national identity, discussed in 1.3.2 Cultural Europeanization of the imagined Costa Rican nation. Methodologically, such differences enhance the discovery of how a diverse pool of people engages in the production of institutional forms of coordination (Smith 2005) in relation to different webs of interaction.

**Table 2****General sociocultural background to participants' actualities**

<b>Participant</b>	<b>Gender</b>	<b>Age</b>	<b>Status in Costa Rica</b>	<b>Workplace(s)</b>	<b>Activities out of workplace</b>
1	M	31	Citizen	Children's healthcare institution.	Punk/rock band lead singer, guitarist, and composer.
2	M	28	Citizen	Private elementary school.	Freelance songwriter, Composer, and pianist. Dancer.
3	M	28	Citizen	Private secondary school. Private music instruction for actors.	Latin music band. Music making for theater.
4	M	31	Immigrant	Public secondary school.	Lead vocalist in commercial pop band. Freelance arts producer.
5	F	24	Citizen	Private elementary school.	Freelance vocalist. Radio producer. Actress.
6	F	26	Immigrant	Private elementary school.	Freelance vocalist.
7	F	29	Citizen	Special music education, public elementary school. Government subsidized conservatory school.	Freelance instrumentalist.
8	F	26	Immigrant	Several public and private preschool and elementary schools.	None.
9	M	23	Citizen	Several municipally subsidized conservatory schools.	Freelance orchestra musician.

In the next two sub-sections, I describe the data gathering procedures.

### 3.2.1 Individual and group interview

Interviews in general are useful to ethnographers to record the voice and experience of participants in first person, as faithfully and completely as possible. They allow discovering information about the experiences of the interviewee in the language and gesture of that person interviewed (Kirby, Greaves & Reid 2006). Interviews in institutional ethnography tend to focus on knowledge and experience about how something is done or learned (Campbell & Gregor 2004; DeVault & McCoy 2006; McCoy 2006). In the interview encounter, the participants' experience emerges in dialogue with the ethnographer. The leading thread of my interviews was what went on in music pathways where music learning took place. My interviews involved considerable narration, because narration would allow participants to construct and share meanings about musical engagements quite naturally and freely (Bowman 2006; Clandinin & Connelly 2004; DeVault 2013; Sunderland & Arthurs 2010). I opened up the first interview encounter with the question, *Could you please tell me about your earliest musical memory?* This opening dynamic triggered the narration of memories of childhood experiences, in pathways in both formal and informal-situated contexts, alone or in company.

The interview turned into talking to people with the aim to investigate widespread, discursive processes (DeVault & McCoy 2006). I asked my participants to continue describing music learning in comings and goings of interpersonal, family, and collective relationships (Sunderland & Arthurs 2010). I asked them to literally take me by the hand to places, people, and events. I emphasized that my attitude as an ethnographer was primarily to listen respectfully, without passing any judgment. We talked about who did what, where, in whose company, why, with what resources, with what intention, and how the above interactions felt like, or meant. In the resulting dialogue, emerged relationships with themselves, other people, music, and social practices, because when people speak "in a sensitive and coherent manner about their lives, they also speak its social relations" (Campbell & Gregor, 2004, 79). A debriefing took place at the end of each interview session. I asked participants if they had anything else to say or comment, giving them an

additional opportunity to deal with issues that worried them, or that they had been thinking about during our encounters (Kvale & Brinkmann 2009).

The individual interviewing phase for eight of the nine participants took place between January and April 2012. Interviews with one participant whose input was most extensive, took place intermittently between September 2012 and June 2013, mostly due to this person's multiple occupations and complex work schedule. There was only one two-hour group interview session, held in January 2014, with seven participants attending. Two participants were unable to attend due to unforeseen circumstances. The session did not follow an interview protocol or seek the same outcome as the individual interview. It was rather a free discussion session among colleagues, initiated with the introductory question *How have you been doing after we had our interviews and what have you thought further?* The purpose was to allow participants to share and discuss issues that came up in the individual interview sessions, and to assist me in refining issues for analysis. I explained some preliminary analysis to obtain feedback and encourage new ethnographic dialogue. All interview sessions were carried out in Spanish, which is the participants' and my own native language<sup>23</sup>. Immediately after all the interviews, I took some time to reflect what I had learned from the task, and wrote it in my research journal, mainly for my own methodological reflection. Whenever any informal conversation happened after we had finalized the interview, that seemed important to record, I asked participants for permission to audio record it and transcribe it (Kvale & Brinkmann 2009).

### **3.2.2 Recording, transcription, and revision**

Most interviews took place at specific public places (malls, restaurants, coffee shops, and parks) close to the interviewer's workplace, the vicinity of the participant's workplace, or a next meeting point for them, in case they were on their way to a class or rehearsal. Less often, a nearby office was booked for meeting. However often informal the environment and unstructured the interview situation,

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<sup>23</sup> See Appendix A, on the number of interviews per participant, and the interview duration.

we succeeded in maintaining distractions to a minimum, without sacrificing the overall data integrity, because we were focused and committed to the ethnographic exchange. We sat in front of each other close enough, and talked in a sufficiently audible tone, in order to overcome noise and bypassers' movement. This was important because every word and gesture matters in ethnographic data collection. Every interview session was audio taped in mp3 format with professional equipment. All participants said directly that they did not find the presence of audio equipment threatening and gave me permission to audio record the interviews. Reminders or notes on topics that emerged and deserved to be addressed later in data collection were recorded in writing. If the quality of the recording suffered from noise at public places, a cleaner sound file was processed for transcription. Background noise at interview sites did not represent an obstacle to communication between my participants and me. The group interview session was not recorded because of time and resource limitations; however, I took thorough notes on this discussion. Interviews were transcribed verbatim in Spanish. I transcribed one third of the interviews myself, while research assistants for whom Spanish was also their native language transcribed the remaining. Only one interviewee requested explicitly that I transcribe his/her interview to protect his/her privacy. The assistants recruited had these characteristics: (a) They were advanced music education students I had met in my classes or education consultancy activities and showed commitment in such endeavors; (b) they had appropriate listening capacities and the right equipment to listen to mp3 audio files; and (c) they were skilled in word processing and had good spelling. I trained the assistants on which rules to follow for transcription. They agreed to commit to observing ethical measures to protect the information they handled by signing a confidentiality agreement (see Appendix C).

In order to contribute to the usefulness of the interview in recording the participants' voice, and to assist in the further analysis of inconsistencies, or incoherence and contradictions in the transcriptions, we observed the following rules:

1. Indicating pauses in the narration with commas, full stops, new paragraphs, dashes, and other sign and the length;

2. Reproducing unfinished sentences without adding anything, except perhaps a dash or ellipsis; and,

3. Indicating small exclamations, speech nuances, interjections, laughter, whispering, and shouting (Hordsal 2012).

Transcribers reviewed the transcripts against the audio recording at least twice. Each interview transcript page had a heading with relevant information, such as the number of session transcribed, and the date, time, and duration. I reproduce it in Figure 1. This coding allowed me to devise my own three-item formula to reference quotes from the participants. The first item (P1 to P9) denotes the number of participant. The second, the number of interview session; and the third number stands for the transcript page.

**Figure 1**

**Interview transcript heading (English translation)**

<b>Transcript of interview for Sibelius Academy doctoral thesis</b>		
<b>Session no.</b>		<b>Participant no.</b>
<b>Interview date:</b>	<b>Time:</b>	<b>Place:</b>
<b>Duration:</b>		
<b>Interviewer:</b>		<b>Transcriber's name:</b>
<b>Transcription dates:</b>		<b>Most recent revision date:</b> <b>No. of revisions:</b>

The participants had the opportunity to read a revised, printed interview transcript. Because the participants are experts in their musical doings and co-constructors of knowledge, it was necessary to know if they saw themselves and their experiences reflected accurately in the transcript. Following Hordsal (2012), at this point each participant was free to: (a) correct misunderstandings, (b) add something that was later considered important, (c) delete passages they regretted telling, and (e) withdraw completely and remove their interview. All nine participants engaged in the revision process. They approved the transcripts, suggesting a few additions in their own writing, and expanded or clarified information where necessary. Nobody decided to delete information in full, or withdraw from the study. Parallel to individual and group interview sessions, I

undertook participant observation and artifact analysis. I will explain these procedures in the following sub-section.

### **3.2.3 Participant observation and artifact analysis**

Simultaneous observation and interviewing led to a more complete understanding of the participants (Prus 1996). Participant observation allowed me to collect data that was simply unattainable using other modes of inquiry (Diamond 2006). Observation was undertaken as a collaborative, intersubjective dialogue in which I learned, with the interviewees, to see the world to which they referred. In this way, my preconceptions could be corrected or updated, and I could learn to map my participants' social world, including the relations of ruling (as defined in *The ruling relations*, 61) in which these participants are embedded and to which they are subjected (Hart & McKinnon 2010). I watched, listened, and witnessed some participants performing or teaching, or preparing or advertising a concert, in-person, or through online media. Particular attention was paid to verbal and non-verbal behavior (e.g., facial expressions), so that the actual behavior was recorded and not just people's accounts of their behaviors, in field notes rather than as a formal transcript (Kirby, Greaves & Reid 2006). We talked afterwards, in person, by phone or online, if comment or clarification about the observation was considered necessary by any of the two parties.

In addition, I collected a variety of artifacts (Remenyi 2012), including song lyrics, song recordings, videos or pictures of the participants, which they willingly shared, or allowed me to attend to, or record, during, or after interview sessions. By commenting on these artifacts as ruling relations-related texts with participants, it was possible to access invaluable points for apprehending particular aspects of life-worlds (Smith 2006b; Prus 1996). We commented on how photographs, self-authored song lyrics, or audio clips represented their efforts, goals, thoughts, and feelings at particular times in particular events. We also talked about how things felt, or what it took to accomplish a task represented by the artifact. Artifact-related conversations and analysis were fruitful to deepen the understanding of the actualities of participants because specific sounds, lyrics, physical and language

gestures, and ideologies behind a performance or an artifact would refer to catharsis, struggles, or resistance in relation to tensions in their webs of music learning. Talking about these allowed for richer understanding of the bodily location and agency of the participants. A general inventory of observation and artifacts is presented in Table 3.

**Table 3**  
**Participant observations and artifacts for analysis**

<b>Participant</b>	<b>Observations</b>	<b>Types of artifacts</b>
1	1	Song lyrics, song audio files, lesson videos, and lesson photographs.
2	1	Live performance and rehearsal photographs
3	1	Lesson plans, teacher's own made materials and class photographs.
4	2	Live performance, live teaching, song lyrics, song audio files, and performance photographs.
5	1	Recorded performance, and performance photographs.
6	2	Live performance and performance photographs.
7	1	Recorded performance, performance photographs, and visual art works.
8	1	Live performance and performance photographs.
9	1	Live performance and performance photographs.

In the next sub-section, I describe the data analysis procedures.

### **3.2.4 Data analysis procedures**

In the light of institutional ethnography practice, analysis begins already at ethnographic dialogue in interviewing, participant observation, and artifact analysis

(see Campbell 2006; Campbell & Gregor 2004; Smith 2005). It moves from empirical data to conceptual construction, and then to empirical verification. It intends to discover and explain relationships between local and extralocal worlds, which coordinate the participants' social interactions. Such relationships are ultimately located within "the problematic" (Defined in *The problematic*, 60), which can be procedurally identified in text mediation in the participants' actualities. The two phases of analysis will be described below.

### ***Phase 1: Assembling and discussing the participants' actualities***

I assembled a chronological story of pathways of music learning for each participant from the ethnographic dialogue that took place simultaneously at:

1. Individual and group interviews;
2. Review of interview transcripts and finished, written accounts;
3. In-person participant observation of some of the participants' work as performers or teachers; and,
4. Discussion of artifacts voluntarily shared by the participants (See Table 3).

I began with the identification of sequences of work knowledge (See *Work-in-actualities as experience*, 56) about music learning in micro socialization webs, from the perspective of each participant. In order to identify sequences, I located what participants and other social actors did or chose for in relation to music learning, in specific circumstances and settings, in the interview transcripts. I also paid attention to which material and symbolic resources were involved in the interactions, as well as to what shaped or constrained interactions. Since participants did not narrate their story of music learning chronologically, but sometimes randomly, I recorded literally and organized the data chronologically for each sequence in a chart. I followed the structure proposed in Figure 2. During this process, I resorted to notes from the group interview, participant observation, and artifact analysis, to better understand, or expand some sequences. In addition, I had to double-check some factual data, like dates or curricula, archival or historical sources, such as course syllabi, newspapers, or history books. Although I kept records of all sources consulted, in order to keep confidentiality of institutions, places and teachers, some of these sources are not listed in the references of this dissertation.

**Figure 2**

**Grid for sequence organization (English translation)**

<b>Participant number</b>	<b>Interview number</b>	<b>Transcript page no.</b>	<b>Chronological transcription of sequence</b>	<b>Setting, actors, doings and interactions</b>

The presentations of the nine participants' stories comprise the fourth chapter.

In the fifth chapter, I undertake a thematic discussion of the participants' accounts of music learning socialization in terms of empirical selves in webs of interaction, largely through the lens of music education literature. I undertook this theoretical treatment of the stories as one step before theorizing from postcolonial theory and concepts. Drawing the stories and discussing them thematically addressed this research question: *What is done in regard to music learning in everyday social interactions, according to the accounts of the study participants?*

***Phase 2: Postcolonial institutional ethnography, the analysis***

The second phase of analysis involves two tasks modeled procedurally after institutional ethnography methodology for analysis of social organization of people's work-in-actualities: (a) Locating the standpoint and problematic in text-mediated actualities, and (b) mapping the ruling relations (Campbell & Gregor 2004; DeVault 1996, 2006, 2013; Smith 2005).

*Locating the standpoint and the problematic in textual actualities*

I locate the local particularities of bodily existence of the study participants according to their stories. Next, I pose the problematic. In order to attain this, institutional ethnography practice encourages the researcher to elucidate a possible set of questions that may not have been asked, or a set of puzzles that do not yet exist in the form of puzzles, but are somehow latent in the actualities of the world that people experience (Smith 1987). In this particular analysis, I identified a problematic by looking at disjuncture in the participants' accounts of music learning that caused dislocation as latent questions that needed to be answered and the

participants’ were not necessarily aware of. The latent puzzle was why and how the study participants were displaced from their bodily experience in everyday webs of learning by relationships embedded in colonialization. I identified the puzzle through the lenses of postcolonial concepts and theories. “Colonization” and “colonial wound” identify instances where the participants’ physical and emotional resources were appropriated, suppressed, or modified by social actors. For this task, I relied on participants’ instructions to understand notions, concepts, stereotypes, discourses, (material and imaginary) sites, and processes, which we call *texts* (See Textual mediation, in 2.4.1 Institutional ethnography operational concepts), that seemed to mediate constraints, dilemmas, and contradictions in interactions in music learning webs. In order to substantiate connections to theorize the problematic, I expanded the grid used for writing the participants’ stories, through the addition of ethnographic descriptions of specific disjuncture, particularities of the problematic, as well as the mediating texts and their activation, as shown in Figure 3.

**Figure 3**

**Grid for recording the text-mediated problematic (English translation)**

<b>Setting, actors and interactions</b>	<b>Disjuncture</b>	<b>Specificities of the problematic</b>	<b>Description of text</b>	<b>Participants’ and social actors’ activation/response to the text</b>

I then interpreted disjuncture through concepts discussed in the theoretical framework. First, I identified when the body or emotions were suppressed or coerced through the articulation of concepts or practices that can be traced to colonial structures (colonial wound). Second, I interpreted instances where the above dynamics of textual activation had connections with the colonial agenda of transforming local experience in the light of the White, cultivated musician or citizen. The concept “coloniality of power” denotes this. I then identified sensations, emotions, thoughts, actions, and choices that reflected the particular textual activation of undoing the self-image, sensations, or skills that colonial-based

concepts or practices entail (epistemic disobedience) in close connection with awareness of one's suppressed bodily location and its agency (border epistemology) (see Mignolo 2007). Additional concepts included banking education (Freire 2000, 2009), the critique to the civilization/development discourse by Souza Silva (2011), and the metaphor on the eagle and the chicken, by Boff (2002), based on Aggrey's story (1998). This task of postcolonial institutional ethnography aims at responding to this research question: *How do music learners develop perceptions about themselves, others, and music in their interactions in music learning?*

### *Mapping the ruling relations*

In the next step of postcolonial institutional ethnography analysis, I engaged in mapping macro-based, coordinating relations of music learning. The relationships explored do not happen in each participant's story plot. Rather, they happen within the problematic in participants' actualities, and within it, I saw coordination between the micro worlds and macrostructures. This coordination takes place through intertextual organization; that is, micro-based notions and processes organized by macrostructure-based notions and processes. To begin, I discussed the specific standpoint of music teachers within their actualities in webs of music learning. The standpoint is shaped and enunciated through physical energy, sensations, thoughts, self-image, and expectations that play out in the narrated social interactions, collected in Grid for recording the text-mediated problematic (see Figure 3). Next, I traced how low order texts in the microworlds of the participants appear to be related to a higher order text and checked the analysis against macrosociological analysis in 1.3 Colonialism in education, music, and music education in Costa Rica. This entails the identification of concepts or actions coordinated from a translocal dimension, that become social practice in the participants' micro webs, and suppress the standpoint interactionally from the local and particular. This second step of postcolonial institutional analysis addresses the third research question: *What relationships in music learning are affirmed, explored and celebrated between the local world of learners and the translocal structures of postcolonial Costa Rica?* The entire Postcolonial institutional ethnography analysis features in the sixth chapter.

### 3.3 Validity

Unlike much traditional ethnography in ethnomusicology and music education, institutional ethnography practice does not seek to study people, or their culture out there, and report it objectively (Smith 2005). This method sets out to discover in people's experiences in their bodies, how social practices are organized in social interactions in very specific—often institutional—contexts. People's experience is not something fixed that occurred before data collection and can be grasped in fixed forms. It rather emerges in ethnographic dialogue, as people narrate what they do, feel, think, and say, as they are located in their bodies in everyday social interactions (Campbell & Gregor 2004). People are able to reflect and talk experience in their capacity as expert knowers of their everyday doings, as they partake of norms, rules, procedures, and socialization in institutional orders. This is how institutional ethnography practice allows first-hand access to multiple standpoints of experience. The scope and form of such experience is then attached to the participants, rather than to previously established theories, concepts in social sciences, or the ethnographer's experience or agenda.

Institutional ethnography began as a research practice committed with unveiling power structures in the capitalist society (Smith 2005). It speaks for the people and researches power-based relations that coordinate what people do, feel, think, and say in their local worlds. The validity of institutional ethnography thus relies, first, on its commitment to discover social practices in the terms that they emerge in the participants' experiences, in the institutional context. Walby (2007) explains that institutional ethnography is not fully exempt from its own ontology of the social, becoming an ethnographic discourse may impact data collection and analysis through truncation of some forms of "the social" and objectification of the participants. Attending to Walby's concern, my obligation is to be open to allowing experiences of the social to emerge, as new, different, or unexpected as they may be from my experience. I commit to do so outside preconceptions or personal agendas unrelated to the actors whose standpoint is being accessed. Secondly, in the data collection and interpretation phases, I return constantly to the local experiences narrated, and seek how they act and think institutionalized practices. I do so by (a)

Asking my participants to read the stories drafted after the data collection and make explicit suggestions to make their experience tangible, if needed, and (b) sharing the rationale of my analysis of the stories in the collective interview, and receive their feedback. Thus, often-unsuspected relationships that organize social life may emerge, not dictated by previous concepts or theories (see Holstein & Gubrium 2011).

### **3.4 Power issues and ethics measures**

This study subscribes to the *Good scientific practice and procedures for handling misconduct and fraud in science* guidelines issued by the National Advisory Board on Research Ethics (2002) in Finland, as the general ethics framework, because its academic context was a Finnish university. Since institutional ethnography does not study people as such, but rather focuses on activities and how they are organized, “the abstract subject of ethical concern to the reviewer (of an ethics committee) is not the subject of an institutional ethnography” (Campbell & Gregor 2004, 57). For this reason, in institutional ethnography there is not an interview guide from the outset, with questions, which one can submit for review, because questions emerge as the inquiry progresses. In fact, the inquiry processes is configured according to the shape of the problematic in the everyday that the researcher explicates, and not the shape of a pre-conceived plan (Campbell & Gregor 2004)<sup>24</sup>.

Ethnography as a method has been oppressive historically to informants and their communities (see Said 1979; Wolf 1992). Ethnographic immersion, participation, and observation have often produced enduring theories of coercive and hegemonic control for understanding social organization in ethnographies about what people do

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<sup>24</sup> Institutional ethnography poses challenges to conventional review guidelines by ethics committees. First, like Campbell & Gregor (2004) point, if ethics committees themselves are viewed as “text-based, activating certain protections within certain ruling relations,” they do not necessarily protect subjects; they protect organizations from situations like litigation (57). For instance, in their institutional ethnography research on research ethics, Fox, Artemeva, Darville & Woods (2006) determined how the standardizing discourse in the guiding principles of a Canadian review ethics board may fail to address pedagogical, methodological and epistemological concerns of a locally-positioned discipline.

when they work<sup>25</sup>. This speaks not only of ethnography in general, but of the ruling relations of research that we need to acknowledge in institutional ethnography (see Walby 2007). Even though ethnography involves a mutual exchange of information, benefits, advantages, and privilege, how power and vulnerability are constituted depend on contexts and are thus historically relative (Kirby, Greaves & Reid 2006; Kvale & Brinkmann 2009). For this reason, I tried to be aware of how the context of data gathering and the nature of interactions between my participants and I were vulnerable in terms of power differential. My participants and I had been in teacher-student relationships in the past. I kept in mind how my own experiences may approximate and differ from my participants (Prus 1996). These former students kept the same respect for their teacher/advisor throughout the ethnography, as they did in the past. However, I did not want them to think of their role as deliverers of accounts in a submissive manner, or to feel uncomfortable by talking about very personal experiences.

The above realization challenged me to avoid the establishment of asymmetrical relationships or maintain hierarchies of power, such as interviewing or observing down during interviews, participant observation, and artifact analysis. To this aim, I encouraged that we see each other as a reciprocally respectful co-constructor of knowledge. I did so by letting my interviewee complete his/her account without unnecessary interruption. I asked respectful questions to clarify or expand particular experiences until they told me I had grasped their experience according to their bodily, interactional standpoint. I also engaged in ethnographic attentiveness to emotional themes that the interviewee may be experiencing or expressing, and maintained composure and a discrete, non-threatening enthusiasm during the interactions (Crick 1992; Prus 1996).

In general, each participant was considered an autonomous human being who owns thoughts, feelings, and experiences (Kirby, Greaves & Reid 2006), who expands our “knowledge of the social, cultural and phenomenological world we inhabit, widen our horizons and vicariously take us along different paths in space

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<sup>25</sup> See examples and analysis by DeVault (2013).

and time” (Hordsal 2012, 75-76). However, in order to treat participants equally, they had to be treated differently, because all should have an equal opportunity to reach a successful, balanced, interview experience (Kirby, Greaves & Reid 2006). To this aim it was necessary that I conform to their pace and conditions, whether it was their speech pattern, thinking, scheduling, or corresponding, as long as these were not obtrusive to interaction and data gathering (Prus 1996).

In terms of ethical measures, each participant had the right to control information relating to them (Hammersley & Atkinson 1995). If they were stripped from the data they have furnished about themselves, they were robbed of their dignity (Lincoln & Guba 1989). In order to provide safe and supportive interactions towards reducing the risk of harming participants at data collection, I gave participants full freedom to decide on the following:

1. What to tell or not, in what order, and how, and to omit sensitive information they considered could yield to potential hazard to themselves, the ethnographer, or social actors in the account;
2. Whether they wanted me or an assistant to transcribe the interview;
3. To review the interview transcripts after all interviews were completed, and whenever necessary, before the data analysis was finished;
4. If something in the transcripts needed to be omitted or modified, including names and other landmarks that could identify themselves, other people, or institutions. This process is called *respondent validation*<sup>26</sup>, and
5. What pseudonym they would like for the music learning stories.

So I accepted the stance my participants took and respected their choices (Kirby, Greaves & Reid et al. 2006). If they should disagree with my analysis, I would engage in dialogue with them to check if the disagreement came out of inaccurate understanding or omission of data. Should that not be the case, I would explain them the steps and rationale behind the analysis to comply with my ethical responsibilities to them and the data.

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<sup>26</sup> This is also known as member check or informant feedback.

In addition, I committed to masking potentially revealing key traits of each participant and key actors to not affect their public reputation and material circumstances (Hammersley & Atkinson 1995), namely:

1. Gender;
2. City of origin or nationality, as not all participants had been born in Costa Rica;
3. Workplace;
4. Major instrument or performing media; and
5. Major artistic or pedagogical accomplishments.

Upon negotiation of the above issues, I presented my participants with an informed consent<sup>27</sup> in which they chose whether and how to participate in the study. Not only the above measures ensured protection of the participants' rights to privacy and anonymity, but also encouraged collaborative ethnographic work, as well as sharing responsibility over the data and validating the interview process.

### **3.5 Chapter summary**

In this chapter, I explained the ethnography data collection and analysis procedures. I began this chapter by describing three specific data collection procedures: (a) interviews, (b) participant observation, and (c) analysis of artifacts shared by the participants.

I also discussed how I recruited a specific pool of participants, negotiated the terms of participation with them, and specified my own role as researcher in the ethnographic interactions. I then explained the steps through which the data are recorded, transcribed, and reviewed. The analysis procedures begin with assembling a story of music learning for each participant, based on interview transcripts, and enriched with the other data collection procedures. The stories will be presented in the fourth chapter, and discussed thematically in the fifth chapter. Both procedures

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<sup>27</sup> Appendix B.

jointly address: *What is done in regard to music learning in everyday social interactions, according to the accounts of the study participants?*

Two steps comprise the second phase of analysis, a customized model for analysis, based on postcolonial theory and institutional ethnography: (a) Location of the standpoint and identification of the problematic in textual actualities; and (b) mapping the ruling relations. The analysis begins at the empirical location of participants and allows tracing macro-based relationships that organize music learning in their actualities, as mediated by micro texts. This analysis addresses the following research-related questions: *How do music learners develop perceptions about themselves, others, and music in their interactions in music learning?*, and *What relationships in music learning are affirmed, explored and celebrated between the local world of learners and the translocal structures of postcolonial Costa Rica?* In light of the postcolonial orientation of this study, validity, power issues, and ethical concerns in data collection and analysis were addressed at the end of the chapter. The second phase of analysis will be undertaken in 6 Postcolonial institutional ethnography, an analysis of music learning.



## 4 Music learning in the participants' micro webs of interaction

This chapter addresses the first research question: *What is done in regard to music learning in everyday social interactions, according to the accounts of the study participants?* It depicts a chronological, prose account of each participant's music learning in family, school, college, and workplace webs. Each account highlights what and how social actors think, feel, plan, and make choices around music learning—the kind of doings that institutional ethnography calls “work” (Campbell & Gregor 2004; Smith 2006), from the standpoint of the participants.

The participants are active and prominent subjects, as opposed to objects (see Smith 2005; Wolf 1992). There are direct quotations from the interviews. Descriptions are included within the accounts. I considered it necessary to add a few words in brackets into the English transcription, with the aim to convey more accurately to the reader the original meaning in the original Spanish language. In institutional ethnography practice, this kind of decision is called “editing”. It consists of “filling in what has been incompletely said,” drawing from the ethnographer's own experience” (DeVault 1999, 71), in order “to cast a talk into a form that is easier to read—and more compelling—than raw interview documents” (75). In this case, my experience was my knowledge of Costa Rican music education and institutions. As I continued editing, I attempted to keep the information clear without reducing or enhancing the complexity. As a writer, I strove for tolerance “for ambiguity, multiplicity, contradictions and instability” (Wolf 1992, 129). As a result, the accounts are unpredictable in length and take more orderly or whimsical shapes.

## 4.1 Accounts of participants' micro webs-based music learning

### 4.1.1 Cecilia

Cecilia, 29, is a part-time music teacher at a public elementary school, and teaches keyboard part-time at a government subsidized conservatory school. Cecilia was born in Guanacaste, the northern province of Costa Rica known as the crib of the so-called folk/national music of this country<sup>28</sup>. Her father had been Cecilia's and her younger brother's first music teacher. He taught them both how to play the guitar, mainly by imitation, before she had any music instruction in school. Cecilia's parents organized music in her childhood. This organization followed a family tradition: Cecilia's paternal family—mainly her father and his brothers—had their own tradition of making Guanacastan folk music, and popular musics. With the intention to perpetuate their legacy, they recorded several homemade tapes of their performances over the years. Cecilia cherishes this tradition and the music learning involved:

*In our spare time we used to play together, after my father's [teachings and] suggestions. One day he asked us, 'So, what are you going to do? Are you going to perform at places or not? Are you going to record the tape?' This was nice, because [recording] is a way to leave one's legacy, just like my uncles did, [something] very natural. So, that's how me and my brother recorded romantic songs<sup>29</sup>, or just some rhythms, or strumming. It is nice to remember my mother asking my other siblings to be quiet [while we were recording]. It was a very serious matter (P7, 1, 6).*

Every family member fulfilled a relevant role in carrying out this tradition. The mother contributed by making possible the silence and space that her music learners

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<sup>28</sup> Since the early 19th century, the traditional music of Guanacaste has been considered by the official cultural discourse as "the" national music. It is largely based on European and mostly Spanish dances that include "shoe-tapping and choreographic steps similar to those of the fandango, jota of Aragon, *paso doble*, polka, mazurka, minuet and waltz" (Cervantes Gamboa and Flores Zeller 2007). See 1.3.2 Cultural Europeanization of the imagined Costa Rican nation.

<sup>29</sup> Popular vocal music of romantic subject, written in Spanish, largely influenced by popular music from Spain.

needed to concentrate, to be able to perform in front of the tape recorder. She also operated the home recording equipment. Cecilia and her brother played what they were taught, listened to the recording, made corrections to the performance, and re-recorded. Their younger siblings observed quietly.

Cecilia, today a professional performer and educator, acknowledges technical or harmonic mistakes as natural aspects of the process of carrying that legacy through music.

*[What mattered] was to undergo that experience, and be able to laugh at how good or bad we played ... Today, when I listen to the recording, I feel a bit embarrassed, and I laugh at the notes out of tune, my childish voice singing a romantic song, or my mistakes. But I am grateful I have recordings of different stages of my life (P7, 2, 6).*

At some point, their father directed Cecilia and her brother to an acknowledged, private teacher in town, because he believed they were ready for more complex, formal teaching than he could provide. This teacher was very strict:

*He trained us to figure out [popular and folk] songs with the I-IV and V progressions ... he'd make tapes so that we could listen and figure out ourselves (P7, 1, 5).*

On more than one occasion, this teacher would also play on the recording along with Cecilia and her brother. They got quite a lot of instruction just by imitation and by ear, before the teacher would hand them an old conservatory guitar method<sup>30</sup>, heavily focused on chromatic and diatonic scales, arpeggios, and fingered exercises. As they made progress, this teacher gradually began to treat them like colleagues, and decided to take them to perform in towns in the province of Guanacaste. Their webs of music began to expand:

*We learned to see music as something [that allowed us] to meet people and towns, go out for a ride, and as a way to get [our] first money [compensation], whether in cash or meals (P7, 1, 6).*

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<sup>30</sup>*Las primeras lecciones de guitarra* [The first guitar lessons], by Sagreras (1992).

Cecilia and her brother were able to travel to new social sites under the mentoring of this teacher. They became acquainted with older musicians from Guanacaste, and began interacting with other bearers of Guanacastan traditions.

Cecilia's first big disappointment concerning music learning took place when she entered the web of school music, specifically in her first experience of music assessment:

*My first written exam [at school] was frustrating, because I couldn't write the C major scale [on paper] or couldn't [tell the difference] between an eighth note and an eighth-note rest (P7, 1, 8).*

Nevertheless, Cecilia managed to learn notation in school and pass the notation exams, because a classmate who had the knowledge decided to help her. Cecilia resorted to peer-support to compensate for what the school system did not provide. The system made "a problem" (not being able to answer what was asked) visible through assessment, but did not implement actions to expand or reinforce the learning to be measured through assessment.

Upon entering secondary school, Cecilia wished to be part of the elementary school guitar ensemble, which students joined by audition. At that time, only boys made up the ensemble. This is what happened when she joined the ensemble:

*The boys sort of made mock of me, or believed that only they could play well. They didn't have faith in me, and thought I would not succeed in the ensemble. My teacher did not allow those words to get on me. He asserted, 'Cecilia is going to be among the first guitar section at the graduation ceremony, at the end of the year'. That was motivating enough, and I said to myself, 'I am going to play better than them, and that's final (P6, 1, 13).*

Cecilia acknowledged that such interactions just happened in school, and relied a lot on her guitar teacher's support.

In one year, Cecilia accessed upward mobility: From being in the lowest guitar section, she moved to the intermediate, and finally was able to join the main voice section. She performed in this status at the school graduation ceremony that year. Some of her ensemble partners did not seem very happy about this. No wonder why: her music teacher taught her to conduct the ensemble and allowed her to do it at the ceremony.

*I enjoyed the fact that everyone had to pay attention to me. The boys had to swallow their words ... 'girls are not able to play plucked guitar parts' (P7, 2, 5).*

A few years later, she joined an experimental music ensemble<sup>31</sup> in secondary school. Many teachers in the school community considered being a member of this ensemble an activity for lazy or uncaring students. Cecilia did not allow herself to have low grades, especially in Math and Science. She did not want to be considered a *vagabond*<sup>32</sup> In addition, she enjoyed it when her teacher asked her to assist him when many former members graduated from school and quit the ensemble. The teacher needed her help to teach new members who came from lower grades. This was her first experience doing peer teaching, and her first teaching experience ever.

Male ensemble peers would confine Cecilia to a specific role according to their own biased perception of girls. The boys would carry and assemble all the equipment and media before performances, and would leave the microphone and speaker-testing to Cecilia. She then asked an ensemble partner for assistance and he taught her everything related to handling and repairing equipment. Cecilia considers that such knowledge has been useful in her teaching duties to this day, because university studies did not involve learning to operate sound electronic media. However, Cecilia's teacher gave her freedom to explore playing electric bass and brass instruments in the ensemble. This was her first contact with local, Guanacastan traditional music for dance. The group used to go out in Guanacastan communities to play and interact with bands and musicians that were more experienced. In addition, this ensemble provided her with her first experience in a recording studio. However, the group was unable to get enough funding and sponsors to make their first CD recording a reality.

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<sup>31</sup> This expression refers to a mixed ensemble of heterogeneous make-up, comprising both acoustic and non-acoustic instruments, and voices, to play original music and arrangements of popular music.

<sup>32</sup> Translation for the Spanish *vagabunda*, which means a vagrant, or a person who does nothing.

*The idea was that [experimental group's name] was the first popular music school ensemble to [later] launch one as musician in "serious" bands [to play] merengue, cumbia, socca, bachata, and pasodoble<sup>33</sup> (P7, 2, 6).*

Cecilia was aware that ensemble music making would give her more freedom to come and go, even though she was a girl raised in a conservative, Guanacastan family.

Cecilia's formal music learning expanded to individual guitar instruction in a conservatory, while still a teenager. Cecilia recalls how bodily tensions marked her first public exam in this setting:

*[When I was] in secondary school senior year I had my first public classical guitar exam [recital]. I was very scared, like I'd never been before, because there was a big audience, and for the first time I was exposed, all by myself, in front of many musicians. [Name of the school guitar ensemble teacher omitted] was there. I played two songs. [He] made some observations about what he liked and didn't like. I recall in general having done well. But my muscles were shaking and I got stiff ... I felt I hadn't played well nor enjoyed. Never before had I experienced an awkward sensation in public. [Teacher's name] calmed me down, and said it was natural, because of the music's stiffness (P7, 2, 11).*

Cecilia's hard work caught the attention of several music teachers while she was in the school system. She seemed to never lack instruction in several instruments, and even had the chance to be part of an experimental music ensemble in high school. Exposure through this group allowed her more contacts with the broader community of her birthplace, Guanacaste. She was discouraged at first by her relatives and high school teachers to apply for admission to college as music major, mainly because she had four younger siblings and her widow mother was the only breadwinner (her father passed away when Cecilia was 12). As well, her secondary school teachers considered music to be not more than a hobby.

Cecilia was expected to enter Mathematics, Biology, or any other scientific university program. She knew she was good at Math and had affinity for sciences.

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<sup>33</sup> Merengue, cumbia, socca, and bachata are Caribbean-based genres, while pasodoble is originally from Spain.

She was also aware that the prospect of relocating to the capital city of Costa Rica for college studies—far from home—would mean a lot of effort. Cecilia felt a lot of pressure from both school and family. While her senior year non-Music teachers constantly insisted that keeping a high GPA would easily get her into a college science program, she deliberately dropped her grades. Cecilia was accepted into music education at a university in the capital city, but throughout her college years, Cecilia remained hesitant about carrying on. Many times, she considered dropping music education and starting studies in a more profitable program.

Cecilia decided to enter visual arts studies at the college level, in her fourth music education year, and do both programs simultaneously. This was mainly the result of having taken an arts workshop to continue with some art learning she once had in school, which she interrupted in order to be able to involve fully in school music ensembles. At the time of the research, she was taking the last courses of the Bachelor of visual arts. Cecilia acknowledges that at that moment her immersion in arts gave her

*... the same sensation [she] had when [she] started studying guitar [in the school guitar ensemble]. Then I enjoyed a lot re-connecting with that sensation ... I need to re-encounter with the instrument ... for my own sake, not for anybody else, not for demonstrating to anyone that I knew a lot of things (P7, 3, 13-14).*

Cecilia's college music education program focused on secondary school music. Before graduating, she joined a Costa Rican folk and traditional music ensemble playing different instruments, especially the Guanacastan marimba. This experience allowed her to travel on tour to Europe. A lot of the music they played was Guanacastan, but many non-Guanacastan and classically trained ensemble partners were not familiar with the rhythmic subtleties and style of such music. They just played the notes written on the score without the proper accentuation or phrasing that she knew well. They were also unfamiliar with natural stops after certain phrases. Cecilia demonstrated interpretation of Guanacastan music to musicians who often value music skills only on the grounds of proficiency in art music and ability to read notated music.

Around this time, she also began to acquire knowledge that college education was not prepared to instill, and experiences it did not encourage. She began to learn

constantly on three unrelated teaching jobs that she got in the capital city, as an advanced student. Her first temporary job was a private, elementary school. She chose to use her students' musical preferences as material for music class, namely songs from videos they would watch at home on Nickelodeon Junior channel<sup>34</sup>, for example, the Jonas Brothers. It was her idea—not the institution's—to teach like that. The school decided to stop offering music for administrative reasons and terminated Cecilia's appointment.

Later on, a private, denominational music academy hired Cecilia. The employer first assessed her for her religious beliefs:

*The first thing they asked me was if I was Christian/Catholic, Christian/Evangelical, or if I believed in God (P7, 4b, 1).*

Cecilia, born in the Catholic religion, was not at all familiar with the largely Protestant repertoire taught at this school. The first thing she learned was that the repertoire was quite specialized. The major categories were Praise and Worship. Subcategories were subject to the denomination or church the music student came from. Often the students would bring a CD with the music they wanted to learn. Cecilia and her student would listen together. Cecilia also became acquainted with different kinds of guitars and keyboards used in the liturgy to instill certain music moods, or produce specific sound effects. Cecilia developed her own strategies to be better prepared to undertake her job. It was necessary to do a lot of online searching to be able to understand unfamiliar genres or styles. She also interacted with teachers from other Christian music schools. Cecilia asked former college music education peers from different denominations, about styles and interpretation of that music. She even attended services at a couple churches to listen and watch how people sang, moved, and played. Cecilia understood the nature of the repertoire and music practices that her students were immersed in:

*Music is used for about an hour ... music is ... enjoyment, but also a process to lead them to a state... of euphoria, or proximity [to God] or intimacy, or a*

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<sup>34</sup> A children TV station broadcast on cable television. This service is not affordable to every household in Costa Rica.

*personal encounter with their faith ... [Learning should lead the student] in the direction of becoming an apostle or intercessor (P7, 4b, 3).*

Cecilia was dealing with students who encompassed a wide age range: from seven year-olds to adults. These students saw themselves as worshippers, and were aware that someday they would become leaders in their church:

*They have to become ... Levites ... [who are supposed to] lead an entire congregation (P7, 4b, 3).*

They would always request that anything they were taught was part of an actual song, or just practical stuff.

At the time the interviews were held, Cecilia had finished her appointment at this Christian music school. Now as a music education graduate, she has been teaching at a new place, a state-funded elementary school for mentally disabled children. She did not have the background, preparation, or experience to cater to this population. Cecilia, again, went to other colleagues in the field, and work partners, and allowed herself to be oriented as to how to fulfill her work. When the group interview took place at the end of the study, Cecilia mentioned that due to administrative measures, the position was shut down, and she had to look for another job. This time, it was another elementary school. Cecilia keeps interacting with colleagues who have experience in this job, and searching for helpful teaching materials, to improve her teaching.

#### **4.1.2 Silvia**

Silvia, 26, is an elementary music teacher with partial appointments at several public and private schools. When Silvia was three years old, she and her parents moved from her native Latin American country<sup>35</sup> to Costa Rica, where they lived with her great-aunt for a number of years. Her great-aunt considerably influenced her. This person had classical music training and orchestra experience in her youth, and had

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<sup>35</sup> I keep non-Costa Rican national statuses confidential in these accounts because it is easy to track the identify of the participants if this information is included along with age, gender, and work experience.

worked as a preschool teacher. She played several instruments: piano, accordion, violin, and mandolin. Silvia learned from her great-aunt how to whistle, and how to read notated music, before she knew how to read the alphabet. She also taught Silvia how to figure out by ear and accompany tunes she listened to in both church and kindergarten. Silvia also enjoyed looking at her great-aunt's children books on classical composers' biographies.

*It was like, 'Oh, well, you learned that song? Ok, you can play it this way or that way'... Nothing very formal or structured. So every time I got something in mind I'd run and show her (P8, 1a, 1).*

Soon Silvia got an electric organ as a present from her father. After her parents' encouragement, she played in front of the family on several occasions, and later in preschool, during music class.

*I later got a keyboard ... My father was very proud ... they made me take the keyboard to kindergarten and so while our music teacher played the guitar, I played, and my classmates sang along [to the children's school songs] (P8, 1a, 1).*

Silvia considers that the time spent with her great-aunt provided her with much care and fun. This went on until Silvia was 11. Silvia's music engagements were not so much fun when she entered the private school system. Silvia's immersion into written notation assessment in elementary school music was not as pleasant as were her years of playful and joyful music learning with her great-aunt.

*I got a zero on my first [written] music exam [at school]. It was about distinguishing between high and low pitches, and you had to write an arrow pointing up or down. For some reason I thought the arrows the opposite way (P8, 1b, 2).*

There is a school administrative practice that Silvia recalls having an impact on her music learning. Several music teachers were hired and dismissed successively during those years. Most teachers seemed to focus on singing songs to the children. The choice of songs had to do with the teacher's age, religious affiliation, and overall music preferences. In other instances, they would dictate texts incessantly, often as punishment for what they called group misconduct. One particular teacher,

who was put in charge of the school rhythmic band<sup>36</sup> where Silvia was briefly a member, would resort to sending sections of the band off to rehearse on their own, in the school yard, and then yelled at students constantly when overcome by impatience, when the entire ensemble was practicing together. When Silvia turned 11, she entered a prestigious, state-funded conservatory program. In the first year, every student had to take group recorder classes, before being assigned a major orchestral instrument for individual study. She found it very difficult to be socialized into a regular basis practice, and a lesson schedule:

*I just didn't feel like practicing recorder ... I went to class every Tuesday, and then it was Tuesday again, and I realized I hadn't practiced at all, and then [the teacher] sent a letter [home]... saying that I'd better catch up because my performance was not satisfactory ... I began to make an effort and [follow] a schedule and realized that it was OK to have good ear, but also that discipline was a very important aspect (P8, 1b, 5).*

Once Silvia completed recorder instruction, she was accepted in double bass class. She always wanted to study cello because she was attracted to this instrument, but according to the school's regulations, she exceeded the age limit to be accepted. Therefore, double bass was her choice. Silvia experienced new challenges, this time associated with the physical demands of instrumental instruction. Silvia recalls how trying to breathe in phrasing would be almost impossible, because she had to stand still not to fall off:

*The first year [in double bass] was tragic, because I was like 1.5 meters tall, and at that time the [name of music school omitted] only had 4/4 size double basses. So I wore huge heels and had to stand on a brick and a phone book, otherwise I wouldn't be able to reach [the instrument] (P8, 1b, 6).*

Silvia is aware that before entering this program she had no clue about the size of a double bass. Nevertheless, she cannot understand why she was taken as a student

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<sup>36</sup> Rhythmic bands are usually made of metal carillons and a heavy percussion section. Such ensembles have been popular in Costa Rica and their function is to actually march in street parades in civic festivities, especially the Independence Day, on September 15. The band members wear costumes that remind of the extinguished tradition of old military bands. By their purpose and instrumental make up, they hold some resemblance with the marching band.

when she was not yet physically able to reach the instrument. Apparently, that year double bass enrollment was in low demand at the school, so anyone interested could make it to the admission.

Double bass instruction remained challenging over the years, for other reasons. The teacher did not seem to be pleased with Silvia. In addition, he often failed to show up to class. Therefore, beginning students like Silvia were assigned lessons with several student assistants. According to Silvia, these were younger musicians who would not be punctual because they had other jobs on the side. In addition, they would not necessarily commit to cater to the beginner students' needs. In addition, the conservatory somehow failed to provide a suitable instrument for Silvia:

*I was the youngest in the class. I was 12. I had a teacher who was used to teach only big boys. So he didn't know how to deal with a girl ... He yelled [at me] and I cried, and I told my dad. My dad came and talked to him, and there was an uproar, because he [the teacher] said I was spoiled and that I needed to learn how to defend by myself. [Then] it happened that all my classmates who entered the program with me were provided with a double bass to study at home, and I, for just one time that my dad came to talk [with the teacher], was penalized, and six months passed before they loaned me an instrument (P8, 1b, 6).*

However, Silvia managed to stay nine years in this program. She also won the audition for first double bass in one of the conservatory orchestras. She enjoyed ensemble playing more than solo, but did not like the spirit of competition among her peers.

Silvia later tried out studying double bass at the university where she was accepted as a music education major, and then quit the conservatory. There was a teacher trained in a performing tradition different from the one familiar to Silvia. She had to learn how to hold the bow according to this tradition. This meant that she had to learn everything all over again. Silvia wished her teacher would be around longer and more often, to help her through this change of habits. She was left on her own to work closely on reversing previous learning. The teacher would show up just to check that she was doing well. Silvia lost her motivation and quit double bass lessons. She decided, instead, to focus exclusively on getting her music education degree.

Silvia wanted to get married, and have a family, and needed a full-time job. She took several, simultaneous teaching appointments in private and public elementary and secondary schools by the hour, to round up a salary. This meant driving or taking buses to different locations near or far from her home, as well as fatigue. Nevertheless, she decided to undertake the challenge. She noticed that it was easier for education administrators to be appointed full-time in public education, in contrast with music teachers. Therefore, she decided to enter a Licentiate program in education administration at her former university. By the time of this study, she was finishing her licentiate thesis and looking forward to a more stable job situation.

### 4.1.3 Sergio

Sergio, 31, is a freelance arts producer, songwriter, a versatile pop band member (guitarist, drummer, lead vocalist), and a secondary music schoolteacher. He was born in another Latin American country. Before migrating to Costa Rica, he encountered a stimulating environment in the social gatherings organized at home by his parents, which made him feel he was “*a magical child*”. His father was an author/philosopher, and his mother, a psychologist. This child made up his own stories and played out fantastic adventures with his only sister. For instance, they would play to record commercial ads and news shows of their own invention on cassette tapes. They structured them like real TV shows, featuring narration, music, songs, and sound effects.

“The magical child” had a musical dream at the age of seven, that to date stands as a landmark in the making of his self-image:

*There was darkness all around ... it sounded like people [like a clamor], and we were pushed through a hallway, like the backstage of a big concert ... I got on stage and it turned out I was playing with a band, I was singing ... there were many people. It was a very interesting sensation, because I felt very confident, like I knew the band members for a long time, but didn't recognize their faces (P4, 1, 1).*

Sergio drew a picture of this dream the next day, and his father still keeps the picture. Sergio considers that this dream reaffirmed his unique relationship with music: “*I always knew!*” (P4, 1, 1).

Sergio acknowledges today that he saw in music

*an instrument or tool to make magic ... a way to reach that magical realm of the things I could accomplish ... My fantastic reality yielded memories or paths that guided me* (P4, 1, 15).

Sergio had migrated with his family to Costa Rica by the time he was in fifth grade. He began attending public school in his new home country, and encountered some discrimination in peer relationships in regard to his dark skin color and non-Costa Rican Spanish accent<sup>37</sup>:

*I had never been mistreated by anybody before, not even in [name of his native country omitted]. I used to have very good friends and was very happy. This contrasted a lot with ... school [fifth grade]... and it was very hard, because kids can be very cruel ... exclusionary ... they always emphasized that I was an Indio<sup>38</sup> ... or that I was [racist nickname related to a specific Latin American country, omitted]* (P4, 1, 6).

Sergio tried to face this situation by playing the guitar, and writing his own songs. As Sergio entered grade 7, he began to compose his own songs, dreaming about being happy, about love, and being close to a special person, a girlfriend. The figure of a girlfriend was very important at that age. Sergio reflects that:

*A romantic ideal ... was what made me start to make music, or wanting to find in music that sensation that would help me feel like that ... an inspiring sensation ... like a void in the chest* (P4, 1, 9).

Between ages 14 and 17, Sergio studied in a state-funded conservatory school, associated with a public university. He majored in guitar. He recalls how stressful it was for him to not be able to realize a melodic dictation on paper. He had to take the same sight-singing course several times until he was able to pass it. This experience

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<sup>37</sup> I do not identify Sergio’s accent to avoid revealing his nationality, which could then reveal his identity.

<sup>38</sup> English for “Indian”, meaning *Indigenous* in a pejorative way.

made him wonder if he was *good* for music. His parents insisted that he practice on a regular basis, and work hard.

Sergio's classical guitar teacher over several years apparently interpreted Sergio's mistakes and apparent inability to please his demands, as laziness and lack of care. There were moments when Sergio would not respond or play the way he was supposed to, and the teacher resorted to physical and psychological punishment:

*I would set the fingering on the guitar and he would slap my hand and yell at me, 'No!' I was (about) 14, and little by little, I began feeling at war with the guitar. Disappointment was mutual. [One day the teacher came up to me and said], 'Look, when I wake up on Thursday, I feel uneasy because I have to teach Sergio.' Some other time he said, 'You better choose something else. Music is not your strength ... I don't see you having a commitment to music' (P4, 1, 17-18).*

Sergio quit guitar and the conservatory altogether.

Sergio went back to playing the guitar outside of the conservatory setting. He had a pal in secondary school in grade nine, with whom he would explore, improvise, and make songs. Sergio then went on an exchange to a school in the northern United States, the following year. He had a very good time and everyone seemed to be interested in his playing and his songs. The music teacher at that school quickly invited him to join the school jazz band. They even recorded a few of Sergio's songs, but in particular, a song about a North American girl he fell in love with, during the exchange.

Sergio initiated relationships with young musicians, who for several years made music together, upon his return to Costa Rica. On the year before this study, they recorded their own album as a pop-rock band. Sergio's songs featured on the album, and he was the producer. To this day, Sergio acknowledges that songwriting is the perfect way to express what he feels.

#### 4.1.4 Daniela

Daniela, 26, today a free-lance vocalist, voice, and elementary music teacher, recalls her first musical memory: her mother provided a setting and resources to sooth pain in specific circumstances in her preschool age. This took place shortly before she and part of her family migrated to Costa Rica, fleeing from an armed conflict in a Central American country. They established residency in an urban, working class neighborhood:

*They took me to the dentist and had my first baby teeth removed ... [because my] baby teeth would never drop by themselves. I remained toothless for long periods, because they had to remove them with enough anticipation, so the new teeth could grow in the correct direction. This was not pleasant at all: getting the anesthesia shot, the [tooth] extraction [after] moving the piece a lot ... and I remained quite hurt afterwards. On that day I would skip school. My mother would put me in bed, feed me with some Gerber<sup>39</sup> [because I was unable to bite], and played for me a tape that my [name of relative] had sent me from Costa Rica. It was very comforting to know that after the visit to the dentist, I would lie down, eat my Gerber, and listen to Cri Cri's music<sup>40</sup> and my [relative's kinship] and wife singing (P6, 1, 1).*

Daniela acknowledges that her first conventional music learning was discriminating that Cri Cri's music had prominent and tuneful parts for an instrument called violin. Her musical learning would continue in self-directed, lonely, musical games that meant fun and comfort for Daniela.

*I grew up with that tape ... played it and played it many times ... I used it in my playtime once I learned how to operate the tape recorder. I had to play by myself because I had no siblings or cousins my age, so I used to play that I was the orchestra conductor who conducted the violins [in Cri Cri's songs]. [My game]*

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<sup>39</sup> A popular United States-based brand of baby food sold in jars, made of fruits, vegetables, and meat.

<sup>40</sup> "Cri Cri" was the artistic name of Mexican composer and singer Francisco Gabilondo Soler (1907-1990), a name that came from Soler's character "Cri Cri, The Singing Cricket". Soler devoted his work to children's songs that became very popular in Latin America, especially through radio, television, and recordings. His work and legacy can be followed on the official website: <http://www.cricri.com.mx/>

*was about playing [music] and listening carefully, and feeling good about it ... I contemplated music stuff with certain ... dunno, magic? certain joy (P6, 1, 1).*

Upon migrating to Costa Rica, when she was 8 years old, an older brother, who had to migrate to another country instead of Costa Rica, gave her a gift doll. The doll contained a small disc player on the back. That is how she learned the song *Tengo una muñeca* (“I’ve got a doll”)<sup>41</sup>. She was able to share the song in public when she sang it before everyone present at a children’s birthday party. The party entertainers set up games and challenges for the kids. Daniela acknowledges that this was very important to her because she felt she was good at something that nobody else was. When asked, ‘Who would like to sing a song?’ as a competition, nobody ran to the front, but Daniela. It was her first singing competition and she won her first prize ever.

Daniela’s relative and sister-in-law, who sent her the tape she listened to after the dentist, and sang on the tape, played the guitar and sang in the church choir in the neighborhood where Daniela’s family settled in Costa Rica. They took her once to listen and watch. Later, she began to attend by herself, going to more than one Mass service during the weekend, just to watch the main guitarist in the choir ensemble play.

Since her father had brought his guitar with him, Daniela wanted to learn to play it. The guitar was too big for her.

*Since my arms could not reach, he said that we’d better sing. He composed a carol in which we alternated parts, and then we sang together in two voices ... There were some problems because ... I was a girl and had the high range ... and was supposed to sing a third above him ... He constantly yelled that I should not sing his melody, that I had to focus ... [Later], he said that I should not use all those embellishments in singing (P6, 1, 4-5). [His way was like]: ‘Watch and do’ ... ‘It’s not like that’ (P6, 1, 7) ... ‘Be aware that I will not teach you that [pejorative expression] rock and I don’t know what else’ (P6, 1, 8).*

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<sup>41</sup> Very popular children’s song from Spain, which was incorporated into traditional children’s repertoire in Latin American in the first half of the 20th century.

They agreed that he would play, and they would sing together. He once composed a Christmas carol that they practiced and sang at a Christmas festival in the neighborhood church. She recalls how awesome it felt to hear her voice through the speakers, filling the building. Later, her father bought a very old and still big guitar, which she used to learn how to play. She watched her father's left hand placing the chords. Daniela tried whatever her father wanted to teach—usually the songs of his preference—, and to be obedient and strong. Her older brothers had tried that years earlier, and warned her that her father was impatient, critical, and severe: *'He's going to get mad at you and you'll learn nothing'* (P6, 1, 7).

After persevering in her learning, Daniela's father finally gave her his blessing as a guitar learner, but not without challenging her first to accompany him singing a *ranchera* and a *bolero* in the key of A major. From her parallel learning by watching the guitarist in Mass, she knew she at least would need to use also the E major and D major chords. She pulled off the challenge. She was only 9 years old:

*It was like my graduation day ... I had sought his recognition so much ... and I realized that I was able to accompany someone* (P6, 1, 7).

Daniela was finally able to join the choir for young people in the neighborhood church when she was 12. She played the guitar precisely with the girl she used to watch. Much of the liturgical and religious repertoire that she learned then became part of what she sings today at Masses, weddings, and other religious events, because Daniela now is a free-lance singer. At some point in elementary school, Daniela was able to join her elementary school rhythmic band, and was assigned a wooden bass drum: *"Being in the rhythmic band was like moving up one level"* (P6, 1, 6).

At the time they gave her a brand new, good looking metal drum, she became the leading bass drummer. Simultaneously, the band members were required to purchase their own drumsticks and their own uniform for an important, forthcoming parade performance. Since her family could not afford the uniform, Daniela had to tell her teacher she had to quit, but felt embarrassed about the reason for her quitting. Thus, she omitted it and decided not to explain further. This teacher constantly used to burst into rage—like Silvia's rhythmic band conductor—, and apparently showed up

to music class drunk very often<sup>42</sup>. The teacher yelled at her. Upon learning the real circumstances of this incident, Daniela's classroom teacher proposed organizing a raffle to raise money, but Daniela felt it would be humiliating, because everyone would know the family's financial limitations. This made Daniela experience differentiation over her family financial situation.

Daniela is the only daughter in her family, and the youngest child of four. Being an immigrant, she had no female relatives in her new country, other than her mother.

*I was the only female, after three older brothers ... It was a very masculine environment. Since I was the only girl, I was overprotected, but I wanted freedom, some space, but did not have it ... Had I embraced myself overtly as female in the context of my home could have been my death ... Had I adopted an attitude of weakness, of being in need to be rescued, or in need of protection, my parents could have used [as an excuse] to protect me even more ... So when I had my first menstruation ... I tried not to share it with anybody, even my mother (P6, 1, 15).*

Daniela acknowledges that her Latin American country's culture around family bonds and social roles of family members is very conservative, especially when it comes to the roles of females. For instance, especially the older male family members overprotected her throughout her childhood. She managed to come and go as she pleased when entering her teenage years, only by becoming a member of the neighborhood church choir that rehearsed regularly, and sang during the services.

Engaging in music ensembles gradually became Daniela's machete<sup>43</sup>—to use her own words—, or her “war weapon”:

*I wanted freedom ... To be in ensembles, choirs, and having to attend a performance, was for me a way to get away from home, whether they gave me permission or not ... I tried to be indispensable so I had to go. This also demanded that I did things well, to gain my place within the ensembles. This was a way to say: 'I can decide where to go' (P6, 1, 15).*

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<sup>42</sup> Many school music teachers in Costa Rica in the early 20th century, before music and music education were offered in universities, used to be military band musicians who, not surprisingly, had to resort to several jobs to make a living because of their lousy pay. Part of dealing with that challenge is likely to have been alcoholism.

<sup>43</sup> In the popular Costa Rican imaginary, this metaphor refers to the main tool of rural farmers to make their living.

Making music was a way to demonstrate that she was strong and able to stand by herself, and make her own choices Daniela was an unusual character in her neighborhood and school because she was always carrying a guitar on her shoulder. She was also a little solitary in school. She had her own, private retreat during school recess, listening to her Walkman with her headphones on. In her house, it was difficult to have exclusive access to the television and radio and, therefore, to recorded music. The Walkman gave her independence to listen to the music she liked. It was forbidden to listen to Walkman in school, so this was one of many things she did during high school to channel her rebelliousness.

Then one of Daniela's high school teachers offered to teach her music during her recess time. She was also able to join the experimental music group at school. Since school subjects did not interest her much, attending group practice allowed Daniela to skip these classes. But when she learned at the school vocational orientation office about the possibility of studying music education in university, she understood she would have no choice but to get good grades if she wanted to make it to the university admission: *'I had a reason to pass baccalaureate and leave school once and for all'* (P6, 1, 11).

Since Daniela finally got outstanding grades in her senior year, and did very well on the university entrance examination, her teachers expected her to apply to a financially rewarding program in university. A teacher once expressed that it would be a waste if she studied music. Her family was not more encouraging. Her father opposed most severely to her decision to study music education in college, *'Who told you that you are good at music? I thought you were going to study law, philosophy, or anthropology!'* (P6, 1, 12).

Daniela was aware that perhaps the fact that her father's brother in the family's native country—a non-formally educated musician who used to be an alcoholic—weighed considerably in her father's negative opinion. Her father was perhaps assuming a career in music *'included drugs, nightlife, working out of the house'* (P6, 1, 13). Unlike her uncle, Daniela wanted to get a formal education. However, it seemed hopeless to try to convince her father, because he was already very pessimistic about both music and university study. Daniela recalls that her older brothers had the same obstacle when they wanted to enter college. She knew from

that moment on, she would not be getting any financial assistance from her father for college studies.

This would not be the first time Daniela's father censored her for her relationship with music. When she finally entered university as a music education major, Daniela wanted to study a "serious" musical instrument on the side. Since the time she listened to Cri Cri during her therapeutic moments after the dentist when she was in kindergarten, Daniela had fallen in love with the violin. She managed to get violin lessons at a government subsidized, municipal music school. The school had hired a cellist to teach violin. She tutored herself and came to show the teacher what she did. No progress was possible. This was very frustrating. On top of that, practicing at home was almost impossible because it was not appreciated, another reason why Daniela tried not to spend much at time at home. *'It sounds so ugly. Are you really learning something?'* her father once said, angrily (P6, 2, 6).

When Daniela enrolled in group instruction in sight singing and music theory courses with instrumental and vocal music majors at the university, she started feeling inferior because she was not a performance major. Even though she had some awareness that as a singer *she* was the musical instrument, she could not help but aspire to play on a serious media in college. Nevertheless, there was a huge obstacle for her and many other people who entered college studies in music, after graduating from secondary school. The school of music stipulates age limits for beginning instrumental instruction. The only instruments that could be learned by teenagers or young adults were double bass and brass. Then, she heard of an opportunity that could work for her:

*I think it was a thirst for competitiveness and success ... due to ... the university criteria ... [and] discourse embraced by the [Music] School ... you are not a musician unless you play an instrument ... and have a degree [in performance]. There was an opening in [woodwind instrument name] ... [I began studying it] and I loved it (P6, 2, 7).*

Notation reading was another prized skill in Daniela's new learning environment. Daniela acknowledges a good side of it:

*When I entered college I didn't know how to read notated music. I was used to making a lot of music without knowing how one quarter of it was called. It was a*

*good thing, because I already had something to associate new knowledge with. If they talked to me about a (harmonic) progression, I had already done it, and I knew how it would sound (P6, 2, 3).*

There was a downside to it:

*[Even though] I liked that kind of discovery, at the same time, it made me feel very disadvantaged in relation to other classmates. Not having this knowledge at hand ... not being able to quickly get the formula to a diatonic scale, or knowing all the key signatures, or being able to read certain rhythmic figures ... It was a big headache, because I felt too old [to be up] for that. I was 18 years old. So I would come home after class ... I had a teacher who had just come back [to Costa Rica] from studies in [name of European country], and they put him in charge of sight singing [courses]. He was very strict and cruel, and, well, I felt quite bad because the teacher was very demanding, and he took pity of people who had fewer difficulties than me. And that annoyed me ... Then I would come home and I cried, and told my mom, 'I feel I'm so old for this. I've found that other people already have enough knowledge that I don't' (P6, 2, 3).*

Daniela relates this to her family financial situation, and how her family organized her music learning:

*So I began to regret my past, 'See? This is what happens when one doesn't study music [early enough], and since you never wanted to pay [for] me classes and I couldn't afford it'. This was my blurb [to my mother] every Tuesday and Thursday at 6 pm (P6, 2, 3). I met people who had very different socioeconomic conditions. And I said, 'I think that this career is for people with more [financial] possibilities than me, people who own super beautiful houses, who have a keyboard at home, who were paid [private] lessons, who attended the conservatory since they were little'. I couldn't have all that, even as much as I wanted (P6, 2, 3).*

Daniela studied as hard as she could, in order to catch up with her classmates. All this happened in her first year of university. A music education peer knew about her background, and invited her to audition for a university traditional and folk ensemble, open to any student by audition. She auditioned and was accepted. This ensemble was very important because her knowledge was prized, and her way to make music was encouraged. In addition, she met other music education majors who experienced the same conflicts concerning their non-Art music background. They

developed close ties, became friends, and to this day play or sing with each other in ensembles when the opportunity comes.

Daniela was later accepted as a voice major at a conservatory program within her university, while making progress in her music education studies. She experienced much difficulty in her jury exam:

*At the end of the first [conservatory] year I got sick ... a severe pharyngitis, because I got sick very often. I had difficulties speaking things out, so everything would get stuck in my throat ... I did my voice term exam like that because [name of the voice teacher omitted] didn't allow me to postpone it, even though I had a medical certificate and all. It was a disaster! I got out of the exam crying, torn apart. I told [name of the teacher omitted] that it was not fair, because she had been absent from my process, and waited until the last lesson to tell me what I had to correct ... I passed the exam with 8.5 [on a scale 0-10] ... which in the [voice culture of this conservatory] means, 'You are about to do it very bad' (P6, 2, 11).*

Daniela's voice teacher forbade students to engage in non-classical singing out of school. The main argument that this recital singer gave was that such singing would ruin the classical vocal technique. Daniela had been singing free-lance for several years as guest vocalist with non-classical mixed ensembles, mostly at Mass, weddings and other religious and secular social gatherings. This began way before she discovered—thanks to a classical voice teacher—that it was possible to sing with resonance other than chest voice. Free-lance singing allowed Daniela to depend less financially on her family. She became a much-sought vocalist. She tried out new genres and repertoire, and listened to more experienced ensemble members to learn more. Trying to conceal this job from her teacher, while also being careful not to damage her classical technique, was stressful. She always had to be ready and in shape for voice class, no matter what.

Daniela began to acquire some experience in elementary school music teaching before graduating in music education. She was asked, like many other teachers, to teach and conduct national hymns in school music. Daniela is convinced that

*[a national hymn] is only a way to make us think who we are, but I'm not sure if we really are like that ... As a teacher, one has the obligation to teach a hymn or a song, one has to describe the context. Otherwise, one is contributing to advance ignorance (P6, 3, 6).*

### 4.1.5 Fabiola

Fabiola, 24, is a private elementary school music teacher, radio narrator, producer, free-lance vocalist, and actress. Fabiola recalls that as a child, she would be sitting in her backyard, nibbling some fruit or chips, while listening to her mother's *nueva trova* music ensemble<sup>44</sup> rehearse. Old friends who performed together in their university's *rondalla* made this group<sup>45</sup>. After their college years, and as an amateur group, these friends now performed mostly at festivals. Fabiola recalls she enjoyed being surrounded by such music at home.

She was also exposed to a range of recorded music at her grandparent's home, because they often looked after her while her parents worked. They played recordings of Cri-Cri, to tropical Latin music, at home. Fabiola learned to whistle from her grandparents. Often, when her grandparents could not look after Fabiola, she would go with her mother to her workplace. Her mother used to teach several preschool courses in university. Her mother's love and commitment to education largely motivated Fabiola to follow a similar path, as Fabiola recalls.

Fabiola would enter a public arts school (elementary and secondary). Students would have the standard public education, plus additional hours to take arts lessons. Before grade nine, students were free to choose and explore lessons in instrumental or vocal music, literature, visual arts, dance, and drama. Fabiola had taken guitar, ballet, and dance until eighth grade. In the transition from eighth to ninth grade, students had to audition for a new major, and had the chance to get an arts technician certificate upon concluding secondary school. The government, for employment qualification purposes, endorsed the certificate. In the case of music majors, they were additionally required to prepare a graduation recital at the end of their senior year (11th grade).

Fabiola feels that at the point of transition between eighth and ninth grades, the school's curricular and assessment organization prevented her from experiencing a

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<sup>44</sup> *Nueva trova* here refers to "New Latin American song", a genre whose energies, hopes, and experiences resemble songs of the time of the socialist government of Salvador Allende (1970-73), in Chile (Fairley, n.d.).

<sup>45</sup> Ensemble of stringed instruments (mainly different kinds of guitars), originally from Spain.

broad and free musical development. She did not pass the juried ballet and dance exams in eighth grade. This was frustrating to her, and made her seriously wonder if she was good at dance after so many years of instruction. Following the auditions, the students were supposed to show up with their parents to hear the verdict. Fabiola's parents were told,

*'Fabiola works very hard, she is an excellent student, but her performance was not up to what was expected for her in order to be able to continue in that [dance learning] process'* (P5, 1, 4).

Fabiola considered that this circumstance was *'the preface to a death or mourning'*. She describes her apparent failure as *'being cut your wings when you are flying'* (P5, 1, 5), because

*being 15-years old, I wanted very badly to become a dancer, and also a singer or musician. I wanted to do both things, and was willing to work very hard, but they would erect the 'You can't' wall [in front of you]* (P5, 1, 5).

Therefore, Fabiola had to major in guitar from then on, and forget about ballet or dance. However, her guitar teachers and peer-circle provided a rewarding environment. Student ensembles would perform in venues outside school, such as unknown towns. One day, a guitar teacher discovered that Fabiola sang nicely and enjoyed it. He encouraged her to sing publicly, and participate in her first school *trova* music festival. The teacher himself volunteered to accompany her on the guitar. This meant a lot to her:

*This moment gave me much confidence, and then I bought it [that I was able to sing]... And so began my career as a singer* (P5, 1, 6).

This teacher noticed she was attracted to Latin American songs and used some time of the guitar lesson to teach Fabiola some of this repertoire, more as a potential singer, than a classical guitar student. Another guitar teacher asked her to join the school's *estudiantina*<sup>46</sup>. Moreover, she began to sing solo, and even had her first tour to Europe as a singer with this ensemble.

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<sup>46</sup>Another Spanish-based ensemble.

Since Fabiola had attended an arts-based elementary and secondary school, and had previous instruction in classical guitar performance, she was able to read notated music. However, at the university, she witnessed what she calls “the cult to the artist”:

*Some comments by [sight singing and music theory] teachers were upsetting ... [like], ‘Someone who doesn’t know the music of such composer knows nothing about music’... and I didn’t know that music ... Those comments somehow lowered my self-esteem (P5, 1, 11).*

Fabiola reflects that she was able to coexist with such views because her guitar teachers performed both classical and popular music, and encouraged her to do the same. Following their advice, she would later join several older, experienced popular musicians to sing at weddings, in bars, or any other venues. She was 17 then, and had just graduated from the arts secondary school. This allowed her to interact with many musicians in both classical and popular traditions. Therefore, while she had to listen to disqualifying remarks from classically trained teachers at the university, she had performing colleagues out of school, who would regard her work very highly. Today she acknowledges that having been immersed in elementary and secondary arts-schools pushed her into keeping up with academia despite the internal conflict between the two traditions.

Thanks to her interactions with musicians from two different traditions, Fabiola was well aware of the expectations upon one or the other kind of musicians:

*[Non-formally educated musicians]] demand more from you [if you are a classically-trained instrumentalist], ‘Well, you studied at [name of university omitted]. You should be able to do or write this [music] right’. They complain if one [in formal music] does not make an arrangement properly, or forgets to make such a stop ... or make a mistake ... or play without expression ... or are unable to march or dance while playing an instrument (P5, 1, 10-11).*

Fabiola could not help but wonder if a classical, academic training would be what she really needed, because she loved both popular and folk music, and wanted to be able to work professionally doing that.

While in university, a radio producer friend asked Fabiola to join his radio show on arts and culture. She began learning about sound and radio technology, and

production, on the job. The show broadcast and presented musics from all over the world, and this broadened Fabiola's knowledge. Much later, she had the chance to work for a few months as a vocalist in a Latin music band by contract in the Middle East, at an entertainment center. This is how she learned more about the commercial side of popular music. After that experience, she became aware that image and profit carry meanings that are not necessarily compatible with her own values as a performer.

Fabiola teaches in several settings, and considers that, in general, having the chance to teach early has its advantages:

*Teaching makes you [see] your weaknesses and strengths [as both learner and teacher]... and you begin to recall, 'Hey, how did I learn this? How can I teach it to this person?' (P5, 2, 5).*

For instance, as a private voice teacher, Fabiola is interested in knowing her students well. She wants to guide each student through her/his own individual process: *Singing brings out insecurities ... [while] choice [of] repertoire defines [a person's] personality a lot (P5, 2, 5).* Fabiola also considers that full-time teaching is very physically and emotionally demanding:

*You are exposed to talking with people who believe in what you say ... [and are] trusting what you say ... [Y]ou are in constant communication with people who have different energies, different ways to see life, who are in a different process than you. So it is tiring to be all the time like in a roller coaster. [W]hen you are with ... kindergarten students, you have to get into a specific world ... I am in motion all the time ... I [combine] body movement with dance ... When I teach secondary, I get to the other end, and when I am in the teachers' room, it's coming back to [a different world] (P5, 2, 6).*

Fabiola implements her own class activities as an alternative to the mandatory hymn singing that has been a tradition in Costa Rican school music. For example, she encourages students' discussion on what identity means to them, and leads them into exploring personal, family, community, and school identities, in addition to the mandatory national identity curriculum content. At the end of a hymn-related teaching unit, she may ask them to write a short essay entitled "My identity". Fabiola explains her objective as a teacher:

*[I intend] to plant a little seed of curiosity and interest, self-knowledge, and expression [in my students]... Music is like an excuse to me ... through auditions, song analysis, music history ... [we work on] self-knowledge, curiosity, and critical thinking (P5, 1, 14).*

Fabiola acknowledges that her attitude owes much to her upbringing: *[My mother] educated me under those concepts, expecting me to be a critical, expressive [person]* (P5, 1, 14). She also acknowledges that since her mother used to be a preschool teacher, she instilled in her daughter a motivation to work with children. However, today, she feels more at ease working with teenagers.

Fabiola's exposure to performing arts from ages 7-17, at her arts school, allowed her to be at home in interdisciplinary arts experiences. She sang in music theater performances in the past couple years before this study, and got a couple singing roles in plays by a professional theater company. She also did some writing for a young writers' magazine. This is important in her musical learning because she feels drawn to narration. She has even written a few songs of her own.

#### **4.1.6 Julio**

Julio, 28, today a piano teacher, professional dancer, and free-lance pianist, vocalist, and arranger, recalls his earliest memory of music as having volunteered to sing a cappella in front of his schoolmates, during snack time, in the school dining hall, when he was five years old. He sang *América*<sup>47</sup>, an often-performed song in televised Latin American song festivals that captivated his attention. The song lyrics are associated with very strong feelings of geocultural identity and brother/sisterhood among Latin Americans. Julio visualized with this song a communal experience that he set up and shared with a group of participants, in his

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<sup>47</sup> Song by Spanish romantic ballad songwriter and singer José Luis Perales (b. 1945). See the artist's official website: <http://www.joseluisperales.net/>

personal world: “It was a festive song, about community. It was one of the songs that my toy cars sang at the toy car song festivals that I had at home”<sup>48</sup>. (P2, 1, 6).

Julio had already been learning to sing and accompany songs under his father’s supervision, before attending school. His father is an amateur musician and professional accountant. Julio learned chords and Latin American rhythms, but mostly religious songs for Catholic devotions, like the *Rezo del Niño*<sup>49</sup>, and other popular or folk/traditional, religious, and secular repertoire. At some point, he tried to add new sung parts to what his dad was singing, and gradually acquired a certain independence as a singer. He was called up to sing at community gatherings, because he was “the child who prayed and sang”. This provided him with his first opportunities to sing and play in front of mainly adult audiences, in informal contexts. Unplanned or unsupervised recreational music activities enhanced his desire to express himself, as well as his confidence in performing in front of a public, with his parents’ encouragement. School song festivals were very important, too.

When Julio was in first grade, his mother signed him up at a local television idol contest to perform *América* once more. This time he sang over an instrumental track available at the TV station. The organization of this event required that he wear a suit and make up, and this made it hard for him to be able to move comfortably. Participants were judged against a fellow contestant, in his case, a 12-year old. Julio won the challenge. Julio recalls intense feelings of awe about the showbiz industry, through this particular experience.

Julio later engaged in popular, religious choral ensembles as a pre-teenager. He was quite satisfied with the local church choir activities, such as group biblical reflection, as well as liturgical responsibilities bestowed upon him, like proclaiming readings at the lectern during Mass. He took his own guitar to play with the choral ensemble, too. Julio reflects that exposure to such social interactions was crucial for

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<sup>48</sup> “América” is understood in the Latin American context as the entire American continent, from Alaska in the North, to Patagonia in the South. The song’s lyrics emphasized the natural beauties of this continent.

<sup>49</sup> “The Rosary of the Child (Jesus)” is a popular Catholic devotion in Costa Rica that consists in praying the Rosary in front of the Nativity scene or crib in early February.

him in this stage of his social life. He began to feel his desire to deal with people. This seemingly vocational feeling was confirmed by a particular experience when he was 12 years old. He was assisting a schoolteacher who went out to teach to a rural school, sponsored by an NGO. She allowed Julio to teach Christmas carols and a song of his own authorship to younger children: *“This was my first music education experience”* (P2, 3, 1). However, as he was growing up, he began to look at other venues to sing outside of the church.

Julio later joined a secondary school choir. New socialization experiences came with this stage. For instance, he engaged in his first serious sentimental relationship. He also had the chance to travel outside Costa Rica for the first time: he travelled to Nicaragua, and performed in front of people who belonged to a different national culture. At this, and other local tours with this ensemble, Julio experienced the pleasure of what he calls “misbehaving” with pals, among other socialization experiences. He was also able to participate in solo popular song competitions, sometimes singing his own compositions.

In Julio’s view, socialization around music in school and church took Julio to places and relationships that are necessary in the development of a teenager and young adult. Besides these experiences, Julio enrolled for piano lessons at a municipal music school. These studies allowed him to enter a university conservatory as a piano major, almost at the same time he became a music education student.

As mentioned earlier, Julio is a professional dancer. Julio decided to study dance because studying music education at the university, and piano at the university conservatory, failed to provide him with tools for the integral experience of self-expression that he needed:

*[Name of conservatory] gave me a routine of daily exercises [to be practiced] inside a practice room, and an exam where you have to present what you did in the cubicle, and it stays there, because [first] comes new repertoire; [then you spend] another six months studying six hours on a daily basis [in order to be able] to make another exam, and again, a new repertoire* (P2, 2, 11).

Julio points out that dance allowed him to acquire full confidence as a performing artist:

*I want to do this, and I am nervous, and I am going to deal with it ... This is so different from playing piano... This is not about suffering with Art ... 'Panic' is the word... Dance was on my side, and I had my body on my side, too (P2, 1, 5).*

At the time of this study, Julio had recently danced his own choreography to music of his authorship, which he considers harmonizes the different artistic and educational experiences associated with music learning in his life:

*[The staging] was not only about me having piano lessons with my teacher, or what my dance teacher taught me, but in this work there were so many experiences of my life: academic, informal ... my background in traditional music within my family ... that gave a climatic character to [name of choreographic work where he danced, sang, and played his own music] (P2, 1, 1).*

To Julio, these experiences are literally “*like standing on the top of a mountain and screaming for liberation, a sort of power*” (P2, 1, 2).

Julio currently teaches extracurricular keyboard in a private school. He deliberately intends to avoid reproducing gaps from his past music education that dance instruction filled successfully. For instance, he assigns repertoire to his students based on “*the student’s personality, how much time he/she dedicates to the instrument ... or how much motivation [he/she shows] or not*” (P2, 1, 5), and tries not to assign repertoire that might frustrate them:

*Since I began [studying piano] so late, they, all of a sudden, tried to push me very hard, and I was not ready ... The world does not need technical pianists, it needs people who are able to feel. People are forgetting how to feel ... I don’t want to reproduce patterns, theories or contents ... I want them to learn what to do with those contents in their own lives (P2, 3, 6).*

#### **4.1.7 Roberto**

Roberto, 31, is a punk/rock band lead singer, guitarist, and composer. He teaches in the education department of a state-funded children’s healthcare institution. His earliest musical connections and media provided by a web of peers:

*After window-shopping toy instruments at a store ... my neighborhood pals and I played the trendy [radio] pop songs on our toy instruments<sup>50</sup>: spoons, pans and pots ... We couldn't afford to buy records, but we were able to tape record the songs and share the cassettes among us (P1, 1, 1).*

He remains a friend with these boys to this day. He explains that they did not seek to be performers, but to do something they liked.

Roberto did not experience freedom or pleasure in music schooling:

*[Music] was just another school subject ... to sing the national and patriotic hymns and [endlessly] playing the recorder. What happened ... was a full disconnection with the students ... There was this way of thinking, that the teacher knew everything, that the students were not taken into consideration, say, not even in choosing the songs ... It was tremendously boring ... I never felt any connection with school music. My friends mock at me because in eighth grade I flunked music ... I never felt interested in it (P1, 1, 1).*

Hymns singing brought tension into Roberto's music learning. Secondary school was not relevant to him, either, to the extent that Roberto dropped secondary school and finished his studies through distance education.

Afterwards, Roberto was encouraged by old childhood pals to seek private guitar lessons. He acknowledges:

*I rediscovered my love for music when I was 18, everything before that was sort of a dull period, very "desert" (P1, 1, 3).*

According to him, the key was that he was presented with challenges that he could overcome, and received encouragement to do so. He acknowledges that his motivation went beyond music. He was aware that there were things he was excelling at, such as languages. However, music was not one of those things, so music learning represented a challenge that he was able to approach. He acquired

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<sup>50</sup> Such as songs from the United States boy band Backstreet Boys, that could be heard on the radio.

*nivel*<sup>51</sup>. Roberto also encountered very encouraging teachers, and this was decisive in the construction of this motivation: “*I can do it; I can do it*” (P1, 1, 12).

Roberto was comfortable playing popular music on the guitar with his former childhood fellows. He decided to enter a municipal conservatory, where his voice and guitar instructors encouraged him to become a better musician. This experience was so relevant that he decided to apply for admission to a college music education program. Roberto acknowledges that at this point he was certain that music *was* what he wanted to do with his life.

Roberto would encounter college instruction for which he was unprepared, being a quiet and shy student:

*Given my motivation to dedicate my life to music and the [richness of] previous interactions with teachers and peers, it was very shocking [for me] to encounter a different kind of treatment from the teachers in college. Some were actually mean. For instance, if they noticed that you were shy [like I was] they would eat you alive (P1, 1, 8).*

In fact, Roberto will never forget one particular college teacher:

*He is acknowledged as a great pianist and composer, but he lacks many human values. I was a freshman and enrolled in his group piano class. At the beginning of the course he left us a fingering exercise for homework. I practiced it and played it in class the way I thought I should. He said to me: ‘It’s deplorable. Are you dyslexic, or what?’ He said this in front of all the other classmates, none of whom I knew. I had to go to the washroom [and pull myself together]. I dropped the course and waited a couple years (P1, 1, 9).*

Roberto’s classmates had no previous formal vocal, keyboard, or instrumental studies at all, or were proficient in notation reading before entering college.

Roberto’s personal strategy for survival and success in university education was to mentally block unpleasant experiences and teachers.

After finally graduating as a music teacher, Roberto was employed at an urban, Protestant-denominational, private secondary school, for almost two years. It was

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<sup>51</sup>Spanish word for level, extent, or degree. This word often appears in the accounts of participants and can be interpreted as ability to perform difficult music.

his first teaching job. Even though private schools are not subsidized by the Costa Rican government, there are some guidelines from the Ministry of Public Education that they are expected to follow. There was some curricular freedom, but Roberto's school principal was a very strong advocate of hymn learning that the public institutional web dictated. She warned Roberto that non-Art Music should be banned from the school, unless it was studied to understand the bad in it. She also advocated religious music as part of the curriculum.

Roberto negotiated with his students the extent to which hymns would be taught, practiced, and assessed. His students agreed to practice hymns, as long as the corresponding assessment would not be of much weight. This agreement was supposed not to be shared out of the classroom.

Nevertheless, Roberto was called up to the principal's office a couple times to be censored, because a rumor was out that he did things differently from what he was instructed.

*They were never able to understand my aim for doing things .... They only saw my class as a game ... the class where kids talked ... where they engaged in indiscipline ... she did not [like] that my projects included guitar and instruments like that ... [In order to challenge me] the principal [commanded me] to make a recorder ensemble (P1, 2, 8).*

Roberto dropped weight considerably during the last semester at school, and began feeling depressed. A class incident took place: A bunch of tenth graders enthusiastically responded to a group vocal-instrumental performance project on folk Costa Rican music<sup>52</sup>, by choosing to perform their own version of the Costa Rican folk song *De la caña se hace el guaro* ("Booze is made from cane"). The waltz-like song evokes an idealistic peasant life within the narrative of national identity described in the first chapter. It speaks of how the spirits of sugar cane booze cheer up someone's spirit when he/she is head over heels.

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<sup>52</sup> This activity is part of a newly implemented school music curriculum for secondary school. See Rosabal-Coto (2010) for a discussion of foundations, goals, and rationale. Roberto's principal overtly opposed the pedagogical practices in this curriculum.

The school principal called him again. She made clear that at such young age students like to socialize at techno parties where they drink alcohol and that, naturally, the school context was religious. She did not want Roberto to induce them to such lifestyle through activities in music class. The principal fired him without any explanation. Roberto decided to leave his bachelor's apartment near his former workplace, and moved back into his parent's house in his hometown outside the capital city.

Not too long after the religious school dismissed him, a public health care institution in the capital city recruited Roberto. This school caters to patients under age 13, and offers music education to the patients during their stay. Roberto was welcomed at the job interview by the health center school director, who openly valued him as a candidate who perhaps was not quite academically qualified, but had the necessary youth and desire to learn on the job. Roberto considers he finally have gained institutional legitimacy as a teacher and enjoys it to its fullest:

*My main goal is to transmit that love for music and that they feel it ... I perhaps want to be the music teacher I never had (P1, 3, 4).*

At the time of this study, Roberto had recently networked through online webs that allowed him to relate to practices he would have never expected to learn in formal schooling webs, like electric guitar performing and rock singing. He recruited fellow musicians to start a punk rock band, through interaction in online forums. In his own words:

*While some people might borrow money to buy a house or a car, I decided to borrow money from the bank to be able to fund my own album (P1, 2, 5).*

He wrote the lyrics and music for the album, and was the vocalist and guitarist of his band. To the time of the study, Roberto's parents (with whom he lived) did not know he made this loan to invest on his album: "*They just would not understand*" (P1, 2, 5). Roberto allowed me to include a literal translation of the Spanish lyrics of the main song in his new album, and was not concerned that this would make his story recognizable to other participants, or the readers:

*I am the pillar industry of this nation,  
I am foreign, I always offer the best*

*at the expense of my underpaid employees  
resigned to this prison.  
I always insist that they give their best.*

*I almost forgot, but 'Welcome to this big family of envy, grudge, and treason'.  
I hope you can deal with the pressure of my transnational agency  
because we are on a deadline to export.*

*Chorus: Damn corporation! Don't cheat my people! Don't cheat this people!*

*And if I appoint you as manager, forget your people.  
I pay you to be indifferent,  
and if sometime you see something you can't stand,  
you better shush, so I will pay you more.  
If your country doesn't want me anymore, I don't care.  
I'll go to another one where they will truly need me,  
where they are willing to stand any atrocity,  
so they can have food for one more day.*

*Chorus: Damn corporation! Don't cheat my people! Don't cheat this people!*

Roberto narrated that he hoped he had become the kind of music teacher he never had.

#### **4.1.8 Carlos**

Carlos, 28, now a secondary school music teacher and department chair, recalls his first musical experience, when he was in second grade: the elementary school rhythmic band. Having the opportunity to ascend in rank in the band allowed him to learn about his personality:

*The roles were well defined: [As a newcomer], one first played tenor, then snare drum, and later, one could become snare drum section coordinator. I have realized this has a lot to do with [people's] personalities. The most extroverts are the ones who lead sections. I was a little introvert, so I played tenor drum; there were two of us. My partner was much more extrovert than me, so he was allowed to play solo parts. But he was quite disorganized. We were playing at a band festival once, and this fellow forgot his drum in the bus, and we were about to*

*begin. So I was asked to play solo. Everyone was surprised, but I did well. This could be related to other aspects of my life. Sometimes it's difficult for me to take the initiative when asked to do things, and well ... I have to back myself up (P3, 1, 1-2).*

Carlos' account does not reveal any other meaningful experience concerning school music, other than the rhythmic band. He also accessed music making in church youth ensembles, where he began to play the guitar, and had the chance to socialize with peers.

Carlos was called by a Catholic denominational, private secondary school, while he was still in college. He had a brief interview with the priest Director, who did not pay much attention to Carlos' CV, but quickly and bluntly asked him if he played the guitar well. He shared with Carlos that there were other applicants with good CVs, but they did not play the guitar well. An in-law of the Director and friend of Carlos, recommended him for the job, so Carlos was immediately hired. At the interview, he was told he would be teaching secondary music, which was fine with Carlos, because his music education program's emphasis was precisely that one.

Nevertheless, once he showed up at the first staff meeting, he was informed he would be in charge of preschool music, also. This was upsetting, because he had no previous studies to be able to teach this population. The school tried to compensate for this when the academic coordinator gave him curricular and pedagogical freedom: *'Do things as you please, we want the students to enjoy music, we want them to feel fine and to learn'* (P3, 1, 8).

Things with the previous music teacher apparently turned out the opposite. A former, rigid and obsolete Ministry of Public Education school music curriculum was still in place, too, and they asked Carlos to make his own music program and lesson plans. Carlos took the challenge, even though his education courses at university were focused on very traditional indoctrinating models:

*I began to experiment. I never had anyone pushing me to follow a program [in the school]. I never had anyone saying to me, [for example], 'These exams do not fulfill the expectations'* (P3, 1, 7).

Carlos tried to ensure that his class was meaningful to the students, so that they liked it, and learned. He interiorized new aspects of school teaching by interacting with peer teachers at meetings:

*I realized the importance of the teacher's role, while I was making decisions about student matters ... I [became aware] that [passing or failing] could make such a difference in the future of a student (P3, 1, 9).*

When in 2008 the Ministry of Public Education<sup>53</sup> issued a new secondary music school program, Carlos undertook his teaching relying on this program, whose conceptual and pedagogical framework he considers allowed him enough freedom and material to fulfill his personal teaching goals.

A couple years after being hired as secondary music teacher, Carlos' acquaintance who helped him get this job, recommended him for a new job: to teach the course "Rhythm and music in theater", at a private acting school. He recognizes that being asked to write a course syllabus for actors, while being aware of their needs, and his capacity as a teacher, meant a significant challenge. Carlos needed to ask questions, receive suggestions from actors and acting teachers, who all had in common having learned mostly by experimentation. Then came interactions with actors and directors, as he was asked to work on making live and recorded sounds for stage performances.

Carlos thinks he fit well into these newly encountered interdisciplinary webs, which included acting professionals, art designers, and other visual artists. The team's consensual premise that guided their interactions was: "*Let us disrespect each other*" (P3, 1, 10). For instance, he would show or play a sound he chose for a performance, a visual arts member would explain how she viewed the sound, and then an actress would interpret it with body movement. He was free to tell the team's art designer why he did not like a poster she had designed, just as she was allowed to disagree with Carlos about how he had worked with live sounds and sound tracks in a certain way. Carlos had to be sure about the foundations of what he was doing, why he was doing it, and then shares it with the team. Interactions in this

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<sup>53</sup> See Rosabal-Coto (2010) for an overview of this program.

network led Carlos to attend a course for actors at a public university, in which he had to learn mostly from practice to theory. Carlos was then invited to co-teach acting students within another course at this university, as part of a new interdisciplinary team, for one full-year.

Carlos realizes that his interdisciplinary interactions outside conventional music learning encouraged him to network with teachers from other school subjects in his own school teaching. For instance, he would incorporate the input of the Spanish teacher in communication matters in a music class project about soundscape maps. These interactions preceded his appointment in a new position in his secondary school: pedagogical coordinator.

Today Carlos, who began formal music study as a percussionist because he did not want to commit to any prominent ensemble role as a performer, has the responsibility to oversee his colleagues' teaching plans, the actual teaching, student-teacher relationships, and student disciplinary matters. The latter has to do with students' personal appearance and care (e.g., proper school uniform use), attendance, and overall conduct. At the time of this study, Carlos acknowledged that had he remained only as music teacher, he would have probably been a more introverted person, and his teaching would definitely lie within a comfort zone. However, today, he visualizes his lessons as a spectacle.

In past years, Carlos had to teach and rehearse national hymns in class. He recalls that students were willing to learn them, only if they were going to earn points for it. His students would ask him if they could listen to, and talk about contemporary, popular Costa Rican music of their liking, instead of "*the music (class) stuff*" (P3, 2, 11). Today, Carlos no longer practices the hymns with his students, and refuses to conduct the whole school unison singing of hymns in school civic gatherings, because of his personal convictions about the imposed national identity. The hymns and the circumstances of their performances are very military, in Carlos' opinion.

Carlos has decided to address the hymns and other related topics to a minimum, in music class. He is aware that the flexibility from his superiors allows it, but many colleagues, especially older ones, do not agree with him, would ask, '*Why don't the kids sing [the National Anthem]?*' Carlos would reply: '*It's called adolescence*' (P3, 2, 11).

#### 4.1.9 Raúl

Raúl, 23, today a much sought-after free-lance violinist, arranger, and conductor, and the youngest study participant, always had a passion for singing, as far as he can recall. He is the only study participant who enjoyed learning and singing national hymns. He even asked his elementary music teacher to make a tape for him with the hymns. He keeps the tape to this day. Raúl always knew music was his calling. When Raúl had the chance to take his first formal instrumental lessons as a teenager, and his parents declined because they could not afford it, Raúl saved the money they gave him to buy lunch at school, and was able to pay for the lessons himself.

Raúl began his orchestra practice as a young teenager. As explained in the first chapter, a massive, government organized orchestral program had been established across the nation, modeled after the Venezuelan program El Sistema. Raúl recalls that instrumental teachers that he knows, from long standing conservatories, municipal music schools, and universities, were at first skeptical about the outcome of this program, because it did not have the orientation of professional instrumental music education. He admits that, even though in its first years the resulting orchestras may not have sounded as good as the ones in the already established programs, they reflected student and conductors commitment to a common goal, without necessarily engaging in competitiveness:

*From the moment we started [in the program], we were told very clearly that we were all equal ... We were all working in order to make the orchestra succeed ... [It was not] making an orchestra, [to produce] professionals or perform music ... it was an orchestra with the vision of making a family, where everyone would get along ... and repertoire came second ... and team work [mattered] ... The person comes first, and then, the music ... Hardly people have conflicts ... [there are] about one hundred people in the orchestra ... despite the age differences (P9, 2, 9-10).*

To this day, as a string teacher and conductor, Raúl intends to encourage this sense of human relationships in his professional endeavors.

Raúl acquired much experience as performer and arranger throughout his webs of interaction, because—as he points out—, he had always been curious about learning other orchestra instruments, and simply trying out new things. For example, he

would look up an instrument's fingerings on the Internet, ask his peers to teach him, or ask an ensemble director to allow him to try out a new instrument for a while. He would ask his ensemble peers to look at his arrangements and tell him if they were suitable for each instrument. Raúl began this task when being asked by his municipal school director to organize the weekly student recitals. Raúl composed small pieces for the students who played at the recitals.

Due to his father's encouragement as an outstanding student in Math, Raúl majored in Math education at a public university, while undertaking his pre-college studies in music. Raúl completed almost the entire coursework in Math, before he quit upon acceptance in music education at another public university. He wanted to be a full-time musician. Raúl later decided to change from a public to a private university where the music education program was of shorter duration. In addition, he encountered a music arranging course based only on popular music (e.g., rock ensemble), unavailable at his former university. Raúl persevered to get more practical-based and relevant tools for teaching challenges.

Raúl got his first formal job as violinist in a mariachi ensemble, while being a student at a municipal conservatory. Not only was he always eager to try new ensemble experiences, but also his family told him it was about time he should contribute to the family economy.

*I felt embarrassed that the [strings] teacher would see me playing in a mariachi. String teachers are super narrow: if you play in a mariachi or similar ensemble ... it is the worst thing you can do with your instrument (P9, 1, 8).*

This did not discourage Raúl.

Raúl was teaching in one of the new national-based instrumental schools at the time of the study. He travelled quite far from his hometown, which means he invested considerable money and time to reach his students. This was his philosophy of education, developed because of his multiple socialization experiences:

*When I teach I feel it is more than ... someone who comes and teaches a method ... it is more like a doctor. Every person is different and has different problems. You are the one who has to figure out how to help this person, [help] him/her to find him/herself and solve the problem by themselves ... I also remember that ...*

*sometimes I spend the class talking with the students about personal matters ... they trust you and tell you (P9, 2, 15).*

## **4.2 Chapter summary**

This chapter presented the participants' accounts of their own webs of music learning, to address preliminarily the first research sub-question. These stories were the result of identifying chronological sequences of work knowledge about music learning in micro socialization webs, from the perspective of each participant. The sequences were elicited through ethnographic dialogue at different steps of data collection. The logic for gathering each sequence was to locate participants and other social actors doing, thinking, saying, or making choices around music learning, in specific circumstances and settings. The individuality of each account warranted different styles, lengths, and emphases in the stories, and therefore, difficult to compare. Relying on institutional ethnography practice, this procedure is important for analysis because it will allow scrutinizing people's doings in their actualities as lived and reflected, rather than through theoretical discourse or categories generated by the researcher. Outlining these stories in this way maintains the subjectivity of those whose experience will be problematized further in the later phase of analysis.

From the standpoint of the participants, learning can be partly or fully self-directed, or directed by peers (friends, classmates), family, mentors, or teachers, in formal or informal learning settings. What sustains music learning doings is dependent on the values, provisions, and choices around education, socialization, and music of a range of their own empirical selves and webs of interaction, and those of other social actors. Work-in-actualities takes place in material or symbolic sites, within a range of micro webs that learners willingly or unwillingly participate in at different times, or life stages. Such work is vast within these sites, because it entails overlapping self-perceptions, perceptions of others, expectations, and conscious and unconscious choices by themselves and other social actors, around music making and learning. In fact, from the perspective of music education, family, communities, and the larger culture embed attitudes that children, youth, and adults

turn into “a series of generalizations, stereotypes and theories that they use to navigate their way through life” (Campbell 2011, 65). As Green (2010) contends, “adults and other surrounding people, including siblings and friends, have a profound effect upon the ways in which infants and young children are encultured into music” (24).

In the next chapter, I discuss the themes that arise from these accounts in relation to music education literature, as supplementary procedure to address the first research sub-question.



## 5 Thematic discussion of participants' micro webs of music learning

In this chapter I discuss thematically the stories depicted in 4 Music learning in the participants' micro webs of interaction, as procedure to address the first research question: *What is done in regard to music learning in everyday social interactions, according to the accounts of the study participants?* The discussion focuses on: (a) What actions take place in specific webs, (b) by or with whom, (c) with what resources, and (d) what kinds of relationships were affirmed, explored, or celebrated. I frame it broadly within concepts and theories from music education literature. Postcolonial thinking and institutional ethnography are concerned with what people do in relationship to institutions. Postcolonial thinking in particular is interested in how people negotiate or resist colonial institutions and practices. For this reason, I pay close attention to how the learner empirical-self gains or loses control of music learning in institutionalized music learning practices, and for what purpose(s). Six ethnographic themes emerged that have to do with freedom and agency, exclusion or differentiation concerning self-perceptions, perceptions of others, and perceptions of music, in a range of informal and formal-based webs of interaction:

1. Cultural consonance in childhood, family-based webs;
2. Cultural dissonance in childhood, family-based webs;
3. Cultural dissonance in formal music-based webs. Within this theme the discussion clusters around these five ideas:
  - (a) National hymns singing in school;
  - (b) Race and gender-based differentiation in school;
  - (c) Dissonance in recruitment and assessment in school;
  - (d) Dissonance in recruitment and assessment in conservatory and college;
  - (e) Teacher's dissonant leadership in conservatory and college; and
4. Vocational choice-related disjuncture in family and school webs;

5. Labor market-related disjuncture; and
6. Cultural consonance in self-directed and peer-based informal and formal music learning webs.

In each section, I discuss an ethnographic theme. Each theme was evident in the actualities of at least one participant. It should be recalled that, since participants narrated their lifelong experience, they chose which actualities to approach and to what extent. Thus, the degree to which themes would emerge in one or several accounts depended on the participants' choices of narration. This allows for a range of ethnographic themes and shows the uniqueness and relativity of experiences.

## **5.1 Cultural consonance in childhood, family-based webs**

Recently, scholars have drawn attention to the fact that family rearing practices notably contribute to people's early enculturation into music (e.g., Campbell 2011; Campbell & Wiggins 2013; Barrett 2010, 2011; Dissanayake 2009; Green 2010; McPherson 2006). This seems to be the case for six study participants: Cecilia, Silvia, Daniela, Fabiola, Sergio, and Julio<sup>54</sup>. They were socialized in music learning by parents or family members who were non-professional musicians, predominantly through listening or imitative playing, very often with the use of a guitar. Sergio, in addition, made music by creating and recording musical games with his sister. In general, music learning socialization took place as a ritual, an activity somehow set apart from everyday routines, "repeated, with some kind of set and expected programme" (Finnegan 2007, 352; see also Dissanayake 2009). McPherson, Davidson & Faulkner (2012) point out that the provision of resources, like household musical instruments or suitable sound media, is crucial to make children's first music engagements happen. Western Art Music instruments and other media were present in the actualities of the study participants: Cecilia, Daniela, and Julio

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<sup>54</sup> Roberto, Carlos, and Raúl were the participants who did not recall any listening or music making in webs of early family interactions. Roberto's music making experiences took place in peer-directed webs that enhanced his self-image of ability and joy in sharing. These friends support his music making to this day. Carlos did not recall significant music engagements before entering elementary school.

were taught to play the guitar. Silvia had access to her great aunt's piano and children's books on classical music composers, and later, her own electric organ. In addition, Daniela, Fabiola, Sergio, and Raúl had access to one or more of the following household electronic media: tape recorder, record player, radio, or TV set. Silvia and Fabiola were taught how to whistle, too. Family mentors also provided them with mostly popular music previously made by composers, and/or performed by professionals, to be listened to or learned. It included folk Costa Rican or Latin American religious, liturgical, and/or commercial songs—mostly from Spain<sup>55</sup>—, passed on by live performance, tapes, records, radio, TV, and/or musical toys. It seems that within family-based webs the participants are “in touch with the familiar and real”, and that this allows “a natural association with known circumstances and situations” (Stålhammar 2006, 216). Music learning appears to grant them access to social and symbolic sites where they forge meaningful, stimulating relationships. In line with Gammon (1996), such kind of music learning socialization could be described as *cultural consonance*. This concept denotes “the feeling of familiarity, and therefore a lack of anxiety with the material being presented” in learning situations, so that work can be carried out “without feelings of apprehension” (110). Even though Gammon uses this concept specifically in relation to school music, it is useful to both informal and formal learning situations, because of the similarities in what is done and how, in both settings. Several instances are described below.

As Trevarthen & Malloch (2012) note, children may become depositaries of a family legacy or some other kind of tradition. Cecilia seemed to have undergone such process under her father's guidance in company of her siblings and mother, all of whom had a role to perform in this process. A meaningful product of this collective effort was the family traditional recording of tapes for posterity. Not only Cecilia acquired a sense of belonging to the Guanacastan-family tradition; she developed self-confidence as a musician, because of the encouragement, trust, and support in these interactions, upon which a tradition seem to have been built. Julio's father taught him religious songs and he confidently became “the child who prayed

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<sup>55</sup> For instance, the songs that Daniela and Julio remember so fondly from their childhood.

and sang” in front of other adults, in Catholic-based and other social gatherings. He was part of a majority population in terms of religion, so this supported his musical growth. In the process he, too, acquired confidence.

Silvia was able to explore her own connections with repertoire in church and preschool, through free, caring learning with her great aunt. Fabiola learned a variety of repertoire under grandparental care. She had other important role models, too: By observing her mother and musician friends’ *trova* music ensemble, she developed a notion of how music partnership could lead to the constitution of a stable music ensemble over the years. In addition, by accompanying and observing her mother at work, Fabiola learned about what being a teacher entailed. Sergio was able, too, to engage in his own free music exploration. Specifically, he composed or improvised musical games—radio and TV broadcast shows— with his only sister, due to parental encouragement. In such music engagement, he seems to have explored what Vestad (2010) calls “an emotional fitting room” (251). Daniela seems to have created her own, very intimate, musical fitting room, to be with herself emotionally. In her solitary games, she played at being the conductor of the violin section of Cri-Cri’s songs recording, before the whole family had to flee from civil armed conflict in their country. According to her actualities, this was the outcome of enjoying listening to Cri-Cri’s tape in solitude, in connection with being taken care of by her mother, after several painful teeth extractions. Later on, as a self-confident child music maker, Daniela won a prize at a children’s party contest, singing a song she heard a sing-along doll sing. The doll also had a deep emotional meaning for her, because a sibling who had migrated sent it to her as a gift. Daniela then became aware that she had a drive for music and singing that other children did not seem to have. She reaffirmed this when she listened to herself on the microphone at the Christmas festival and a sense of awe took hold of her. Julio, too, had an emotional fitting room. In his case, he sang songs in Spanish from broadcast talent shows and festivals to the imaginary community of his toy cars. This affirmation of self-expression would also extend to activities at school. Besides the latter experience in Julio’s account, no other participant would narrate instances of what would be considered cultural consonance, in the school context.

Cultural consonance becomes awkward as category for a deeper analysis of the above actualities. The universalization of children's abilities in relation to music learning as natural—regardless of their geocultural context and particular everyday location—essentializes human qualities or undertakings and subsumes children's doings, as lived and felt in individual, particular bodies. Such categorization may serve to homogenize dissimilar or particular standpoints into constructions that make particular experiences into abstractions for interests outside their experiences. Institutional ethnography (e.g., Smith 2005) criticizes how analytical categories may serve to classify and abstract human experience, for the sake of social scientists' goals or interests. Gaztambide-Fernandez (2012) warns that this happens in institutionalized education, with the aim to manage and contain cultural difference, displacing “the political-economic determinant of the socio-cultural identities in question onto essentially racial and ethnic signifiers” (44). Spivak (2010) considers that systems of representation through hegemonic categories may also end up obliterating or erasing the agency of individuals in social research. Any categorization by those who control knowledge and learning resources, like for instance, a specific category of “human”, may reduce and control what people are allowed to be, do and learn, and silence them, under the guise of necessary conservation or reproduction of a given institutionalized social order. As Wynter (2003) contends, self-definitions mask universal contents to reproduce a given social configuration and status of the ethno group that enunciates such social order.

## **5.2 Cultural dissonance in childhood, family-based webs**

As described earlier, learners are socialized into performing rites, obligations, roles, and responsibilities in and through music, “anchored to the values and practices of the adults who raise(d) them” (Campbell 2011, 61). However, as McPherson, Davidson & Faulkner (2012) warn, the home setting can be a site where high-risk, discouraging factors to music learning are likely to emerge. In fact, within family socialization, disjuncture is likely to arise when adults/family members regulate or organize music learning through resources, settings, practices, or values that are not

related to the child's capacities or perceived rights. Learners are asked or coerced to perform tasks, roles, and responsibilities they are not prepared to do or exercise. In the case where learners have already constructed an encouraging self-perception and perceptions of others in music making, such a world may all of a sudden become invalid or illegitimate. In general, learning music may begin to feel as something foreign, uncertain, or unpleasant to the music learner. According to McPherson, Davidson & Faulkner (2012), this turn of events may misalign with children's social, biological, and psychological experiences causing tension. This is what Gammon (1996) discusses as *cultural dissonance*. Broadly, cultural dissonance is the opposite of cultural consonance, "and is manifested as resistance to the material being presented" (110), because the learner feels a strong discrepancy "between experience in school and experience out of school". According to Gammon, the most intense dissonance is generally felt in terms of: (a) Repertory (school songs and light classics vs. popular music); (b) instruments (recorders and glockenspiels vs. guitars and drums); (c) style ("good" singing vs. popular style singing); and, (d) values (classical music vs. pop music) (111). Just like cultural consonance, this concept is useful to explain absence or presence of familiarity and tensions in music practices in both informal and formal learning situations.

We find detailed examples of such disjuncture in Daniela's family-based webs. Just like Cecilia, she accepted her father's guidance so she could learn to play songs on the guitar, because her immigrant, low class family could not afford private music lessons. She was so motivated that she accepted trying to play on an oversized guitar. However, in contrast with Cecilia's experience, her parental-based learning took place in apprehensive and inflexible terms. McPherson, Davidson & Faulkner (2012) have studied this kind of interaction, and point out that sometimes the mentor's time is "begrudgingly given" so that it turns music learning into "a source of anxiety-pleasure" (194). Upon a closer look, Daniela's father-as-teacher position seems to have gravitated towards his male, parental empirical self. He socialized his daughter into pleasing his commanding standards of behavior as a possessor of musical knowledge, who also happened to be a parental authority. As described in the previous subsection, Daniela had developed confidence in her first music learning at home.

At first glance, it seems that Daniela's gender as a daughter, is what causes the above disjuncture. It may be, but only partly. What seems to be explored, affirmed, or celebrated in disjuncture in this particular music-learning web, in addition to gender issues, needs to be understood through contextual macro realities of postcolonial Latin America and Daniela's father's webs. First, Daniela's father was not just any immigrant in any country. He was a low-class male who fled from his native country because their life was in peril due to civil armed conflict. This conflict was rooted in historical concentration of wealth in just one tenth of the country's population, and framed broadly within colonialist interests of the United States and former Soviet Union during the Cold War. Second, her father was financially responsible for his family. Low class immigrants in Latin America do not have the same opportunities for employment and financial prosperity, as might be the case in many industrialized countries (see Dobles, Vargas & Amador 2014). For instance, welfare is not a social right provided by governments, partly because the goals and amounts of public investment differ. Third, Daniela's father was an authority, by virtue of his parental status. Such status becomes clear in how he imposes his control over Daniela, for the sake of her being his child, as well as her being female. The punitive authority of parents over their offspring, but especially upon daughters, is common and legitimate in Latin America. From a postcolonial perspective, it owes largely to patriarchy, transmitted and legitimated partly through the teachings of the Catholic doctrine, instilled for many centuries through Spanish colonialism. This contextualization speaks to the complexity of the relationships that organize music learning in Daniela's family webs, beyond categories of analysis only partially related to social and material realities of postcolonial countries.

### **5.3 Cultural dissonance in formal music-based webs**

In the light of Green's thinking (2010), formal music education gravitates around classroom and instrumental music teachers' practices of teaching, training and educating, as well as students' "experiences of learning and of being taught, educated or trained in a formal educational setting" (16). In this section, numerous

formal music-schooling experiences narrated by the participants seem to substantiate a flaw perceived by Green (2010). That is, music learners in formal contexts often have “to study music or engage in musical practices to which they could not relate and through which they felt unable to progress” (177). This is likely to be the result of schooling’s disinterestedness in enjoyment and emotion as lived by learners, even though these feature among the most important functions of music in students’ lives, as Boal-Pahleiros & Hargreaves (2001) point out. Stålhammar (2006) concurs, and cautions that a resulting gap is likely to emerge between music experiences “as presented in school and the student’s experience and knowledge outside school” (216; see also Hargreaves & Marshall 2003). As Feichas (2011) warns, learners then face the challenge to make a meaningful connection between what they know already, and what they are learning, despite the resulting deterrence and disengagement. This tension or gap may be understood broadly as *cultural dissonance*.

In the following five subsections, I discuss how dissonance is likely to arise in several formal music webs. Specifically, participants are coerced by adults, teachers, or figures of authority, to learn and understand high Western art forms, and partake of practices that challenge them physically, cognitively, and emotionally. Their physical sensations and abilities, as well as their history and knowledge, are questioned or silenced. The tension manifests in unfavorable self-perception, and physical or emotional pain in their bodily beings.

### **5.3.1 National hymns singing in school**

All participants were acculturated into national hymns singing in school and had to teach them much later, as teachers. This was my case, too, as learner and then a school music teacher. Of all participants, only Roberto chose to refer in detail to disjuncture in relation to this practice as a school-goer: He had to learn unison national hymns by memory under curricular mandate, to be sung at civic gatherings in the school. Hebert & Kertz-Welzel (2012) consider that such hymns are powerful tools to instill values that sustain ideologies of social consensus within nation-state-based identity, such as patriotism, nationalism, and citizenship. Batt-Rawden & De

Nora (2005) agree: Such repertoire may serve to structure one single, national-based social order of citizenry. According to Hobsbawm (2000), the transmission of national identities relies on a set of fixed, formalized practices that instill invariable norms and values from the past, with the aim to represent a universal, Western, modern nature of “people, nation, or culture” (Cohen 2009, 323). National hymns fall within such practices. According to Roberto’s account, tension arose in music schooling because, even though he is a native Costa Rican, he could not relate to learning the hymns that are supposed to represent the national identity he was born into.

Under the lens of institutional ethnography, the national hymns may be regarded as textual media that can be replicated and revealed “in identical form wherever the reader, hearer, or watcher may be in her or his bodily being” (Smith 2005, 166; see Campbell & Gregor 2004). Accordingly, the hymns transmit discursively the Enlightenment, liberal values and the notion of a republican-based, White, European cultivated social order that a Costa Rican citizen supposedly upholds. Latin American postcolonial thinking would look suspiciously at this discursive political practice, in the guise of music education. That is, instilling universalist citizenship values in children-learners in order to construct a symbolic community tailored after the same European stereotypes of race and modernity that legitimated the colonization of Amerindian territories, is a way to renew old oppressive relationships and metropolitan-based structures that sustained such colonization (see Álvarez 2006; Quijano 2000). In fact, Fanon (1963, 1967) suggested that the renewal of dependence with former, metropolitan colonial structures was a way to recolonize individuals from within. In this instance, one could think that music teachers would be taking the role of inner colonizers, towards overriding local identities, through hymn teaching, without themselves necessarily being aware of it. To perform this role well, they must have been previously socialized into the invented national identity tradition through many years of music schooling and citizen indoctrination.

### **5.3.2 Race- and gender-based differentiation in school**

Sergio's and Cecilia's classmates seemed to have affirmed or celebrated relationships of differentiation around race and gender stereotypes, according to their school music actualities. I discuss them under the same ethnographic theme because: (a) They entail the same kind of relationships; and, (b) the two participants appear to have approached them very similarly. Sergio's classmates in his new country used to make racist comments about his dark skin color and his unfamiliar accent. He never experienced discrimination on any basis before. It is probable that Sergio did not embody the Costa Rican, Spanish-based national identity, in which his classmates may have already been socialized extensively at home and through schooling. They may have considered themselves more worthy and superior than their new classmate, by being ethnically correct, Costa Ricans largely of Spanish descent. Sergio explored music composition solitarily to affirm that he was a magical, musical boy, and this allowed him to sooth the emotional pain of discrimination. He was "working through moods", to use Karlsen's term (2011, 112). DeNora (2000) associates this use of music with self-regulation towards affirmative construction of the self. Karlsen (2011) and Karlsen & Westerlund (2010) have studied the uses and meanings of music by immigrant students, and point out immigrants may use music as vehicle for empowerment and resilience.

Race, or even immigrant status, per se, are not sufficient to understand this turn of events. According to Castro-Gómez (2008), to be White within the Latin American colonial context does not mean to embody a specific skin color. It means to be able to access a whole range of symbolic culture, already owned and articulated by the White, European colonizer. Fanon (1967) concurs, and asserts that the aspiration for Whiteness represents the longing of the colonized to become in the image and likeness of the colonizer; notwithstanding, they probably would ever become White. To Fanon, to wield racist stereotypes in this way is a manifestation of psychological colonization. In a sense, all participants were embodying Whiteness. Sergio experienced discrimination as an outcome of his classmates' own psychological colonization; in their imaginary, he seemed to lack the race that they supposedly represented.

Cecilia experienced two situations in her music schooling during which male classmates asserted her difference as a female. First, they rejected her from an all-male school guitar ensemble. It is also possible that the guitar was at that time a mostly male instrument in Guanacaste. Later, still in Guanacaste, they questioned her ability once more, now as a member of an experimental music ensemble, specifically because operating and repairing electronic sound media was not supposed to be a girl's task. Following Armstrong (2011), these could be examples of explicitly gendered technical/technological knowledge in a learning setting. The notion underlying this stereotype is that the male body is "the main site of knowledge production" in relation to technology (32). Cecilia explored connections of hard work and peer tutoring to learn the required skills outside the ensemble, and then succeed in ensemble challenges. She seems to have relied on self-regulation in a way very similar to Sergio in the above-explained sequence.

To better understand these two instances within a gender perspective, we must consider that gender dynamics "take specific forms in colonial and postcolonial contexts because ... they are interwoven with the dynamics of colonization and globalization" (Connell 2014, 555). In order to establish itself, the colonizing power creates a new order, configured by gendered violence. It is in this kind of society that "changing forms of patriarchy or gender-unequal societal structures" create "certain types of masculinities and the ways that power becomes linked to them" (Holter 2005, 20)<sup>56</sup>. At this point, it is worth recalling that since participants made choices about which significant lifelong music learning experiences to them share in the interviews, not all of them provided sufficient data that could be clearly identified as race- or gender-related.

### **5.3.3 Dissonance in recruitment and assessment in school**

Teachers and school authorities appear to have explored and affirmed relationships that caused dissonance in the participants' actualities through recruitment and

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<sup>56</sup> In the Latin American context, patriarchal, hegemonic masculinity is commonly called *machismo* (see Gutmann & Viveros Vigoya 2005).

assessment practices in elementary or secondary school. Shortly after her acceptance into the elementary school rhythmic band ensemble, Daniela was required to buy the band uniform. This recruitment mechanism in a school-based ensemble—apparently known by her family—pushed her to explore a setback that conditioned her music learning constantly: family economic resources. Campbell (2011) and Finnegan (2007) are among the few scholars who suggest broadly that this aspect of material life may affect learning. This kind of dissonance does not depend on availability of money only. Rather, it needs to be understood against Daniela's background as member of a low-class, Latin American immigrant family from a poor country, relocated into another poor, Central American country. As said earlier, Daniela's family did not encounter stable or lucrative opportunities for the family breadwinner upon their arrival to Costa Rica. This is a reality for low class immigrants in Costa Rica who do not possess a high degree of literacy or academic preparation. This seems to partly attest for her father's restrictive actions towards her accessing media and learning outside the household.

Fabiola studied both music and dance in her art school for almost ten years; however, a jury did not deem her to achieve the performance standards and did not allow her to continue with dance studies after grade nine. Such standards did not seem to matter in the school until that moment. Excellence acquired much weight in the assessment mechanisms at this stage of studies. Green (2010) warns that “too much emphasis on assessment and on measuring (artistic) ability is the unintentional fostering of a competitive ethos where kudos are gained by being ‘the best’ or ‘better than’ other people”. This may cause the learners to feel “at the bottom of a very long ladder” (211).

Cecilia's and Silvia's music learning before school did not rely on notation literacy or assessment mechanisms, but on aural learning and imitation. When they were socialized into music notation/theory exams, they experienced stress and a self-perception of incompetence, because it was hard to make connections between previous knowledge and new learning (see Feichas 2011). Following Green (2010), it is a disadvantage to informal musicians that notation is used in formal music education as an end for its own sake, because they have learned mostly aurally. According to Green,

[A]n overload on notation and theory divorced from listening and practical application results in the likelihood that learners will end up knowing how to name note on the staff or on an instrument, or knowing the names of musical procedures and elements, but not knowing what to do with them independently (2010, 206).

Not only is such an emphasis on notation and theory assessment disconnected from the learner's aurally shaped musical knowledge; it values only certain aspects of music learning as if they were the only valid ways to learn. This is the case of notation and theory "pencil-and-paper tests", which decontextualize "gauges of one aspect of musicianship" (Elliott 1995, 75).

Cecilia's and Silvia's self-perceptions of incapability were reinforced by low grades. As Roberts (2004) suggests, grades operate as currency that may afford mobility, "more is better" (15). Grades become labels through which learners validate their work. Institutional ethnography practice considers written music theory examinations and grades as texts, similarly to the previously discussed lyrics and music of the national hymns. Students, teachers, and parents are likely to interpret these texts as making an effort to do well for a worthwhile goal, because that is what the educational establishment taught them. This goal has been forged outside the lives of students by Western Art Culture and music education. The latter is rooted in European rational, Cartesian epistemology that considers the learner a *tabula rasa*, which must be domesticated and scrutinized by those who possess knowledge (see Souza Silva 2011).

#### **5.3.4 Dissonance in recruitment and assessment in conservatory and college**

McPherson, Davidson & Faulkner (2012) suggest that practical music examinations, and perhaps music performance itself in formal learning settings, are not always encouraging situations. In consequence, they can influence musical development unfavorably. Cecilia was quite unfamiliar with public performance examinations when she entered a conservatory setting while still in secondary school. Her reaction at her first public examination involved muscle and stress that hindered her

performance. It is no wonder her guitar teacher considered her performance to lack naturalness and confidence! It seems that in this new socialization she would have to explore what was not naturally musical to her as a learner, in contrast to her previous family-based musical enculturation. It was a High Western Art practice that she had great trouble accommodating.

In her first-year conservatory sight-singing exams, Daniela had to explore being less proficient in sight singing than classmates who had previous training in classical instruments. She only had her informally trained voice and ensemble experiences. Daniela then wondered what difference it would have made if she had had access to private, paid, pre-university preparation in music theory. This reconnected her student self with the family socioeconomic status, reminding her of when she had problems complying with the elementary school rhythmic band material requisites. However, Daniela resorted to peer tutoring to be able to overcome the alleged deficiency in sight-reading notated music. According to Green (2010), the formal music education setting may recognize and reward “only certain aspects of musical ability, often in relation to certain styles of music, thus aiding the appearance that only a minority of human beings have musical ability” (210). Roberts (2004) agrees, and contends that the student population in a music school can be “banded into official academic streams, such as musicology, music education, or performance” (13), and in this context performance majors end up being superior by definition. This is another example of how the exploration of High Western Art values plays a part in othering learners in formal education.

In a critique of the artistic values that the Western music establishment explores, affirms, and celebrates, Lamb (1993-94) observes that musicians may have a commitment to their art that makes them willing to perform in pain. Daniela’s account of her first-year conservatory voice exam sequence makes a similar case in point. Daniela had to ignore the delicate health conditions that impeded her singing—conditions diagnosed by a physician—because her voice teacher did not allow her to reschedule her exam. Daniela forced her body-self in order to follow the teacher’s mandate. She chose not to act like someone who needs to rest and recover before taking an exam. Her learner-self affirmed educational demands and artistry goals, delivered through the practice “exam”. In the end, what was important was to

fulfill an academic requisite in front of a teacher and a jury, in order to obtain a grade that would qualify or disqualify her from obtaining a socially legitimate reward. Daniela seemed to have encountered not just discouraging situations or bad experiences, as McPherson, Davidson & Faulkner (2012) point out; she was coerced into affirming artistic goals of the establishment, even at the price of harming her body.

Considering the extensive information on work-in-actualities and webs of interaction Daniela provided in her account, her experience may not just be an instance of an unfortunate or unexpected health condition that was ignored because of coercion. This dislocation parallels Daniela's conflict with parental authority in family webs. At home, her father was the authority over the female child, and the voice teacher was the authority over the pupil. Daniela reflected that her inability to speak out and to keep her feelings of disconformity to herself—instilled through her family upbringing—always manifested in oppression in her throat. Perhaps this is an instance of bearing the full weight of parental and teacher authority upon a body organ, exacerbated by the imposition of values of the High Western Art tradition. Daniela's experience is an instance where dislocation manifests in emotional and physical resources that have been subjugated by social practices. Such resources are not usually represented by categories of analysis, because these do not necessarily take into account the bodily ways of being of learners.

### **5.3.5 Teacher's dissonant leadership in conservatory and college**

Renwick & Reeve (2012) have pointed out how teachers' attitudes can be crucial in diminishing considerably students' inner motivational resources, producing alienation and disaffection. McPherson, Davidson & Faulkner (2012) provide a possible explanation to why students' informal webs may remain so marginal to many teachers: Music educators may have “no control over the extraordinary range of recreational activities and hobbies (including different forms of music making) that attract young people” (188). Perhaps some teachers are unable to relate to their students' background and experiences. McPherson, Davidson & Faulkner mention a very specific instance of dissonance in relation to teachers' attitudes, one that has to

do with the deliberate control of material resources. They warn that teacher decisions about the students' learning "may often be focused on what instruments are available for study", rather than on the goals, attributes, and potential of the students (22).

McPherson, Davidson & Faulkner (2012) say that children may want to learn an instrument because they think, "it would be fun, exciting, or enjoyable" (23). In Silvia's case, she was probably motivated by the many years of joyful music making with her aunt. Even though she longed to study cello, the conservatory turned her down because she was too old for learning that instrument. Since double bass admission had a broader age limit, she was accepted for this instrument by the double bass teacher himself. This was puzzling, because her height and arm size were not appropriate for the instrument. She had to adapt her posture and arms to learn how to play the new, oversized string instrument, at the risk of hindering posture, muscles, or articulations due to unnatural comportment. She had to explore relationships of discomfort in her body to comply with the conservatory practices. Silvia's conservatory double bass teacher may fit into the *authoritarian leadership* teacher profile. McPherson, Davidson & Faulkner (2012) define this teacher as uncommitted, lacking self-control, and non-empathic. As these authors explain, authoritarian teachers are high in exactness, but low on responsiveness. They "expect compliance from their students and are unwilling to negotiate or consult". These teachers "tend to rely heavily on rewards and rules, and whilst achievements may be high, there is often an ethos of fear or coercion that can be stressful for the students" (72).

Silvia quit the conservatory and continued double bass studies at the university where she enrolled in music education. She was fast to quit this class, though. She had been educated in a different bow tradition at the conservatory, and had to start instruction from zero in the new university. The new teacher did not show up consistently for her lessons. According to McPherson, Davidson & Faulkner's (2012) leadership classification, her university double bass teacher seems to fit the *uninvolved teacher* label, because this teacher leaves students "to their own devices", and because they are low in demandingness, exactness, and responsiveness (72).

Sergio's conservatory guitar teacher appears to have affirmed relationships of authority, too. This teacher conveyed to Sergio the message that he was an incompetent music learner. Sergio may have experienced dislocation because his guitar classes were at odds with all the fun and fulfillment he felt during years of musical games with his sister. This also contradicted relationships he established with himself, even in the middle of experiencing discrimination by his peers for not being Costa Rican: the self-image and conviction that he was a musical being.

Roberto's account of his first group piano class as a music education freshman (with which I opened the first chapter) is another example of cultural dissonance in relation to what teachers expect or demand from their students. In front of still unfamiliar classmates, the teacher mistreated him through pejorative remarks for failing to play a fingering exercise the way the teacher wanted it. This experience resonates with McPherson, Davidson & Faulkner (2012): Instrumental instruction may "prioritize particular forms of technical skills and competency as end in themselves" (206), "through the regular practice of exercises such as scales" (Green 2010, 84). As an informal musician, Roberto was not familiar with the scrutiny of technique as "physical control over the interface between their body and (his) instrument" (Green 2010, 84), in the ways of his artist-teacher. This caused him to explore relationships of insecurity and uncertainty about his adequacy to make and learn music.

The purpose of this study did not include collecting ethnographic information from the participants' teachers. Nevertheless, what emerges clearly in these participants' actualities is that what they perceived their teachers to have said and done in a Western Art Music teacher-authority/student-inferior situation in a conservatory had a profound dissuading impact on the learners<sup>57</sup>. What seems to

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<sup>57</sup> Both Silvia and Daniela recalled having authoritarian teachers in elementary school as well, and did not recall any input from them in terms of worthwhile musical learning. I will not discuss the instances with these three teachers because little information was provided by the participants in their accounts. But what seems to be clear, is that none of these teachers seemed to take the student's side. There is also insufficient data about Raúl's string teacher who would not approve of his job as a mariachi musician, but it is interesting that even though Raúl had to find ways to conceal his coming and going for this task, the impact of this impediment did not lead him to quit.

come up in such instances of imposition of the values of the High Western Art tradition are expressions of recolonization from within, as understood by Fanon (1967). The music learner is forced to overcome certain lacks that impede them from becoming in the image and likeness of the White, European musician. Those who pursue colonization of learners are likely to celebrate colonization already.

## **5.4 Vocational choice-related disjuncture in family and school webs**

Roberts (2004) reminds us “[s]tudents who come to the music school more often than not come without much parental support” because their parents “do not see much, if any, occupational security in a music career.” This reaction may extend “into the music education field as well” (13). McPherson, Davidson & Faulkner (2012) concur: “Parental pressure, especially during the middle and upper high school years in relation to future vocational opportunities and potential earning capacity, is frequently articulated as a reason to ease off on musical specialization” (129). Both Cecilia’s and Daniela’s instances may be considered examples of how family and school webs affirm relationships around vocational music choice, in ways that cause tension to the music learner. Cecilia’s mother was concerned that her oldest child would need to contribute to the family income, because her father—breadwinner—passed away before she graduated from high school. Thus, she needed to access a profitable professional degree. Cecilia’s schoolteachers thought she should have enrolled in science, instead of majoring in music education. Daniela’s father, too, opposed his daughter’s decision to undertake college studies in music. He was probably biased by his perceptions of past, unfortunate circumstances in the life of his alcoholic, musician brother’s life, in their country of origin. Perhaps, as a musician, his daughter would have to work at night in unsafe environments. He ends up cutting off financial resources and withdrawing support for her studies. Daniela’s non-music high school teachers considered that her intellectual abilities and good grades would be wasted if she chose to study music in college.

In Cecilia's and Daniela's instances, it appears that when the time came to make decisions about college study, the parent-conducted musical experiences in childhood did not seem to matter much. This means that families may not be always supportive or fond of music practices when financial issues arise, or when notions about music's negative side seem perhaps for the first time to make sense to the family. Following McPherson, Davidson & Faulkner (2012), both examples suggest how stereotypical family scripts predict failure in a music career.

## **5.5 Labor market-related disjuncture**

As Dolloff & Stephens (2002) suggest, music education students experience dissonance as their student and musician identity conflicts with their teacher identity (see also Dolloff 2007). Disjuncture may be common as the participants enter the music and teaching labor market at some point during their years of university studies. Sometimes they access teaching jobs in different musical or non-musical-based settings: From temporary music schoolteachers in the private or public sector, to instrumental music teachers in municipal schools, or self-employed private tutors. Other times, they work as free-lance performers in a range of art fields, ensembles, repertoire, traditions, audiences, and venues, occasionally or for long periods. This is how the student/teacher/musician self is socialized into new webs of interaction that, following Froehlich (2009), include both individual and collective empirical selves. Some of these selves might include principals, audiences, administrative staff, and non-university non-music related peers. This implies that the music learner is challenged to explore, affirm, or celebrate new, often contrasting, and perhaps antagonistic relationships.

Career-based disjuncture entails the musician-self dealing with courses, standards, and obligations to individual instrumental practice, as well as blind adherence to the Western Art Music performance standards. Making money and job/institutional demands may come before making progress in studies. Nevertheless, the artist/teacher-self at the university does not always care, and expects the student to exercise the student-self fully and committedly, in relation to

artistic values and course requisites. In other words, the worker-self needs to be silent and comply with the study requisites in priority over paid work. A good example of this kind of disjuncture is Daniela's simultaneous, multiple, part-time jobs, which at some point she had to conceal from her voice teacher, because her teacher disapproved of engagements in some work environments. This sort of teacher perceives such engagements inferior or potentially dangerous to the High Western Art Music tradition that students learn in the university. For example, art music trained singers/teachers perceive that popular music singing develops bad habits concerning art music. This may have to do with historic stereotypes from colonial times about non-elite, low-class music as sinful and inferior. Cultural Europeanization of the Costa Rican nation reinforced these stereotypes, as Marín Hernández (2009) elaborates. They endure to this day. Similarly, this is perhaps the reason why Raúl tried to conceal his employment in a mariachi from his instrument teacher.

The above disjuncture needs to be approached from a macro context. From my own experience as a teacher in the context of Costa Rica and participant observation in this study, I am aware that young musicians and music education students decide to enter the labor market before graduating, or even earlier, because of a generalized need to ensure food and shelter security. To be employed with a decent salary in music and music education, outside the already highly constrained public sector, requires that people engage in multiple jobs with conflicting schedules and demands. One cannot afford to remain unemployed because there is no such thing as unemployment welfare in Costa Rica. The government engaged in debt with international agencies in order to be able to deal with the most elementary public expenses. This scenario magnified in the late 1980s at the outset of neoliberal policies. This is precisely the same time when the study participants went to school, then began to work, and graduated. Under postcolonial analysis of these processes in this period, human undertakings in non-industrialized countries are conditioned by such financial restriction and neoliberal rules, including labor and education. Consequently, people are not fully free to decide their bodies and lives, and even their destiny (see Boff 2002; Souza Santos 2011).

An additional disjuncture that most participants have had to deal with in labor market webs is the expectation to blindly submit to what a principal or employer dictates about their job, in terms of contents, practices, and assessment. Some participants found their own ways to negotiate and partly advance their convictions and practices around music learning and socialization; however, Roberto's account is the most detailed. He was dismissed from a private, secondary school job, because he did not affirm and celebrate institutional values related to religion and the school clientele's socioeconomic status. This disjuncture was evident in Roberto's decrease of physical and emotional health. It touched his body along with a self-perception of powerlessness concerning the education establishment, in a manner not very different from his experiences of disjuncture as a school-goer (e.g., singing the hymns) and a group piano student in college. This could be an instance similar to Daniela's dislocation at the voice exam, because the body as resource manifests the struggle between one's locality and way to be in music, and the institutionalized notions and practices that condition such locality.

## **5.6 Cultural consonance in self-directed and peer-based informal and formal music learning webs**

Green (2008, 2010) identifies music practices through which learners interact with peers who do not necessarily act as formal music teachers. Whether in formal or informal-based learning situations, all the study participants took part in peer group based-webs of interaction at some point in their lives. According to Green (2010), learners usually acquire musical skills and knowledge in this setting "by watching, (listening) and imitating musicians around them" or "by making reference to recordings or performances and other live events involving their chosen music" (5). This kind of learning may end up being more "haphazard" or "random" than orderly, linear learning because learners often resort to experimentation (207). Often, it is quite flexible and free. For instance, as Finnegan (2007) points out, one learns on the job and often does not depend on written music. In addition, and according to Green (2008), one may rely less or not at all on technical language and simply show a peer how to do something. The study participants/learners engaged in several peer-based

webs of interaction at different times where learning was more self-directed, flexible, and free. These became sites where learners explore, affirm, and celebrate a series of meaningful relationships.

Daniela's music engagements in a church ensemble and an experimental group allowed her supportive social interactions, and the chance to come and go more freely into other webs as a girl. She was able to enter physical and symbolic sites of independence, security, and empowerment where her female, music learner-self grew strong enough to resist the submissive femininity/daughterhood expected in her household. She found a site and interactions that allowed her to be who she wanted to be. Carlos and Julio, too, gained flexible and rewarding socialization with peers when they joined informal webs in church vocal ensembles. Fabiola crafted her popular musician empirical self by interacting with formal and informal—usually older and more experienced musicians—who encouraged her to be who she was in music, in contrast with the discouraging message from university music theory teachers. Despite having been told in her art school that she had limited potential as an artist-in-the-making, she has interacted with confidence as vocalist, guitarist, actress, radio presenter, and producer in multiple arts webs. She experienced the need to cross-disciplinary boundaries, and this influences how she intends to teach.

Julio found a vehicle in dance instruction where his musical skills finally coalesced. Whether using non-traditional, toy music instruments to recreate radio pop music, or preparing a project of recording radio pop music with friends, Roberto developed a rich sense of freedom in music. This knowledge about himself and music as felt and lived, may have guided him in making personal and professional choices in other webs: In the decision to enter a conservatory, in choosing music as a career, and exercising resistance to discourses of control in education as a teacher (Rosabal-Coto 2014). Carlos, despite his introversion, engaged in acting lessons, and ongoing dialogue and exploration with theatre professionals. I witnessed Julio's and Carlos' performance in these contexts within participant observation.

Sergio, Julio, Roberto, and Raúl began to explore composing their own songs at different stages, before and during university education, even though music teacher education did not encourage this area of expertise. Raúl resorted to online resources

to inquire about fingerings and other important information, to start him exploring several musical instruments. Roberto was able to connect with new peers through online networking, in order to begin his punk rock band. Julio recalled music and dance experiences “to construct, reinforce and repair the thread of self-identity” (DeNora 2000, 62). This allowed him to present himself to others and “hold to a coherent image of ‘who one knows one is’” (63). Cecilia at last overcame her insecurity about having studied music education. She reconnected with her learner-self by reviving her love for drawing, through university courses for non-visual art majors. She succeeded to such an extent that she managed to do a full-bachelor’s program in visual arts at her university, in addition to her degree in music education.

Some learner/workers sought access to webs in or out of music making and music learning to acquire relevant knowledge to meet work challenges. Cecilia turned her attention to children’s everyday ways of engaging with music in order to attend to their developmental needs. Later, she had to become an efficient music teacher to young non-Catholic, liturgical musicians, even though she did not have this kind of preparation during university studies. Participant-observation and constant inquiry helped her with this task. Cecilia and Roberto entered the healthcare system without ever seeking this possibility. Their fluent interactions with specialists in physical and mental health, as well as patience and understanding from their superiors and peers, paved the way to acquire much needed skills and promote self-confidence as teachers. Carlos also relied on webs of teacher colleagues to gain knowledge and skill to become an elementary school teacher and later, when asked to do so, he took on administrative work that included overseeing his teacher colleagues.

## **5.7 Chapter summary**

As a fundamental procedure to address the first research question, I discussed thematically what social actors did, how and why, in the following webs of interaction: (a) Childhood, family-based webs; (b) formal music-based webs; (c) work labor market; and, (d) self-directed and peer-based informal and formal music

learning webs. According to the discussion, learners bring to those webs their own notions of themselves, others, the world and music, and an awareness of what goes on (or should go on) in socialization around music. However, a series of practices in music has often been conceived previously or led by others, from an established informal family tradition, or an artistic legacy, which are then embedded in social processes like racialization and gender roles.

More often in formal than informal webs, the learner self may be recruited, excluded, watched, listened to, alphabetized, acculturated, judged, and assessed by those in control of the organization of music learning. Who the learner is and what he/she does in relation to music in everyday life may often be taken for granted by other social actors who manage practices, standards, and values. The learner is expected to feel, see, and think about music, themselves, other people, and social relations, in the function of goals that do not always relate to his/her local world. It is not usually the norm to take learners' needs or expectations into consideration, or provide room for self-directed learning, independent exploration, or decision-making. Music learning within family-based webs tends to provide music learners with: (a) Engagement in natural association with familiar circumstances and situations and (b) access to social and symbolic sites where meaningful relationships are forged. Such types of music learning socialization could be described as cultural consonance.

Whether in formal or informal webs, constraints, dilemmas, contradictions, or displacements are likely to arise when music learners are coerced by adults, teachers, or figures of authority, to learn, understand, or teach High Western Art forms, and partake of practices that challenge them physically, cognitively, and emotionally. The music learners' physical sensations and abilities, as well as their history and knowledge, are questioned or silenced. Silencing results in unfavorable self-perception and physical or emotional pain in their bodily beings. The misalignment of these experiences with music learners' social, biological, and psychological experiences may be understood as cultural dissonance. In family-based web, this occurs when gender and material/financial-related issues mediate the access or choice of music learning, apparently in relation to webs of other social

actors. For instance, family socioeconomic status and parental pressure may limit some participants' choice for college musical specialization.

In formal webs, cultural dissonance occurs mostly when informal music learners are socialized into: (a) A hegemonic, White citizen identity through national hymns singing; (b) race or gender differentiation; (c) assessment through music notation/theory exams; (d) coercion of bodily abilities through performance examinations; and, (e) technical skill and competency-based instrumental instruction. Cultural dissonance is mediated by parents, peers, or teachers who cannot relate to the music learner's background and experiences. Work-based dissonance entails the conflict between blind adherence to the art music studies and attending financial needs and job or institutional demands. Another important disjuncture is the struggle between blind submission to contents, practices, and assessment a principal or employer dictates, to which the participant/teacher may not be able to relate in view of his/her previous informal musical learning socialization. A trend common to all participants in addressing disjuncture is to undertake more self-directed, flexible, and free strategies to gain control over learning, when some social actors exert control mechanisms that constrain the student learner's access to the kind of learning they want or feel they need. Learners may enter physical and symbolic sites of independence, security, and empowerment, and then acquire relevant knowledge to meet school or work challenges.

Even though cultural consonance and cultural dissonance may be useful to describe social interactions broadly and to locate tension in socialization around music, they subsume individual music learning experiences of postcolonial-based individuals—as lived and felt in their bodily location— under generalizations already established in Euro-American, metropolitan centers within social science epistemology developed within the project of modernity. To address work-in-actualities through these categories is insufficient to tackle the organization of music learning socialization in the geocultural context of this study and the research question. In the next chapter, I will undertake a postcolonial institutional ethnographic analysis, in order to establish connections between the participants' experience and their postcolonial macro context, beyond abstract categories of analysis.



## 6 Postcolonial institutional ethnography, an analysis of music learning

In the previous chapter, I discussed the organization of social interactions of the study participants around music learning in informal and formal webs, according to their stories. I organized five ethnographic themes under the lens of cultural consonance and cultural dissonance. I located specific roles of social actors, and described gradations of freedom, control, and resistance in such interactions. It was possible, too, to trace dilemmas and constraints in the participants' actualities in music learning. However, cultural consonance and cultural dissonance prove insufficient to address contextually and theoretically, the bodily felt and lived work-in-actualities of postcolonial individuals and therefore the research question. Such categorization originated in societies to construct the undeveloped as inferior, by virtue of not appearing as rational or progressive in the eyes of the institutions, communities, or individuals who enunciate such concepts (see Gaztambide-Fernandez 2012). This sort of essentialist categorization in social research exemplifies how systems of representation may distort or erase the agency of the inferior through hegemonic categories (see Spivak 2010).

My aim in this chapter is to demonstrate the value of PCIE to understand institutional practices within the geocultural context of this dissertation, through every day, lived experiences of music learners who participate in postcolonial socialization contexts through music related practices. I address the second and third related research questions: *How do music learners develop perceptions about themselves, others, and music in their interactions in music learning? What relationships in music learning are affirmed, explored, or celebrated between the local world of learners and the translocal structures of postcolonial Costa Rica?* PCIE is a multi-level model that establishes connections among the participants' actualities with theories and concepts by Latin American postcolonial thinking and institutional ethnography (see 2 Theoretical framework), and contextual connections with colonialism and postcolonialism in Costa Rica (see 1.3 Colonialism in

education, music, and music education in Costa Rica). Because of this analysis, at the end of this chapter I have addressed the general research question: *How is musical learning in postcolonial Costa Rica organized from the standpoint of young music teachers?*

## **6.1 Analysis according to Postcolonial institutional ethnography**

Postcolonial institutional ethnographic analysis (PCIE) brings institutional ethnography practice and concepts (e.g., Campbell & Gregor 2004; DeVault 1996, 2006, 2013; Smith 2005) together with theories by postcolonial scholars (e.g., Castro-Gómez 2008; Mignolo 2007; Quijano 2000). I begin by identifying the location from which the participants in this study enunciate their actualities. Institutional ethnography calls it standpoint. The next level of analysis is identifying “the problematic”, and is based on ethnographic data that deals specifically with disjuncture in the participants’ experience, against the backdrop of postcolonial theory and concepts. It entails finding a puzzle that needs to be solved, in the participants’ actualities, in the light of the issues that concern Latin American postcolonial theory and institutional ethnography. I frame the problematic in terms of how the study participants and other social actors activate specific discursive notions, concepts, and practices in relation to the music learners’ bodily location. I then trace relationships of organization of music learning that comes through PCIE, between the articulation of the problematic and broader macro structures, under the institutional ethnography concept “ruling relations”.

### **6.1.1 Locating the standpoint**

The standpoint is the empirical location from which the participants talk about their actualities. It is an interactionally constructed site of enunciation of social practices rooted in the local particularities of the participants’ bodily existence, of which the participants are expert knowers. By virtue of being empirical and interactional, the relationships that comprise a standpoint are not necessarily uniform or harmonious.

The standpoint comprises physical energy, sensations, thoughts, self-image, and expectations, prone to suppression interactionally from the local and particular, as site of knowledge. The standpoint is not a category to capture a correspondence between what the participants are and what they ought to be according to some preexisting cultural reality (see Smith 2005). This means we need to comprehend the standpoint beyond a mere shared trait, such as gender, race, and status in Costa Rica, educational background, occupation, or more general and abstract descriptors, such as consonance or dissonance.

Cecilia, Silvia, and Fabiola are Costa Rican-born female music educators, who had childhood models or mentors that promoted different kinds of music learning. Their standpoints would not be accurately represented through the general category Costa Rican female teachers who experienced cultural consonance in family-based music learning. Daniela's immigrant experience cannot be equated with Sergio's simply because they were both Latin American immigrants in Costa Rica. Daniela was born in a smaller and poorer country than Sergio. These two participants report quite a contrast between the parental education and profession, family socioeconomic status, the available music media, and the degree of flexibility and encouragement towards music learning, despite their apparently shared status of immigrants.

In the light of the data in the previous chapter, multiple micro-based webs of many social actors shape the standpoints of the participant music learners in this ethnography. Moreover, considering the sociohistorical review in 1.3 Colonialism in education, music, and music education in Costa Rica, we need to consider that the web of Costa Rican music education provides a macrostructure for educating children and young people into the skills and values required of its citizens. It is necessary to emphasize such historical implications because often people are not aware of how their social practices already have been coordinated by macro structures outside their local worlds (see Campbell & Gregor 2004; Smith 2005). In fact, all nine participants were born and raised in the era of neocolonialism in Costa Rica. It would be unrealistic to think that these learners/teachers did not undergo some degree of formal and informal socialization into becoming worthy citizens or more productive labor force for the globalized market. The participants have been

socialized, to different degrees, into notions and practices that privilege the ideal of a Costa Rican citizen under High Western culture and epistemology—rooted in colonial structures—, through interactions with social actors in institutions like family, school, and labor market. Within such interactions, their local world as lived in their bodies, is shaped or challenged by such institutionalized notions and practices.

For instance, Cecilia's bodily location, first shaped at family interactions in the tradition of Guanacastan music, was invalidated as female in music schooling, and later challenged by conservatory practices. Silvia's body posture and sensations, and overall self-image were oppressed in interactions with a male, authoritarian conservatory teacher –an experience foreign to her many years of family-based music making. Sergio, non-Costa Rican by birth, struggled to believe in his self-image as a magical child forged within family interactions, despite mistreatment by a male, authoritarian conservatory teacher and his difficulties dealing with music notation and theory. Such image had been negated, too, by his school peers' racist treatment. Even though Daniela's immigrant family world provided a basis for self-directed learning at first, her father's authority and social class became a lifelong landmark in controlling and limiting her access to financial and social opportunities to learn music. Fabiola was directed to music study when her body was assessed at school as illegitimate for dance. She had to constantly navigate between the standards of formal and informal music settings, experiencing dislocation. Despite diverse and rich interactions in music schooling and informal music making, Julio was unable to reconnect with his bodily self (dislocated at the conservatory), until he became a professional dancer. Roberto fought the standards of Christian private education. He tried not to repeat the anthem-singing model and emphasis on Western Art music that imbued his own schooling. Carlos found a way to channel his personality through artistic and administrative engagements outside music education. Raúl embraced the Western Art Music orchestra pedagogical model as an exceptional way to socialize with peers and his own students. To this point, it is clear that the participants' standpoints are: a) *particular*, because dealing with dislocation cannot be generalized; b) *interactional*, as they are shaped by multiple, contextual interactions; and c) *postcolonial*, inasmuch as there is dislocation that can

be related to the enforcement of Western Art Music tradition and citizenship education, as well as particular resistance to it.

### **6.1.2 The problematic and interaction with texts**

I identified a puzzle that needed to be solved in the actualities of the study participants (Smith 2005). The puzzle consists of how learners are constructed into inferiors, in ways they could not necessarily see, as they navigate webs of music learning. Within postcolonial thinking, such inferior is a non-hegemonic or non-elite individual who has been dispossessed of agency, voice, and representation because their location of enunciation lies outside a central, civilized, correct system of knowledge (Castro-Gómez 2008). A correct knowledge system may be an invented tradition (see Hobsbawn 2000) that sustains the worldviews or agendas of hegemonic elites or institutions (see Bhabha 1994; Fanon 1963, 1967; Said 1979; Sousa Santos 2010; Spivak 2010). The music learner is categorized in postcolonial, institutionalized learning, as inferior, minor, illegitimate, and therefore, unthinkable—someone who lacks a history and narrative of his/her own (see Rodriguez-Silva 2012). If the learners resist or seek alternative ways to the hegemonic Western epistemology and Art Music tradition, in order to accomplish their personal goals, they may be repressed, censored, or expelled from established practices. This is why capitalist education often regards learners as expendable, and for this reason completely disregards their context and potential (see Illich 1971; Souza Silva 2011). This repression causes the learner-as-subject to disappear and bans speech and existence (Sharpe & Spivak 2003).

When music learners develop a self-perception of inability or inadequacy in interactions with adults, parents and family members, and other social actors that control music learning, it brings forth alienation or displacement to the learner in relation to his/her everyday bodily location. The epistemic control over the illegitimate subject has the potential to numb life. Such domination suppresses the drive for searching and instills a view of conformity and even fatalism about the learner's situation (Freire 2000). It is likely to impede the ability to think, act, create, and transform reality, and instead participate coherently of the colonial discourse.

Learners may even embrace colonization so that they oppress their own empirical selves from within (see Fanon 1963, 1967). They may even be ready to exert such oppression upon others, as foreseen by Freire (2000, 2009). In the end, the learner may become a chicken that may lose the motivation to aspire to discover the potential new self within (see Aggrey 1998; Boff 2002).

The construction of individuals oppressed in their bodily location under colonial-based notions and practices, as the problematic in this ethnography is possible when music learners in this study connect with other social actors in space and time around discursive knowledge and power-based notions and practices that have already been tailored in colonial and postcolonial Costa Rican macro structures. The latter include Western Art-based music education, public schooling, family socialization, and global market. Institutional ethnography calls them texts (see DeVault 2006, 2013; Smith 1987, 1999, 2000, 2005, 2006b). In broad terms, notions-as-texts carry ideas or stereotypes that override the learner's bodily location and confine it to the role of expendable inferior, according to the ontology of the Western art music tradition, and family and school socialization passed down since colonial times, without learners necessarily being aware of this. Practices-as-texts, in turn, mobilize the learner's bodily-located resources and volition as a function of structural epistemology, and usually remain outside the learner's local way to think, feel, and engage with music.

There are two types of interdependent texts: low-order and high-order texts (see Smith 2005). The lower texts coordinate interactions in micro webs. In this analysis I elicit low-order textual mediation intersecting: (a) sequences and quotes by the study participants, from the fourth chapter; (b) themes from participants' micro webs of music learning, from the fifth chapter; and, (c) the geocultural context, as explained in 1.3 Colonialism in education, music, and music education in Costa Rica.

## 6.2. Low-order textual mediation of the problematic

Low-order texts come to life when (a) adults (family members or teachers), peers, or authorities enunciate words, comments, concepts or other symbolic constructions that confine learners to an illegitimate position, and when (b) they coerce learners into practices that force them to act or learn outside their bodily location, reinforcing the condition of inferior/illegitimate. Both notions and concepts override the music learners' bodily resources within the text of ability. The learner apparently lacks or has not been able to develop something that is necessary to be up to the challenge of learning music. Learners may perhaps possess this asset or quality, but apparently not in sufficient degree. Ability becomes a text because it is replicated in judgmental forms (e.g., comments, remarks, or statements) or procedural forms (e.g., lessons, performances, or exams), through which social actors gather the meaning intended at the macro level of textual production. The instances of use of ability as a text to disqualify or other music learners' degree of maturity, or corporeal or cognitive ability take place mostly in formal music learning contexts. Next, I will discuss individual instances of activation of ability as a micro-based text. I grouped such instances around four kinds of assets the music learner lacks or possesses in unsatisfactory degree.

### 6.2.1 The wrong traits or identity

Cecilia twice experienced construction as an incapable, inferior music maker by male ensemble peers in school music ensembles. *"The boys sort of made mock of me, or believed that only they could play well. They didn't have faith in me"*, Cecilia says about the first incident in an elementary school guitar ensemble. Such peer feedback undermined her confidence, developed through many years of home-based learning: *"They didn't have faith in me and I thought I would not succeed in the ensemble"* (P6, 1, 13). The second instance took place at an experimental music ensemble in secondary school. Cecilia was confined to "soft" tasks in the ensemble (e.g., testing the sound on the microphone), because getting involved with electronic equipment was apparently a male activity. In both instances, Cecilia put her bodily-

located resources at the service of the ensemble, as she had been taught at home. What she had learned and had to offer seemed to be irrelevant, by virtue of how her peers interpreted her gender, as an embodied category.

At the beginning of each incident, Cecilia activated this ability text questioning her bodily-located capacities. She was able to overcome the first experience because she believed in her music teacher, who encouraged her to be among the first guitar section at the graduation ceremony at the end of the year. This particular incident confirms the weight of the opinion of a male teacher or figure of authority to her development of a favorable sense of self. This favorable impact of the teacher's words may owe partly to the mentor-disciple relationship she had developed with her father. Cecilia solved the second incident by requesting support from her peers. Whether due to motivation from an adult or by being resilient, Cecilia coped with a gender-related ability text, by investing more time and discipline in her study. This means that even though she first activated the text unfavorably, she interpreted it afterwards as an opportunity to unlearn and challenge the text itself, through the action of her volition and bodily resources. By trusting the potential of her bodily-located capacities, Cecilia resists marginalization, but somehow, she confirms the textual institutionalized validity. She did not enunciate her location under the symbolic construction her peers used. Instead, she took control of her resources. On the other hand, it makes sense to think that Cecilia's peers had already learned that females were not capable, and that they treated her in accordance with how masculinity was constructed within Guanacastan homes. Even though the research questions do not focus on issues of gender, it is useful here to acknowledge broadly that colonization "was itself was a gendered act, carried out by imperial workforces, overwhelmingly men, drawn from masculinized occupations" (Connell 2014, 556). This is likely to be the case of the gendered relations socialized by Cecilia's classmates at home and school. Perhaps Cecilia crossed the line of what her classmates had learned that females were allowed to do. They censored her for not submitting to this gender inequality arrangement. Considering that gendered violence is one constituent element of masculine power within colonization (see Connell 2014), I will address this further in 6.3.1 The problematic and coloniality as textual mediation.

As Gaztambide-Fernandez (2008) suggests, stereotypes around ethnicity may control socialization in arts-based educational environments (see also Green 1997; Lamb 1995). The cruel insults and pejorative nicknames (e.g., “Indian”) used by Sergio’s fifth grade classmates evidenced a racist stereotype behind the ideal of the Costa Rican national identity. Sergio activated this as insecurity about a musical self he had been forging for several years. The fifth graders seemed to have activated the ethnicity-ability stereotype as colonized individuals under the White European ontology of modernity. They considered Sergio to be an unworthy inferior for not having the right skin color, nationality, and accent required in their community. Despite colonialist-like treatment and associated insecurity, Sergio dealt with this text by reconnecting with himself: He listened to who he was in his body as musician. He embraced what he heard from his body, and this enabled him to connect with the notion of the magical, musical child he had developed since his first musical dream at age seven.

Silvia and Daniela were unable to access specific musical instruments for study because they had another wrong trait: age. Silvia was too old to study cello. Daniela was over 18 when she entered university, and she felt inferior to peers who played “serious” musical instruments and already had a background in theory and notation. Daniela found an opening in French horn and pursued it. They both activated the text of age-ability as feeling inferior, and became participants in the dominant practice, despite the limitation. Daniela expressed:

*I think it was a thirst for competitiveness and success ... due to... the university criteria ... [and] discourse embraced by the [Music] School ... you are not a musician unless you play an instrument (P6, 2, 7).*

Even though he did not choose to comment at length on this, Julio provides a little information about experiencing potential oppression in relation to age as an element of pressure related to age-ability. An institution may put pressure on the learner to make progress quickly to make up for not being as young as required:

*Since I began [studying piano] so late, they, all of a sudden, tried to push me very hard, and I was not ready (P2, 1, 5).*

Roberto felt othered as unable to be a bearer of the Costa Rican national identity—itself a colonial project—, not by overt verbal remarks, but by control from the music teacher, who mandated rote learning of national hymns:

*What happened ... was a full disconnection with the students ... There was this way of thinking, that the teacher knew everything, that the students were not taken into consideration, say, not even in choosing the songs. ... It was tremendously boring ...I never felt any connection with school music (P1, 1, 1).*

The othering does not take place by being told “unable” by a parent, peer, or teacher, but by the constant imposition of a practice over several years that homogenizes music learners. Roberto did not relate to this homogenized learner.

In Roberto’s first teaching job, his principal emphasized that he had to show students the “bad” in music, and teach the national hymns appropriately. The expected teaching practices seemed to activate ability in a negative way again. Roberto interpreted these institutional demands to be an “able teacher”, as foreign to his concept of music learning. He did not believe the imagined Costa Rican national identity and was not fond of teaching the national hymns, something not difficult to imagine considering his own school experience learning the hymns.

His principal reprimanded him several times in light of her perception of the sort of freedom Roberto allowed in his classes. As part of a project on traditional Costa Rican music, a group of students chose to perform their own version of the folk song *De la caña se hace el guaro* (“Booze is made from cane”). The principal did not value the opportunity to create a free version of the song, but emphasized that doing this was encouraging students to drink alcohol. Roberto manifested his principal’s censorship of his teaching in weight loss. On the other hand, considering the neoliberal Costa Rican context that influences education, his principal may have interpreted his apparent inability in relation to: (a) the financial needs of the institution; (b) the religious background of its clientele; and, (c) her own experience as student and teacher. As Connell (2009) mentions, neoliberal policy puts pressure on educational institutions, including “the transformation of school principals into entrepreneurs ... and forcing schools to compete for students and resources” (14).

## 6.2.2 Insufficient material or financial resources

Despite the social legitimacy of both Guanacastan family music tradition and Western Art music in Cecilia's household, studying music was not justifiable for her once she entered her senior year and decided to begin a music career. There was financial pressure from the family, because her father had passed away, and she was the oldest sibling. By my knowledge of Costa Rican education and music business, it is very possible that when Cecilia made her decision to study music, there were not as many job prospects as there are today. The discouraging remarks made by her mother, relatives, and non-music teachers in her senior high school year about her interest in pursuing a music career weighed so heavily, that Cecilia was insecure about her decision to major in music education for many years. The articulation of music teaching as a non-desirable professional path for Cecilia may be placed broadly within the ideology of the neoliberal era, itself a contemporary colonization discourse. This means that since teaching music is not a profession that contributes to the interests of transnational companies and international financial agencies, it is irrelevant. However, it is very important to consider that within such macro context, Third World low-class women do not have as easy access to opportunities for professional development and financial autonomy (Connell 2014) as do middle-class and professional women. Cecilia's family, provided for by a low-class mother, would expect that she access such development and autonomy.

Daniela's bodily-located resources seemed insufficient to fulfill her dreams throughout her life. From the rhythmic band incident in elementary school—which involved a male authority—to socialization in conservatory and college, to her family remarks about financial restrictions, Daniela understood she was unable to accomplish her music aspirations due to material and financial household conditions:

*I met people who had very different socioeconomic conditions. And I said, 'I think that this career is for people with more [financial] possibilities than me (P6, 2, 3).*

Daniela wondered if the apparent household inability to fund her dreams might have been activated as a mechanism to control her in a subject-object hierarchy of gendered power.

*I was the only female, after three older brothers, ... It was a very masculine environment. Since I was the only girl I was overprotected, but I wanted freedom, some space, but did not have it. And did not have sisters (P6, 1, 15).*

Even though this ethnography does not include the webs of the participants' parents, it is possible to foresee some complexity in Daniela's father's webs through her comments. As Gutmann & Viveros Vigoya (2005) point out, contemporary fatherhood in Latin America is full of contradictions. It is shaped largely by "men's socioeconomic and ethnic-racial allegiances, their generation, their primary experiences, the specific moment of the life cycle in which they find themselves, and the sexes and ages of their children" (117). Besides such micro realities of Daniela's father, it is important to point out, in the light of the macro sociological interest of this study, that "the existence of historical, changing forms of patriarchy or gender-unequal societal structures ... creates certain types of masculinities and the ways that power becomes linked to them" (Holter 2005, 20). Holter anticipates an important connection between this particular masculinity and forms of power at a macro societal level. Connell (2014) points out that in global, Southern contexts, like Latin American countries, the dynamic of gender relations ought to be considered not only at the individual level, but also on a societal scale. I will address these connections theoretically, later in this chapter.

These examples reflect that access to material and financial resources in a postcolonial context impact the choice to learn music. In neocolonial times, a postcolonial country like Costa Rica presents a wide disparity of income between households, and governmental actions have not stopped this gap from increasing, or the poverty from escalating (Molina & Palmer 2005; Rosabal-Coto 2010). The research questions do not address this issue directly. It becomes a subject for further research with PCIE.

### **6.2.3 Insufficient corporeal ability**

After one year of group recorder lessons, Silvia entered individual double bass lessons at the conservatory. She was not physically ready to play on a full-size instrument. Apparently, the double bass teacher in spite of being the Western art

music expert in this instrument consented to her joining the class. Even though the teacher made no pejorative remarks about Silvia's background or characteristics in this first incident, she had to figure out by herself how to modify posture and bodily sensations to be able to play, because she was not tall enough. The learning practice pushed her to explore corporeal relationships and sensations that her body was not ready for. She calls this incident "tragic". She developed a sense of powerlessness in front of the authority of the male teacher. He seems to get his authority from the Conservatory (an institutional representative of the authority of Western culture) and it is the rules and standards of the Conservatory that he can impose. Silvia did not consent to this control. She complained to her parents. Her teacher remarked negatively, telling her she was not mature and did not know how to deal with things appropriately.

Elements of materiality in the Costa Rican postcolonial context appear to make social actors downplay the artistic ideals of the Western art tradition. Apparently, double bass enrollment was undersubscribed at the conservatory when Silvia applied for admission, and anyone interested would be accepted. Perhaps the institution's budget plan required that a space be filled in the teacher's load. This somehow allowed Silvia to be put at-risk as a learner. This is a paradox, because Silvia's teacher demanded she conform to the Western art music practices, but material aspects of not having a smaller double bass available mediated providing her with a fair opportunity to learn. By insisting that she make the full-size bass work, her teacher (representing male authority) turned her into an inferior.

A voice exam at the conservatory forced Daniela to repress her bodily being, too. Her voice teacher pushed her to explore unhealthy and dangerous relationships with her body (pharyngitis), for the sake of a jury exam, a procedural form of the ability-text. Daniela appeared willing to comply with the conservatory protocols because all she wanted was to learn. However, this specific mandate required her to distance herself from her bodily location because the individual body is not important to the Conservatory. Daniela activated this text with submission and much pain. In fact, as she reflects about this instance, she realized that "everything would get stuck in [her] throat." This attests to her constant repression of desires and goals, in relation to authority.

*At the end of the first [conservatory] year I got sick ... a severe pharyngitis, because I got sick very often. I had difficulties speaking things out, so everything would get stuck in my throat ... I did my voice term exam like that because [name of the voice teacher omitted] didn't allow me to postpone it, even though I had a medical certificate and all. It was a disaster! (P6, 2, 11).*

Fabiola also repressed her bodily being, but not by being taught in ways that were foreign to her bodily location. Interestingly, she was not allowed to continue studying dance due to the results of a jury exam, an institutional protocol that judged her below standard. She was told that her effort, energy, commitment, and perhaps, her degree of corporeal development were insufficient for advanced dance study. She experienced this text as deep pain

*... being 15-years old, I wanted very badly to become a dancer, and also a singer or musician. I wanted to do both things, and was willing to work very hard, but they would erect the 'You can't' wall [in front of you] (P5, 1, 3, 4-5).*

A male conservatory teacher treated Sergio as an incapable, inferior. Sergio's apparent inability to accommodate his body to his teacher's demands justified the use of psychological violence. The teacher slapped Sergio's hand, too. The teacher's comments overtly questioned Sergio's ability:

*I would set the fingering on the guitar and he would slap my hand and yell at me, 'No!' I was (about) 14, and little by little, I began feeling at war with the guitar. Disappointment was mutual. [One day the teacher came up to me and said], 'Look, when I wake up on Thursday, I feel uneasy because I have to teach Sergio.' Some other time he said, 'You better choose something else. Music is not your strength ... I don't see you having a commitment to music' (P4, 1, 17-18)*

At first Sergio responded to this text by quitting instruction, "little by little, I began feeling at war with the guitar" (P4, 1, 17-18), but later he resorted to writing his own songs. Sergio resisted marginalization at the hands of the teacher by the ability text conveyed through his teacher's remarks.

Roberto reacted to his group piano teacher's comments about his personal solution to a fingering exercise with insecurity in relationship to his ability:

*He is acknowledged as a great pianist and composer, but he lacks many human values. I was a freshman and enrolled in his group piano class. At the beginning*

*of the course, he left us a fingering exercise for homework. I practiced it and played it in class the way I thought I should. He said to me: 'It's deplorable. Are you dyslexic, or what?' He said this in front of all the other classmates, none of whom I knew. I had to go to the washroom [and pull myself together]. I dropped the course and waited a couple years until my GPA was high enough to allow me to choose another group piano teacher [for the remaining five courses] (P1, 1, 9).*

According to Roberto's account, most of his classmates lacked a Western Art music background, as he did. This makes the teacher's authority more contradictory, because it makes one think that perhaps his text activation, as an acknowledged Western musician/artist, was that everyone had to be capable of succeeding on the fingering challenge, regardless of individual background or corporeal possibilities.

#### **6.2.4 Insufficient Western Art Music skills and background**

Once she entered a conservatory, the mandatory implementation of weekly scheduled recorder lessons, and the prescription for weekly individual practice on her own organized Silvia's time, physical, and psychological energy. This took place one full year before she actually began her double bass lessons. As Small (2010) reminds us, in the values of Western music education, teachers interpret punctuality and discipline as foundational principles for the construction of musicianship. Control and standardization of time is something students must accommodate, according to this institutional order. However, Silvia interpreted this ability demand as stress. It seems that rather than telling her "unable" directly, this practice distanced her from her many years of free and flexible family-guided music learning. If Silvia wanted to succeed, as an incapable inferior she would have to change how she makes and learns music. Silvia adapted to the system that year by exploring the new learning routines and accepting the value of discipline, thus embracing the colonial, conservatory practice.

*I began to make an effort and [follow] a schedule and realized that it was OK to have good ear, but also that discipline was a very important aspect (P8, 1b, 5).*

Whether in conservatory or college, Daniela and Sergio experienced the text ability as transmitted by music theory and notation examinations. They felt they

were unable to grasp the contents of Western art-based music education, in relation to their aurally based musical abilities forged in their informal webs of music. ‘... not being able to quickly get the formula to a diatonic scale, or knowing all the key signatures, or being able to read certain rhythmic figures ...’ took a deep toll on Daniela. ‘It was a big headache’ (P6, 2, 3). It seems that oral music traditions are extra-musical, and therefore, outside the legitimate scope of formal music schooling.

It is interesting that later in her college studies, problems arise not in relation to music theory and notation per se, but in relation to how a male teacher who had just come from studies in Europe, seemed to put demands on her as a learner:

*He was very strict and cruel, and, well, I felt quite bad because the teacher was very demanding, and he took pity on people who had fewer difficulties than me (P6, 2, 3).*

This suggests that not only the demands of Western music education influenced Daniela’s learning, but also the interactions with a male authority, in a way similar to her experience at home.

Fabiola reflected about college teachers’ remarks about her background in popular, non-art music:

*Some comments by [sight singing and music theory] teachers were upsetting ... [like], ‘Someone who doesn’t know the music of such composer knows nothing about music’ ... and I didn’t know that music... Those comments somehow lowered my self-esteem. Someone who doesn’t know the music of such composer knows nothing about music (P5, 1, 11).*

Fabiola activated this ability comment from her location of a music learner who is more familiar with popular music. These comments seemed to convey that true music training is not related to the kind of music background she brought to college.

Raúl provided some similar data on marginalization mechanisms by instrumental teachers. He had his first formal job as violinist in a mariachi ensemble; at the same time, he was a student at a municipal conservatory:

*I felt embarrassed that the [strings] teacher would see me playing in a mariachi. String teachers are super narrow: if you play in a mariachi or similar ensemble ... it is the worst thing you can do with your instrument (P9, 1, 8).*

Even though this did not affect his self-image or learning, his experience demonstrates another way in which the hegemony of Western Art Music standards and values may forge music learners' non-art music background as lacking ability with Art music, by virtue of making lesser or unworthy music. In addition, his response demonstrates how Sergio participates in the colonial-based arrangements in the conservatory.

Cecilia got a message of inability as a beginner Western Art music performer, through a public guitar jury exam. She played "rigid" Western Art music on the guitar<sup>58</sup>, and was assessed and exposed in front of many musicians, for the first time:

*I felt I hadn't played well nor enjoyed. Never before had I experienced an awkward sensation in public (P7, 2, 11).*

She activated ability through fear: "... my muscles were shaking and I got stiff ..." (P7, 2, 11). Such activation was in conflict with her previous familiar and supportive learning environment. She knew she could enjoy music, even though learning might be a challenge. The new message made her aware that she would need to develop new bodily sensations, unfamiliar to her at that point, if she wished to become a Western Art musician.

## **6.3 High-order textual mediation**

### **6.3.1 The problematic and coloniality as textual mediation**

As can be gleaned so far, music learners/teachers Cecilia, Silvia, Sergio, Daniela, Fabiola, Julio, and Roberto had insufficient or wrong degree of skin color, gender, identity, bodily-based behaviors, music education background, or material/financial resources. On such grounds, they were compelled to rescind ways to think, feel, and act, and be converted into the practices and values upheld by adults and experts in control. The fact that the latter appropriate, administer, and evaluate learners' bodily-located resources, on the grounds of their own musical knowledge superiority

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<sup>58</sup> One should recall her learning was largely based on learning scales and arpeggios, through the study of Sagreras (1992).

and legitimacy, somehow makes me think of the one-direction hierarchy of power that sustained the *encomienda* in the Spanish conquest of Amerindians<sup>59</sup>. The *encomienda* consisted of forced labor supply to the invaders, because the Amerindians had to be redeemed from the primitiveness and barbarism of their bodies. Such redemption lay in the hands of the Europeans, because they represented the superior order of civilization, to which the rest of the world should aspire. The *encomienda* went hand in hand with forms of symbolic violence: The Amerindians were forced to speak the imperial, Castilian language, and convert to Catholicism. Latin American-based Modernity/(De)coloniality project, calls the logics of this kind of colonization coloniality of power (Quiijano 2000, see Mignolo 2007)<sup>60</sup>.

Coloniality of power entails the material and symbolic exploitation of those deemed inferior, for the sake of material and symbolic interests of those who own the knowledge that is used to turn the inferiors into docile bodies. The full, coercive submission of ones' bodily-based location, to authorities of knowledge who consider such location should be domesticated, for goals foreign to the local world of the alleged inferior, in general resonates with the appropriation of music learners' physical, intellectual, and emotional resources in this ethnography. Wynter (2003) speaks of *coloniality of being/power/truth/freedom* in the context of the colonization of what is now Latin America. Wynter's term is useful for seeing how coloniality operates within every material and subjective dimension of the life of the colonized. Even though the study participants did not literally own or were dispossessed of lands, they were often dispossessed of physical, psychic, and emotional resources, or guided into their subjugation.

Cecilia had to work hard to get good grades in high school, especially in Math and Science, because many teachers in the school community considered being a member of a male-dominated instrumental ensemble an activity for lazy or indifferent students. She worked hard because she did not want to be considered a *vagabond* because she invested her time in music making. In Spanish, *vagabunda* is a vagrant, a non-productive, socially unfit individual. Because of this conceptual use

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<sup>59</sup> See 1.3.1 European colonization and vernacular musics as subaltern.

<sup>60</sup> See Latin American postcolonial critique, in 2.2. Postcolonialism.

of the term, it is possible to suggest that Cecilia was marginalized here as someone who is unlikely to contribute to the goals of progress and development that a worthy citizen should observe.

Cecilia and Silvia had to engage in time and energy at the conservatory that had nothing to do with their years of informal music making. Cecilia responded with stiffness to foreign ways her body and energy were taught to engage in a conservatory public exam recital:

*I was very scared, like I'd never been before, because there was a big audience, and for the first time I was exposed, all by myself, in front of many musicians ... . But my muscles were shaking and I got stiff ... I felt I hadn't played well nor enjoyed. Never before had I experienced an awkward sensation in public. (P7, 2, 11).*

Silvia first felt stress trying to comply with scheduled recorder lessons and formal practice in her first year of conservatory, after many years of unscheduled, free music play with her great-aunt. The recorder teacher remembered in a letter to her parents the expected degree of use Silvia's bodily resources: *'[S]he'd better work hard or she'll need to find something else to do'* (P8, 1b, 5). Silvia finally caught up with the desired behaviors: *I realized it was part of what I had to do, and basically I had no choice* (P8, 1b, 5).

After many years of informal guitar learning, which included composing and improvising freely, Sergio felt unable to cope with the use of time and body in the conservatory. His authoritarian teacher responded to his inability to accommodate:

*'Look, when I wake up on Thursday, I feel uneasy because I have to teach Sergio.' Some other time he said, 'You better choose something else. Music is not your strength ... I don't see you having a commitment to music'* (P4, 1, 17-18).

Daniela's father was her first music teacher. At first, she tried accommodating her body to a large guitar—the only instrument available within a poor, immigrant family—and had to comply with very specific rules that her father impatiently set, that were unquestionable:

*He composed a carol in which we alternated parts ... There were some problems because ... [I] was supposed to sing a third above him ... He constantly yelled that I should not sing his melody, that I had to focus ... [Later], he said that I should*

*not use all those embellishments in singing (P6, 1, 4-5). [His way was like]:  
'Watch and do' ... 'It's not like that' (P6, 1, 7).*

Nevertheless, Daniela was willing to pay the price. Then, Daniela faced the challenge that her belonging to the elementary school rhythmic band was conditional on her ability to cover a fee for the uniform, even though she had been accepted for her musical aptitude. Later, in the conservatory, she had to use her body according to institutionally accepted practices that hindered her health:

*At the end of the first [conservatory] year I got sick ... a severe pharyngitis ... I did my voice term exam like that because [name of the voice teacher omitted] didn't allow me to postpone it, even though I had a medical certificate and all. It was a disaster! I got out of the exam crying, torn apart. (P6, 2, 11).*

As a teacher, Roberto was coerced by the principal of a Protestant, private school, to use his background and resources as a teacher, in ways that were distanced from his years of informal music background, and his personal identity, unrelated to the school religious denomination:

*They were never able to understand my aim for doing things .... They only saw my class as a game ... the class where kids talked ... where they engaged in indiscipline ... she did not [like] that my projects included guitar and instruments like that ... [In order to challenge me] the principal [commanded me] to make a recorder ensemble (P1, 2, 8).*

There is an epistemological similarity between Spanish coloniality of power and the hierarchical relationships that organize learners' lifelong music learning in this study. Spanish colonial institutions wielded the notion that those who were not White, Christian, rational, and European-born, were inferior, unworthy barbarians, who ought to be domesticated and converted into the White path of modern civilization (see Castro-Gómez 2008). This gave full legal authority to civil and religious colonizers to exploit and convert the Indigenous. In this ethnography, the appropriation and control of learners' bodily location finds grounds in the epistemology of the Western culture and art music tradition. This happens more often in formal learning settings than in informal.

Returning to the low-order text activation discussion in subsection 6.2.1 The wrong traits or identity, many social actors who controlled music learning of study participants knew or approached the participant music learners through lenses that resembled the racial and cultural stereotypes that sustained the world system that would legitimize the appropriation of resources and domination of bodies in Spanish coloniality. In the colonization of Latin America, the Indigenous (Indians) and Blacks were considered subhuman (see Wynter 2003). Even though this is not the same label that guided violence upon the study participants, they were somehow viewed and treated as being “below the norm” in specific Western-based social arrangements. In the instances already discussed, peers or family seemed to perceive and judge Cecilia and Daniela as unable females, rather than music learners. Sergio was not seen as another classmate in his new school and country; he was perceived and judged as non-White Costa Rican and punished for that. In Silvia’s case, her previous years of informal music learning and desire to study a symphonic instrument did not matter for admission to the conservatory. What mattered was her age. Likewise, Daniela’s music background did not matter when she wished to study an Art Music instrument; being 19 years old mattered. These examples exemplify how identity or traits are manipulated to control music learning according to the epistemology of the person or institution who provides resources or structures for learning.

Those who produce knowledge in which the observer is not part of what is being observed sustain coloniality of power. This relationship may be understood under the concept “hubris of point zero”. Such knowledge bearers have the power to judge and evaluate inferiors. The former are not seen, and do not have to prove to the learners the nature and legitimacy of their power and status. Thus, they have the right to scrutinize the learners from the outside, without being observed (see Castro–Gómez 2008). This means that learners become part of one direction, subject versus object-based relationships in the form of hierarchies of power, e.g., mentor-disciple, teacher-student, and authority-teacher. A parent or teacher in this dichotomy may be viewed as “custodian, preacher, and therapist” (Illich 1971, 45). As a custodian, he/she guides students into rituals and drills, and “arbitrates the observance of rules and administers the intricate rubrics of initiation of life” (45). In the position of a

preacher/moralist, he/she “substitutes for parents, God, or the state” (45) and has the power to determine what is right or wrong. In the father-daughter hierarchy, her father strictly controlled Daniela’s learning, and imposed his rules:

*[His way was like]: ‘Watch and do’ ... ‘It’s not like that’ (P6, 1, 7) ... ‘Be aware that I will not teach you that [pejorative expression] rock and I don’t know what else’ (P6, 1, 8).*

Within the teacher-student dyad, the artist-teacher labeled Roberto as incompetent in his freshman group piano class:

*At the beginning of the course, he left us a fingering exercise for homework. I practiced it and played it in class the way I thought I should. He said to me: ‘It’s deplorable. Are you dyslexic, or what?’ He said this in front of all the other classmates, none of whom I knew. I had to go to the washroom [and pull myself together] (P1, 1, 9).*

In the context of the authority-teacher dyad, the principal invalidated Roberto’s notion and experience of the kind of music education his high school students enjoyed, and substituted a prescribed curriculum to the Protestant, wealthy clientele of the private school.

*They were never able to understand my aim for doing things .... They only saw my class as a game ... the class where kids talked ... where they were undisciplined ... she did not [like] that my projects included guitar and instruments like that (P1, 2, 8).*

Coloniality of power is considered the “dark side of modernity” because it propelled the economic growth, as well as the political and ideological hegemony of Western Europe, at the price of imposing this epistemological wound upon the colonized peoples of the American continent. What differentiates coloniality of power from other forms of violence or oppression is the impact of a colonial wound, in the form of epistemological violence, to make a world system universal, erasing local worlds indistinctively. Coloniality of power inflicts a colonial wound onto the colonized bodies in order to dominate their material and symbolic worlds. It is colonial because it seeks the epistemological control of bodily location of the colonized, by making them malleable or willing to uphold the process of

colonization. It is a wound because it differentiates the world of the colonized as not right or enough, and therefore, they ought to be domesticated or corrected.

Music learner oppression and marginalization, as a type of colonial wound accomplished through epistemic domination, exemplifies what Sousa Santos (2007, 2010) termed “abyssal thinking”. This refers to thinking that places specific social actors, and their knowledge and experiences beyond the line of legitimate knowledge and way of living. Such thinking constructs an unfathomable distance between those who are invisible, unintelligible, forgotten, or dangerous, and the civilized or developed individuals, knowledge, and experiences. The parental restriction of material and financial resources that conditioned Daniela’s music learning throughout her life put her at such a border location. During her university studies, she made this realization:

*‘I think that this career is for people with more [financial] possibilities than me, people who own super beautiful houses, who have a keyboard at home, who were paid [private] lessons, who attended the conservatory since they were little’. I couldn’t have all that, even as much as I wanted (P6, 2, 3).*

Sergio tells how his guitar teacher put him in a position beyond the good or worthwhile students, in spite of all his effort:

*[One day the teacher came up to me and said], ‘Look, when I wake up on Thursday, I feel uneasy because I have to teach Sergio.’ Some other time he said, ‘You better choose something else. Music is not your strength ... I don’t see you having a commitment to music’ (P4, 1, 17-18).*

Fabiola also reported how a teacher placed her beyond the line of knowledgeable music students in college:

*Some comments by [sight singing and music theory] teachers were upsetting ... [like], ‘Someone who doesn’t know the music of such composer knows nothing about music’... and I didn’t know that music... Those comments somehow lowered my self-esteem. Someone who doesn’t know the music of such composer knows nothing about music (P5, 1, 11).*

Since gender inequality and construction of patriarchal masculinity emerged with some intensity in Cecilia’s and Daniela’s construction as inferiors, it substantiates the complexity of this ethnographic analysis when attempting an explicit theoretical

connection between these issues and colonization. In Connell's (2014) view, gendered violence has played "a formative role in the shaping of colonial and postcolonial societies", whatever the pre-colonial situation. For example, the colonial state "was built as a power structure operated by men" (556). According to Connell (2014), gender dynamics "take specific forms in colonial and postcolonial contexts" because "they are interwoven with the dynamics of colonization and globalization" (555). Cecilia enunciated her music learner location by working very hard, against stereotypes that all-male peers/colonizers in two instrumental ensembles perhaps had learned at home and school socialization. She was able to demonstrate to herself that she did not have the wrong gender in order to be able to play the plucked guitar lines or manipulate skillfully electronic media.

*At the end of the year I ended up being the best, I recall it with such satisfaction; it has been one of the biggest successes, something that a degree would not compensate (P7, 2, 5).*

Daniela had to downplay and disguise her femininity physically and psychologically, in order to be able to access music learning outside the house, against the power structure sustained by parental patriarchal masculinity:

*I was the only female, after three older brothers ... It was a very masculine environment. Since I was the only girl, I was overprotected, but I wanted freedom, some space, but did not have it ... Had I embraced myself overtly as female in the context of my home could have been my death ... Had I adopted an attitude of weakness, of being in need to be rescued, or in need of protection, my parents could have used [as an excuse] to protect me even more ... So when I had my first menstruation ... I tried not to share it with anybody, even my mother (P6, 1, 15).*

Unfortunately, Daniela could not hide her first menstruation completely, and due to this, her mother would not allow her to go to a church children's choir performance the next day. Her mother complained:

*'You see? This is an indication that these things can keep happening' (P6, 1, 15).*

According to Daniela, this means that her mother was warning her about the risks of the beginning of reproductive life; such "risks" conditioned her struggle to engage in

music in ways that gave her independence and set her apart from the submissive femininity she witnessed in her mother.

Quijano (2000) considered gender relations (and sexuality) as one of the main areas where coloniality of power operated, along with material and work resources, authority, and cognitive and affective domains (see also Mignolo 2007). In fact, coloniality of power racialized gender. Connell considers that the concept of the coloniality of power applies also to the “continuities in global power” in postcolonial times, and that therefore it is necessary to understand gender in the era of “neoliberal politics” where “new formations of power have appeared” (556).. This era brings about the global restructuring of the popular classes, with “a shift away from breadwinner/housewife norms, also creating pressure for change in masculinities” but still advantaging men (562).

Colonial-based oppression and marginalization in the webs of the study participants somehow appears to be largely at the service of the perpetuation of the High Western Art tradition, as a social order that holds its own prescriptive statement of the normal, ideal, desirable human being: the cultivated, developed citizen (see Wynter 2003). Within the Conservatory, Cecilia underwent coercion to adapt to public performance examinations of rigid music. Silvia was coerced to accommodate her time and energy to the schedule and discipline, and to put at risk her body to learn a string orchestra instrument. Cecilia, Sergio, and Daniela, in a conservatory context, too, had to struggle to become proficient in music notation in ways that their previous aurally based music learning became irrelevant and invalid. In college music education, Fabiola’s background as a popular musician-in-the-making was questioned as insufficient and inferior, in relation to the Western Art Music tradition. Roberto’s previous music background became irrelevant when he engaged in figuring out an assignment in piano group instruction.

Coloniality conquers subjectivities in order to conquer territories. It may impose overt physical violence or enslave learners, and silence, repress, or disregard their bodily-located resources. Whether on the American continent five centuries ago, or in contemporary Costa Rican webs of music learning, this colonization decontextualizes the complexity, diversity, and differences of the colonized, and ignores their autonomy to imagine and negotiate their own future (see Mignolo

2000, 2007; Sousa Santos 2010; Souza Silva 2011). There seem to be other Western-based social arrangements, such as gender inequality, masculinity dynamics, and financial implications of global neoliberalism on micro interactions, entrenched in how coloniality is exercised and activated; however, they touch the research questions indirectly (although this does not mean that they lack importance). In fact, in this ethnography, the most overt degrees of violence seem to be associated with these kinds of arrangements, whether they are related or not, directly or indirectly, with the perpetuation of the Western Art Music tradition.

Silvia's coercion to put her body at risk to learn an oversized double bass also may have to do with the need to fill a vacancy included in the teacher's paid workload. Struggling to become proficient in music notation, while their previous aurally-based music learning was invalidated, Cecilia, Sergio, and Daniela faced the challenge to accommodate their bodily resources in assessment to the same pace and abilities that notation and theory literate students already had, similarly to the impersonal, goal-oriented, massive capitalist education that philosopher Illich (1971) so harshly criticized. His conservatory guitar teacher physically and psychologically abused Sergio because he did not accommodate his body to the pacing this authoritarian expert was expecting. In all these instances, the music learners did not experience autonomy, or opportunity to negotiate or create the goals or circumstances of their music learning.

Next, I will analyze connections of the low-text activations with the broader macro societal structures.

### **6.3.2 High-order textual mediation and re-colonization from within**

Seven study participants experienced being constructed as uncivilized, uncultivated, or undeveloped beings, by virtue of not possessing partially or fully physical, intellectual, or symbolic assets or qualities, or knowledge, from within the standards and values of the Western Art music tradition. The aspect of these participants who, as subjects, are created through colonial oppression and marginalization, experienced a colonial wound, through the unable-subject construction, and as a result, they became partly or fully docile or malleable for colonization. Worth

recalling is that the infliction of the colonial wound 500 years ago was accompanied with two forms of violence: (a) material and labor exploitation in the hands of the strongest through the *encomienda*; and, (b) their conversion to the European-based faith (Castro-Gómez 2008; see Quijano 1992, 2000). Similarly, neocolonial dynamics comes with militarization, control of sexuality, and knowledge. Their actualities of music learning exhibit subtle and overt forms of coercion, instrumental in becoming illegitimate others. Some of these forms were violent. I identified five such forms.

### ***Forms of coercion and violence***

First, there is the disregard, silencing of, or repression of learners' gender, age, ethnicity, identity, feelings, sensations, thoughts, goals, and previous learning, as irrelevant or invalid. Illich (1971) and Freire (2000) warned that education processes might disregard that students already bring a rich background to schooling, because learning already happens in meaningful social interactions before and outside schooling. Cecilia's gender was regarded as invalid or inferior in two school instrumental ensembles. Daniela's gender was silenced in parent-daughter music mentorship. Sergio's ethnicity seemed to make Costa Rican learners uncomfortable when he began attending school in fifth grade, in his new country. Silvia's and Daniela's apparent inappropriate age for specific instrumental study in a conservatory seemed to be of weight to disregard their previous learning and the commitment and interest they brought. Julio felt pressure to make fast progress in conservatory piano due to his age. Roberto's individual identity, which did not coincide with the ideal Costa Rican citizenship, was overlooked through the rote learning of national hymns.

Instead of exploring one's background through music learning, it seems in this ethnography that Western Art Music learners are trained to establish relationships with specific sound structures and works of art relationships inherent to modernity and Westernization, detached from the learners' local worlds (see Cohen 2009; Small 2010). In his group piano class, Roberto experienced being illegitimate in how his body did not perform Western Art Music materials as prescribed by the artist-teacher. Cecilia, Sergio, and Daniela had to explore relationships in Western Art

Music theory and notation that invalidated their previous informal, aurally based learning. According to Small (1987, 2010), such training sometimes has to do with instilling Western capitalist values, such as discipline, competitiveness, punctuality, and excellence. Silvia acknowledged explicitly how one full year of conservatory group recorder instruction forced her to acquire self-discipline. Raúl emphasized how symphony orchestra practice in the massive instrumental program SINEM appeared effective in making students become team workers under a leader.

Secondly, learners are exposed to performance or assessment rituals or settings that they are not yet prepared physically, cognitively, or emotionally to handle. Here we can recall Cecilia's first public guitar examination, where her muscles were shaking, resulting in her stiff performance—a context foreign to her many years of family music making. In addition, Daniela and Sergio experienced music theory and notation exams that measured ways to relate to sound, still foreign to them. Freire (2000) and Illich (1971) opposed programmed, pre-packaged or commodified sequenced ritual instruction and manipulation of the learners' cognitive growth, because they standardize the ideal or proper learners, without necessarily considering their background or needs. There is supposedly a secret around learning music that is not found in the lives of learners—just like there is secret to everything about oneself, others, nature, and the world (Illich 1971, Freire 2000)—, which adults or teachers are capable of unveiling, often through strict curriculum-organized teaching.

These practices involve scrutiny and judgment based on opinions formed by teachers (Illich 1971) and not on students' background or needs. Daniela's father presented himself as authoritarian bearer of music knowledge to his daughter and she decided to undergo stress and pain to obtain such longed for knowledge. According to Daniela, her first steps as learner under her father were coercive, and her feelings, sensations, or perceptions did not matter: She could not reach the oversized guitar and her father scrutinized how well she imitated whatever he sang or played. Sergio's conservatory guitar teacher claimed categorically that Sergio was unfit to music learning because he did not respond in the way the teacher expected. At the conservatory, Daniela had pharyngitis and even though she was not prepared, she had to sing her full exam for the sake of the institution's protocols. In some

instances, such practices direct learners into the modes of thought and action characteristic of civilized life (see Castro-Gómez 2008). There are two very representative instances in this ethnography: a) School goers are trained in rote singing of national anthems; and, b) Roberto's Protestant private school principal coerced him to teach what was civilized in music to his high school students, a practice that would inevitably question the musics that were familiar to them. Freire (2000, 2009) describes banking education as the most systematic and intense example of such teaching and assessment rituals in formal learning settings. Mostly all of the examples of formal education where the participants experienced oppression, mentioned in this subsection, seem to be closely related to, or exactly, banking education.

Thirdly, there is the example of forcing learners' bodies or putting them at risk. The two representative instances in this ethnography are: a) Daniela's forced voice exam when she had been diagnosed with pharyngitis; and, b) Silvia trying to learn to play the full-size double bass, stretching her arms, wearing heels, and standing on a brick and some phone books. Freire (2000) and Illich (1971) recall that learners in Western education are expected to listen as passive spectators or just submit to institutional educational practices, and adapt to the content to be learned. The body of learners or their location does not matter, but the goal of educational practices seems to be foremost.

Fourth, there is making mock or using psychological violence upon learners. Sergio's classmates called him nicknames (e.g., "Indian") because they considered him inferior or invalid among the group of learners. His guitar teacher used demeaning remarks to instill a self-perception of incompetence (e.g., music was not his strength; he did not seem to have a commitment to music). Roberto's piano teacher remarks, "*Are you dyslexic or what?*" [P1, 1, 9], make a kind of violence that Freire (2000) suggests is likely to suppress the drive for searching to be more, to think, act, create, and intervene in reality. According to Sojo's studies on social construction of inequality in Costa Rica (2009), pedagogical violence has been common and legitimate in schooling. It is a direct legacy of the historical Christian-Spanish physical punishment protocol for children. Violence has taken over many

areas of life in postcolonial countries, especially in the neocolonial period, because financial crises provoke poverty and unemployment.

Fifth, the restriction or denial of funds to access learning may be seen as a way to instill a view of conformity or fatalism about the learner's situation. Daniela's particular situation in her household is the most representative in this study. Daniela's ongoing pessimistic thinking about herself and the parental control of her household finances caused her insecurity and frustration throughout her life of music learning.

### ***Relations of ruling***

It is at this point possible to make more explicit, historically and theoretically, the macro foundations of the power relationships based on construction of inferior/illegitimate individuals in the participants' micro webs of learning. Institutional ethnography calls this kind of organization relations of ruling (see Campbell & Gregor 2004; DeVault 2013; Smith 2005). The ruling relations occur when the agendas of state, market, or Western art tradition coordinate what others do, through textually mediated notions and practices, in family rearing, schooling, conservatory, and college webs. Ruling relationships rely on the music learners and others social actors knowing how to take texts and act in the appropriate way, often without being aware that this is what they are doing. This is how the ruling relations begin in a translocal dimension, outside the encounter of music learners with the ability text in micro interactions. Unveiling the relations of ruling is the last step in exploring a series of relationships to respond to the main research question: *What relationships in music learning are affirmed, explored, or celebrated between the local world of learners and the translocal structures of postcolonial Costa Rica?*

It is possible to suggest that social actors in family rearing, schooling, conservatory, and college webs are already colonized subjects and participate in a process of re-colonization of the music learner, by domesticating or converting music learners' bodies, ethnicities, and relationship with music, in the image of those who teach or hold authority: parents, teachers, peers, or principals. It is also possible in the values and standards of the Western Art music tradition, through the articulation of the civilization/development discourse. In his critical institutional

ethnography of coloniality in Latin America Souza Silva (2011) demonstrates that the two-fold discourse civilization/development discursively sustains the extraction of resources, labor force, obedient minds, and disciplined bodies in Latin American, beginning with the colonization of the Atlantic 500 years ago up to more recent neocolonialist market-based practices. Development is the guise the civilization discourse acquires in the late 20th century. Industrialized, so-called First World countries articulate it to appropriate natural resources, lands, and labor force from the so-called Third World countries for market expansion or ideological domination. Such countries were labeled undeveloped, Third World territories, which had to travel the path of economic development and growth imposed by wealthy countries and transnational agencies, for the latter's agendas. This is how the civilization/development discourse allots for the construction of inferior/illegitimate individuals.

Frantz Fanon (1963, 1967) first used the expression re-colonization from within to theorize how local elites in independent, postcolonial territories renewed material and ideological connections and dependencies with former metropolitan centers. Local elites then impose their own aspirations "over the vast majority of the people, replacing the colonial rule with their own form of dominance, surveillance, and coercion" (Rizvi, Lingard & Lavia 2006, 251). Wynter (2003) emphasizes that such processes operate through self-definitions by hegemonic ethno classes, which mask universal contents to reproduce a given social configuration and the given status of such class. It is important now to recall some historical background: A bourgeois elite began and led such re-colonization in Costa Rica, following the independence from Spain in the first half of the 19th century. They saw themselves as worthy heirs of the European ontology and epistemology, and wished to erase material and symbolic differentiation between Amerindians, Spanish Caucasians, and Afro-Caribbean peoples, from three previous centuries of colonization, by organizing the population under the Liberal, European-based structure of nation. It was necessary to invent a White, rational, civilized, cultivated, European citizen identity to turn the population into docile bodies, willing to participate in the new agro-export economy and political structures, which they controlled.

Following Fanon's (1967) and Castro-Gómez's (2008) theorization, the founders of the Costa Rican nation remained psychologically colonized because they desired to experience Whiteness, even though they could not become White. Whiteness does not refer to a particular skin color, but to an imaginary comprised by religious beliefs, forms of dress, customs, and "forms of producing and disseminating knowledge" (Castro-Gómez 2008, 282). Becoming a civilized and progressive citizen entailed also giving up barbaric modes of living and settings, such as the village, to enter an orderly and productive life, organized by a schedule in the workplace, and not by any natural phenomenon, such as, dawn and dusk (see Cuevas Molina 2006). This means that to become a citizen one had to assimilate into a common measure of human nature that ignores people's bodily, local worlds.

The enforcement of colonial logic based on White supremacy extended to arts and music through cultural Europeanization, as exemplified by the creation of the National Symphony Orchestra, Western Art music schools, and conservatories. Furthermore, making school curricula more relevant to the skills that Costa Rican labor force ought to possess to satisfy the demands of the global market renewed the development discourse in contemporary times. The same seems to apply to the recently founded, massive version of El Sistema in Costa Rica, known as SINEM (see Rosabal-Coto 2016). According to the only study participant who had experience as both student and teacher in this program,

*From the moment we started [in the program], we were told very clearly that we were all equal ... We were all working in order to make the orchestra succeed ... [It was not] making an orchestra, [to produce] professionals or perform music ... it was an orchestra with the vision of making a family, where everyone would get along ... and repertoire came second ... and team work [mattered] (P9, 2, 9-10).*

Small (2010) criticized how this kind of education incorporated students "into the fabric of knowledge, belief and custom" to learn the values of "punctuality, obedience, toleration of boredom and standardization" (285).

Considering that the participants' standpoints are historical, it makes sense to consider that the late 19th-century education reform that oriented education to constructing the ideal Costa Rican European-based citizen within an agro-export economy, permeated the schooling of Costa Rican parents, family members, teacher,

and authorities. Music education was instrumental in this project, especially through the mandatory learning of national patriotic hymns (see Rosabal-Coto 2014). National symbols, historiography, literature, philosophy, and arts enforced such identity. Under the premise that the national identity has been partly or fully assimilated by the social actors in their webs, through the above sociocultural structures, it is not hard to imagine that the study participants are likely to have been colonized by the national identity project from their earliest age, without themselves their parents, or teachers knowing it. Cultural dissonance in family-based webs of music learning (e.g., Cecilia's, Silvia's and Julio's family-guided music learning) may be the logical outcome of processes of family rearing and banking education, towards the formation of an obedient citizen-to-be, without necessarily being violent or overtly colonialist, at least in an obvious way to the participants.

It is possible that the participants were willing to undergo oppressive learning practices; largely motivated by credentials that formal education grants them (e.g., Silvia's and Daniela's acceptance of coercion in conservatory education). Illich tried to make this aspect of capitalist education obvious. According to Illich (1971), school promotes the certainty that it will lead to wealth and status, social insertion and qualification in adult life. After all, Western-based formal education commodifies a nonmaterial need for specific knowledge into a morally necessary demand. Lastly, it remains feasible that the study participants have participated in activities within other Costa Rican colonial and postcolonial institutions, besides family and school, that take the shape of client relationships, and therefore are partially or fully schooled up (see Illich 1971), such as church music ensembles and associated activities, in the cases of Daniela, Carlos, and Julio.

### **6.3.3 Resistance and epistemic disobedience**

Participation in colonization does not mean only passive subjugation. Despite the colonial wound that comes with practices that somehow remind of coloniality of power, most study participants engaged in some resistance to illegitimacy or inferiority locations at different stages throughout their lives of music learning. These different ways relate theoretically to some of the concepts discussed in 2

Theoretical framework. In order to be able to overcome the colonial wound inflicted by her all-male peers' interpretation of her gender, Cecilia seemed to get in touch with her individual strengths that she had developed in a family setting before attending elementary school. This gave her the will to keep up her commitment, invest energy and time, and make an effort to improve and demonstrate her ability. She was able to play in the main ensemble section, conduct the ensemble at the year-end graduation ceremony, and resist sexism, somehow connected to colonial-based gendered violence. Her response to sexism is authoritarian, because she embraces the colonial logic of the conductor as a way to resist:

*I enjoyed the fact that everyone had to pay attention to me. The boys had to swallow their words ... 'girls are not able to play plucked guitar parts' (P7, 2, 5).*

Sergio seemed to have undergone similar self-reflection, which gave him strength to defy insults from his classmates and pejorative remarks by his guitar teacher. He lived through what he described as "a melancholic state" by composing his own songs. Music making for him was

*an instrument or tool to make magic ... a way to reach that magical realm of the things I could accomplish (P4, 1, 14) ... My fantastic reality yielded memories or paths that guided me (P4, 1, 15).*

Fanon (1963) explained that introspective contact with the contradictions felt in one's Blackness could be a source of strength to oppressed Black people, to be able to engage in challenging the colonial apparatus. Cecilia and Sergio are not Black; however, using Fanon's idea as a model, one could agree that each got in touch with their contradictions to identify how what had been othered or discriminated against, was probably his/her strongest asset. This self lies beyond the negative activation of an ability text based on gender or ethnicity. Both Cecilia and Sergio engaged in learning who each one was, but did the learning from their bodily locus, beginning with personal feelings and sensations. Following Fanon, they unlearned on their own what a colonial wound instilled, upon each of them, from the site of enunciation of the colonizers. Anzaldúa (2007) uses the concept border epistemology to depict what Fanon had foreseen. Even though she defined this epistemology from her specific lesbian Chicana locus and not from Blackness, she did it from a border

location. Cecilia's gendered- and Sergio's ethnic- located positions can be seen as border sites in relation to the all-male and Costa Rican ethnic-identity locations, two "official" sites of production of knowledge in their schooling incidents of discrimination. Perhaps by realizing their particular strengths, they acquired a vision of themselves as unfinished and incomplete. According to Freire (2000), such realization could lead learners to acknowledge their ontological vocation of *being more* than what they were taught they could be, as well as their potential to act upon the world to transform oppressive realities.

Roberto recounted that once he began working as a teacher, he tried to become the kind music teacher he never had. This decision might not simply be an ideal. Roberto had constructed a musical self in positive relationships in informal experiences and conservatory setting, motivated enough to dedicate his life to it:

*I rediscovered my love for music when I was 18 ... 'I can do it; I can do it' (P1, 1, 12).*

Roberto did not give up in interacting with teachers *'that would eat you alive'* (P1, 1, 8), like the group piano teacher who labeled him as unable. He seemed to persevere by being in touch with what he had previously constructed. Perhaps Roberto was engaging in a border epistemology process, too.

The simultaneous intersection of the webs of masculine authority, the material conditions of a migrant in lower class life in postcolonial Costa Rica, and Western Art Music standards and values constructed Daniela as an inferior throughout her life. She resisted in several ways, including:

- (a) Attending the church choir rehearsals—itsself a colonial institution—to watch and learn;
- (b) Carrying a guitar—her machete— on her shoulder, and listening to a Walkman in school; and,
- (c) Learning from teachers and peers at school and in college outside the music class or college music courses.

Daniela may show us another example of border epistemology. In her senior high school year, she held firmly to the musical self she had constructed—the girl in a denim jacket, with very short hair, who carried her guitar on her shoulder and

listened to a Walkman. Daniela finally “*had a reason to pass baccalaureate and leave school once and for all*” (P6, 1, 11). Daniela moved beyond the awareness of being a daughter of a poor immigrant and the fatalism and insecurity in relation to the lack of moral and financial support from her family. She successfully entered a university music program, despite her father’s opposition and warning that he would cut financial help. Once in college, despite being othered through assessment due to not having early classical instrument training, she connected with a part of her previous, aurally based music background, as an advantage to her challenges in relation to learning music theory and notation:

*I already had something to associate new knowledge with. If they talked to me about a [harmonic] progression, I had already done it, and I knew how it would sound (P6, 2, 3).*

When narrating the incident of her pharyngitis and the forced voice exam in the conservatory, Daniela reflected that her problems were stuck in her throat because she was unable to verbalize her pain to figures of authority. However, perhaps it was precisely in her throat where she experienced how strong and able she could be, had only she believed in herself and her assets.

*At the end of the first [conservatory] year I got sick ... a severe pharyngitis, because I got sick very often. I had difficulties speaking things out, so everything would get stuck in my throat (P6, 2, 11).*

Daniela’s multiple instances of oppression and border reflection are helpful to realize that resistance to colonization cannot be explained under one formula or category, but rather captured in particular reflections by oppressed bodily selves, in particular webs.

Another way through which several study participants resisted oppression was to seek peer assistance to learn tasks they were allegedly unable to complete. In her second incident with all-males, Cecilia learned to perform “hard” tasks on electronic and sound equipment, previously reserved for males. Cecilia and Daniela asked peers to tutor them when their informal background in music was insufficient in music theory and notation. Such action recalls the importance that Illich (1971) gave to building networks to challenge the educational establishment imparting

knowledge distanced from the backgrounds and goals of the learners. He suggests the deliberate creation of networks to deschool society. To Illich (1971), such webs should serve self-motivated and self-directed, collaborative learning. According to his vision, they were a little sophisticated in their organization: they could include peers and elders, as well as professionals and free-lancers, and be centered around the “kinds of things and people might learners want to be in contact with in order to learn” (111). Even though the instances in this ethnography do not fall into the sophisticated and systematic process of networking as Illich argues, they certainly illustrate the potential of oppressed individuals to disobey and dismantle what has been learned through oppressive or discriminating institutional practices. They also reflect how oppressed learners become self-motivated and acquire new, relevant knowledge in cooperation with others, without interfering with their bodily location. A term that is very close to this act of unlearning colonizing habits and concepts is epistemic disobedience (see Anzaldúa 2007; Mignolo 2007). When the participants reflect upon this disobedience, they can reveal and dismantle colonialist powers. By acting according to this disobedience, the participants regain music-learning practices from the re-colonization from within in the hands of teachers and authorities.

All study participants seem to have engaged in a particular kind of epistemic disobedience once they began working as teachers. They identified problems they needed to solve, or needs relevant to their students’ bodily locations, backgrounds, and goals. Cecilia tried to understand the world of liturgical musicians-in-the-making to be able to provide them with useful learning, partly because her college education did not address this particular music making. She approached peer teachers and musicians for assistance. Daniela questions the national identity and national hymns in her teaching:

*[a national hymn] is only a way to make us think who we are, but I’m not sure if we really are like that ... As a teacher, one has the obligation to teach a hymn or a song, one has to describe the context. Otherwise, one is contributing to advance ignorance (P6, 3, 6).*

Carlos considers the circumstances of hymns singing to be militaristic. He negotiated with his students to address hymns in music class at a minimum level. He

understands why students do not relate to the hymns: “*It’s called adolescence*” (P3, 2, 11).

Fabiola has her own way to challenge teaching hymns:

*[I intend] to plant a little seed of curiosity and interest, self-knowledge, and expression [in my students] ... through auditions, song analysis, music history ... [we work on] self-knowledge, curiosity, and critical thinking (P5, 1, 14).*

She acknowledges that she owes this to socialization with her teacher mother:

*[My mother] educated me under those concepts, expecting me to be a critical, expressive [person] (P5, 1, 14).*

Fabiola also reconnects with her singing self to be able to better reach out to the worlds of her students. She seems to engage in problem solving with her students:

*[t]eaching makes you (see) your weaknesses and strengths (as both learner and teacher) ... and you begin to recall, ‘Hey, how did I learn this? How can I teach it to this person?’ ... Singing brings out insecurities ... (while) choice repertoire defines (a person’s) personality a lot (P5, 2, 5).*

Fabiola reflects lucidly on the interactionally shaped, bodily locations of herself and her students, and their implications:

*You are exposed to talking with people who believe in what you say ... [and are] trusting what you say... [Y]ou are in constant communication with people who have different energies, different ways to see life, who are in a different process than you. So it is tiring to be all the time like in a roller coaster. [W]hen you are with ... kindergarten students, you have to get into a specific world ... I am in motion all the time ... I [combine] body movement with dance... When I teach secondary, I get to the other end, and when I am in the teachers’ room, it’s coming back to [a different world] (P5, 2, 6).*

Julio somehow opposes the ability notion based on age, by focusing on the background and goals of his piano students, rather than imposing institutional protocols:

*Since I began [studying piano] so late, they, all of a sudden, tried to push me very hard, and I was not ready (P2, 1, 5) ... ‘The world does not need technical pianists, it needs people who are able to feel. People are forgetting how to feel ...*

*I don't want to reproduce patterns, theories or contents ... I want them to learn what to do with those contents in their own lives (P2, 3, 6).*

Raúl sees a psychological and moral side to the interaction-based role of a teacher, and resists homogenizing students through his teaching. He commits himself to addressing their needs:

*When I teach I feel it is more than ... someone who comes and teaches a method ... it is more like a doctor. Every person is different and has different problems. You are the one who has to figure out how to help this person, [help] him/her to find him/herself and solve the problem by themselves ... I also remember that ... sometimes I spend the class talking with the students about personal matters... they trust you and tell you (P9, 2, 15).*

Through the above instances, Cecilia, Daniela, Carlos, Fabiola, Julio, and Raúl engage in epistemic disobedience because they seem to break the one-way, indoctrinatory, teacher-student dyad that Freire (2000, 2009) criticized so intensely as banking education. To these participants, teaching is not only content and practices prescribed by an institution or tradition. Teaching is not necessarily about converting learners into cultivated or developed citizens, as the old national identity or the new market demand. It is mostly about backgrounds, needs, goals, and actions of human beings, and about solving problems relevant to teachers and students. It appears the participants are part of a web of teachers that recover learning from the internal re-colonization that organizes music learning in postcolonial Costa Rica, as identified in the context of this dissertation. The study participants seem to contribute to deschooling the invented tradition upon which the Costa Rican society is built (see Illich 1971). Following the metaphor in Aggrey's story (1998), they seem committed to guiding music learners to encounter their condition as eagles in a macro structure that seems to aim to educate chickens. They are able to engage in this enterprise with their own students because at some point they took control of their own delinking from hegemonic concepts and practices. According to Freireian theory (2000, 2009), these teachers, as the oppressed, became aware of the epistemic wound and realized that they were not being true to themselves, and that their vocation to be more was obliterated. They acknowledged the need to struggle for

liberation. Freire (2000) suggests that nobody is more qualified than the oppressed to understand the effects of oppressive interactions on oppressed bodily beings. Only they can understand fully the need for liberation. At some sites of inferior construction, these learners/teachers metaphorically stood on top of a hill and experienced sunlight in their eyes, to reconnect with the eagle within, and set out to live and learn outside the illegitimate position.

## 6.4 Chapter summary

In this chapter, I analyzed the relationships that coordinate the social organization of music learning in the context of this dissertation. I employed my model of analysis that I call Postcolonial institutional ethnography (PCIE), which brings together postcolonial thinking and concepts, and institutional ethnography. The analysis is largely theoretical, but returns to the experience of the study participants. This is advantageous in two ways:

1. The participants' empirical, interactional experiences are not obliterated or distorted by universalist or essentialist concepts or theories, as evidenced in the ethnographic theme discussion in the previous chapter, and
2. It is possible to establish relationships between the micro or local based courses of action around music learning according to the participants' actualities, and how the macro processes already produced coordinate such socialization.

According to PCIE, the study participants' standpoint is the bodily, interactionally overlapped and shaped, and historical-postcolonial location from where they enunciate their actualities, as opposed to a category or trait. A latent puzzle emerges more often in formal than informal music learning socialization: The participants/music learners submit time, energy, thinking, expectations, efforts, and notions about themselves, others, music, and learning music to institutionalized practices. Such practices are managed by parents or relatives, peers, teachers, or authorities who control material and symbolic resources, prominently, hegemonic music knowledge or an invented music or citizenship tradition. More often than not, learning socialization did not relate to what is familiar in their informal based music

learning. Music learners may be coerced to act, feel, speak, think, and learn music to become who the traditions and epistemology upheld by adults, State, or market wants them to become. This involves subtle or overt forms of violence, from demeaning comments or remarks, to physical violence:

1. Disregard of learners' age, gender, ethnicity, identity, feelings, sensations, thoughts, goals, and previous learning, as irrelevant or invalid.
2. Exposure of learners to performance or assessment rituals or settings that they are not yet physically, cognitively, or emotionally prepared to handle.
3. Forcing learner's bodies or putting them at risk.
4. Making mock or using psychological violence upon learners
5. Restriction or denial of funds to access learning.

These convey the message that the music learner possesses:

1. The wrong traits (e.g., gender or race) or identity (e.g., national identity), in the context of one-gender ensemble, instrumental lessons, or national hymn singing;
2. Insufficient material or financial resources, when family financial possibilities are obstacles to access instruction and learning resources;
3. Insufficient corporeal ability (e.g. sufficient age to learn to play specific instruments or to accommodate teacher's demands on instrumental learning); or,
4. Insufficient background in Western Art music (e.g., when trying to make connections between informal, ear-based background, and notation, music theory assessment situations).

These socialization dynamics constructs them as inferior subjects and dispossess them of their history, memory, and bodily-located resources, and silences them or sentences them to disappear. While study participants seem to activate these notions into self-inferiority, social actors that enunciate them as illegitimate or unable, appear to have learned stereotypes of ability in their family and school socialization. This way to learn music coercively, and to learn self-perceptions of inability or inadequacy for control agendas foreign to the learners' world, can be called epistemic control. Such control of what and how they learn is an instance of a colonial wound, similar to how the colonization of the Indigenous accomplished domestication of "the barbaric and irrational" inhabitants of the New World through the *encomienda* and religious conversion. It is a wound because it differentiates the

music learner as illegitimate in relation to the culture or tradition upheld by those in control of learning, just for being outside them. It is colonial because it is grounded on a universal world-system that prescribes the White, rational, European way to be and learn, in the same way that Spanish colonialism and contemporary neocolonialism operate in Latin America. This dynamic is coloniality of power. Coloniality of power is different from other forms of violence or oppression, because the impingement of a colonial wound is necessary to re-order the entire world according to the European ideal of richness, power, and associated notions of civilization, justice, or Christian sanctity, and make this particular world system universal. Coloniality of power is considered the dark side of modernity, because of the price paid by Amerindians to bear upon their bodies the European project of civilization/progress.

Despite the notorious instances of colonization, the music learners in this ethnography may exercise resistance through mechanisms coherent with postcolonial concepts of liberation from oppression—like epistemic disobedience and border epistemology—and stop being oppressed.

It must be mentioned, after concluding this PCIE analysis, that two coordinates constituent of the participants' standpoints, warrant being addressed directly, rather than indirectly: (a) Gender inequality and construction of masculinities; and, (b) financial and material conditions.

## **7 Towards a sociology for music learners**

I begin this chapter with a summary of the research findings resulting from analysis by way of Postcolonial Institutional Ethnography (PCIE), in terms of the main research question and related questions. Second, PCIE and music education research (7.2) suggest theoretical and methodological challenges, as well as potential contributions of PCIE to decolonizing music education research. The concluding section suggests how a sociology for music learners might help music education focus on often silenced or taken for granted realities of music learners, and promote decolonization of concepts, values, and practices that we, as students or teachers, articulate unknowingly as social practices that end up colonizing us.

### **7.1 From the micro-constructed body, to macrosociology of music learning: PCIE and the research questions**

This research is the culmination of many years in a personal quest to understand contradictions, dilemmas and conflicts that began in my music learner bodily being, during the time I was enculturated into Western Art Music practices in a conservatory in Costa Rica. Throughout the years, I encountered very similar disjunctures in the everyday lives of my music education university students. At the beginning of the dissertation, I posed an example of emotional pain and psychic dislocation in the story of music learning by Roberto, a former student of mine, inflicted within what many of us would consider normal and legitimate music socialization. I suggested that everyday music learning dislocation could be a site for organization of social discovery beyond abstract categories created by social research. I urged music education researchers to address often taken-for-granted disjuncture in the everyday lives of music learners from an experiential standpoint. I also contended that we should approach such matters theoretically, scrutinizing the colonialist agendas that have ruled the material and symbolic development of music and education in postcolonial contexts.

In this study, nine music teachers in Costa Rica shared their experiences about what was done, with whom and what resources (material or symbolic), and for what reasons, in learning music with others. They spoke in their capacity as experts in their bodily experiences. Experience takes place in social interactions in informal and formal contexts. Thoughts, feelings, words, and actions that articulate social practices comprise experience. Institutionalized practices organize experience in music learning socialization. I analyzed the participants' webs of interaction through PCIE. I identified their locations as bodily, interactional, and postcolonial. Organization of music learners' bodily-located resources is entrenched with the needs and values of empirical selves of music learners and the many social actors involved. Those who manage resources and make decisions about music learning are the ones who recruit, enculturate, and judge music learners. Organization often becomes hierarchical, with a range of degrees of freedom and control that appear to constitute multiple empirical selves of these social actors. Recalling a few representative instances analyzed in this study helps us understand:

Sometimes, freedom to make and learn music, and non-censoring, non-oppressive socialization of the music learner, seem to matter to social actors who control learning, mostly in informal-based webs, such as home or peer socialization. For instance, a parent or relative turns the music engagement experience into pleasure and safety, seemingly based on their own upbringing and past music socialization webs. This is how, as music learners, Cecilia, Silvia, Fabiola, and Julio explored and affirmed relationships of caring and self-growth in music engagements led by adult figures in their homes. Sergio, Roberto, and Raúl gained confidence, too, through similar degrees of freedom in family or peer-based music making. Carlos and Raúl explored stimulating socialization, too, in school music webs. It appears that freedom and flexibility occur less often in formal schooling.

Other times, however, oppression emerges through the practices led by those in control of resources and knowledge within contrasting, coercive control in both informal and formal learning contexts. Daniela represents an example of extensive coercion in family music webs, because her father exercised his authority and controlled financial resources important to accessing music learning, apparently in connection with his construction of masculinity in his immigrant family webs.

However, coercion happens more insistently in formal contexts, somehow associated with Western Art Music knowledge and resources. Roberto's account is a strong example: A teacher's past Western Art Music education may attempt to rule what is taught and what is expected of the students in relation to Western Art Music learning goals. Both instances disregard the background and expectations that learners bring to music learning, because of agendas and convictions that empirical selves of parents, teachers, and even authorities bring forth in relation to their own webs of interaction, somehow foreign to the local worlds of music learners.

In spite of the recurrent instances of oppression, music learners partially or fully exercised resistance to coercive control of their music worlds, at different stages in their lives, and on their own terms. Sometimes interaction with other peer students or musicians, or just interaction with their own self-motivation, triggers the unlearning of what is oppressive in music learning socialization and encourages making choices to exercise agency. This is how Julio was able to reconcile his formal music learning with his bodily sensations and self-image through dance; and how Roberto was able to engage in punk rock, protest music composing, even though previous college studies focused on more traditional music education. The analysis summarized so far responds to the first related question: *What is done in regard to music learning in everyday social interactions, according to the accounts of the study participants?*

The associated manipulation and ruling of the body, thinking, sensations, and self-image that brought disjuncture or displacement to the study participants, referred me theoretically to the material and symbolic dynamics through which colonialism historically has oppressed individuals and communities for five centuries in Latin America, including Costa Rica. Colonialism spans from the European transatlantic expansion 500 years ago, to the ruling of the global market upon many dimensions of life, including music and education, in current times. I established theoretical connections between the experiences of disjuncture/oppression of the participants, with thinking about colonialism and the construction of an other-inferior. According to the relationships that PCIE traces between micro-based oppression in informal and formal webs, and macro-based colonization practices in Costa Rica, the following subtle or overt forms of violence

influence how learners think, feel, speak, and make choices to engage in music learning webs:

1. Disregard of learners' age, gender, ethnicity, identity, feelings, sensations, thoughts, goals, and previous learning as irrelevant or invalid;
2. Exposure of learners to performance or assessment rituals or settings that they are not yet physically, cognitively, or emotionally prepared to handle;
3. Forcing learner's bodies or putting them at risk;
4. Making mock or using psychological violence upon learners; and,
5. Restriction or denial of funds to access learning.

The above forms of music learning socialization often bring forth the message that the music learner possesses:

1. The wrong traits or identity;
2. Insufficient material or financial resources;
3. Insufficient corporeal ability; or,
4. Insufficient background in Western Art Music.

Under PCIE these are ability-related texts, because they convey macro-institutionalized ways to act, think, and feel to social actors, who, in turn, articulate them as norms within micro interactions. This process makes possible the coercive control and oppression of the music learner through an epistemic act of appropriation and modification of their lived bodily location in music learning. This act causes displacement or split of consciousness in the participants' local world and body as they know them, and often denies their voice and agency. Learners activate the ability text in relation to the credibility, confidence, and familiarity of their location in their bodies in multiple webs. For instance, Daniela's confidence and longing as female music maker conflicted with her father's negative remarks and coercion as a potentially *macho* father/teacher, just as Roberto's ability for music became irrelevant in a college web when he did not perform as the artist/teacher expected. This stage of analysis addressed the second related question: *How do music learners develop perceptions about themselves, others, and music in their interactions in music learning?*

Next, I revised the postcolonial concept coloniality of power (Quijano 2000), also known as the dark side of modernity, and used it to interpret the organization of

music learning webs around the interests of colonialism. This means that music learning webs shape the physical, intellectual, and emotional make-up of the music learner through concepts about self and music, and practices around learning, to convert the learner into the image of those who own the knowledge of the Western Art Music tradition, as historical colonialism has done through colonality. I theoretically determined that the colonization of music learners abides by an interest to control them for agendas unrelated to their local worlds. Further theoretical connections with critiques in educational literature allowed me to trace these agendas to the goals of modernity and capitalism at large, as transmitted and perpetuated through Western Art Music education tradition. This includes more recent forms of colonialism that affirm, explore, or celebrate the civilization/development discourse (Souza Silva 2011), in the likeness of European or developed world, Western, modernity. This ideal might implicate learners in shunning the ways they experience music, especially in formal education webs. The thoughts, feelings, and experiences in their worlds of learning not modeled after the Whiteness, rationality, logic, repertoire, and methodologies of modernity and capitalism are in danger of erasure or modification. This theoretical analysis responds to the third related question: *What relationships in music learning are affirmed, explored, or celebrated between the local world of learners and the translocal structures of postcolonial Costa Rica?*

In light of the above analysis, it is not difficult to think from a macro perspective that the construction of subalternity through power relations in micro webs of music learning in postcolonial Costa Rica is grounded in a sometimes tacit, sometimes overt, aspiration to colonial Whiteness. This aspiration is associated with the material and cultural dynamics of both the agro-export economy initiated in the nineteenth century within the national identity project, and the rules of the global market. This means that through the articulation of social practices coordinated by the discourse civilization/development, social actors who control learning participate in the re-colonization of music learners so that they become White, European or—in the neocolonial era—North American/industrialized, civilized, developed, cultivated individuals in their interactionally shaped bodily being. Goals inherent to political, economic, or artistic agendas often foreign to the learner's bodily location guide this

re-colonization. As Fanon (1963) contends, a “recolonization from within” occurs when local elites in postcolonial context –who aspire to be White in every sense—, use similar structures to those that formerly colonized them, to control property and mind of those outside the hegemonic structures. This intersectional analysis of the three related research questions addresses the main research question: *How is musical learning in postcolonial Costa Rica organized from the standpoint of young music teachers?*

## **7.2 PCIE and music education research**

Engaging in PCIE has the potential to expand the awareness and scope of research in music education that focuses the social organization of music learning. PCIE contributes its theoretical tenets, concepts, and methodological and analytical approach. For instance, it was challenging to me, while engaging in this research, to attempt theoretical connections between music education literature and the participants’ first-person experiences. The theoretical notions cultural consonance and dissonance—perhaps useful and pertinent in terms of micro webs as some Euro-American scholarship sees social interactions around music—somehow fell short when it came to addressing the macro-organization of power and colonization as experienced from the postcolonial music learners’ standpoints. I did not find in such scholarship the bodily-located disjuncture in terms of the lived experiences of learners. The feelings, sensations, and personal thoughts were missing. The experience is replaced with abstract concepts from the researcher’s viewpoint, such as age, occupation, nationality, race, and gender. I also found that such scholarship neither addresses directly the dynamics of coloniality of power behind the construction of the subaltern, in terms of micro and macro social organization.

In fact, in the first phase of analysis of the participants’ actualities, I did not notice the importance of two specific macro-organized processes that influenced music learning: (a) The social construction of masculinity under machismo and (b) structurally-based financial/material access to music learning. I made this decision

because they did not seem at first to be related to the research questions. They appeared to be outside the “music proper”. Such oversight may have to do more with my own Whiteness as a researcher, because my thinking was constrained by the Euro-American research tradition. However, as I went back to the data and engaged in additional study, I discovered the problematic, and these two factors gained much importance. Machismo-based male authority and institutional control of financial/material resources became power-related tools to exert control over the music learners’ agency and condition their socialization in music. These processes enact past and ongoing macro processes of colonization in the music learners’ bodily micro location. This kind of realization allowed me to strengthen theoretically the social coordination of music learning in concordance with the postcolonial specificity of the study’s problematic. Aware of the emergence of this particular kind of construction of masculinity at the last stage of analysis, I suggest that the next crucial issue in Costa Rican music learning PCIE could be machismo as a ruling relation of music learning in formal and informal settings, embedded in colonial and neocolonial structures. On a methodological note, this demonstrates that PCIE identifies a set of relations that explain the social from a very specific contextual perspective, without attempting to constitute a full or finished picture of the social.

PCIE begins in the everyday, local realities of music learners as they experience it. This gave me ample room to start theoretically and methodologically, and return recursively in analysis, to the very standpoints of the participants as they construct their learning, and not from my own assumptions, or someone else’s abstract theories or categories about music learning. This is how I attempted to avoid truncating the participants’ experience and the social, in light of Walby’s (2007) advice. As Spivak (2010) warned, social researchers have the power and tools to diagnose actualities at their own convenience or interest, knowingly or not (see Sharpe & Spivak 2003; Spivak 2010). In fact, the researcher has the potential to become a First World colonizer that is already biased and convinced of the inferiority or illegitimacy of the background and the ways to be in the world in music of the Third World individuals, (or chickens—remembering Aggrey’s parable about the chicken and the eagle), namely, the music learners. However, it is worth

recognizing, as Walby (2007) points out, that institutional ethnographic research operates discursively to a certain degree. For this reason, I acknowledge that my analysis, while consciously and purposefully centered on the participants' experience of the social, in order to avoid misrepresentation, may not be fully exempt of the influence of my own experience as a postcolonial music learner/teacher/researcher, and the discursive framework of the specific methodology used in this ethnography.

PCIE makes palpable a locus or site of enunciation for music learners that becomes a flexible and adaptable standpoint, to which any music learner can relate, not exclusive to postcolonial contexts. In light of the research focus on bodily-located, interactional ways to be in the world, and PCIE's political commitment to problematize colonialist notions and practices that suppress the bodily location, it may be necessary to become epistemically disobedient in order to approach music learners' standpoints. Becoming epistemologically disobedient means that we engage in unlearning theoretically and methodologically much of what research has undertaken as standard and legitimate practices, because these practices have the potential to subjugate music learners' experience under colonial structures. This requires respect for the integrity of the stories, from fieldwork to analysis, reviewing, and writing, so that each participant contributes his/her own story in their own terms and frames the researcher's role as a co-constructor of knowledge.

However, in many non-Latin American, or non-Third World contexts, researchers may still need to become more fully aware of how they may construct inferior, illegitimate *others* on a daily basis, through ruling relations based on the articulation of universal and abstract, discursive categories related to civilization and development connected with sociopolitical and financial, national or international processes. For instance, what I have defined as an oppressed music learner may not be very different from being a marginalized Indigenous in Costa Rica, a First Nations student living on an Aboriginal reserve in Canada, or the urban Caribbean immigrant, or an Afro-American teenager in a North American city. None of the above may necessarily feel a relevant connection to Western Art Music or its learning socialization, inasmuch as becoming a Western Art musician requires these learners to shun their music world. In light of this contextual flexibility, the music

learner standpoint becomes a procedural and analytical tool relevant to diverse geographic and symbolic places, communities, and individuals in many webs or interactions.

The problematic, as frame to the learner's experiences of disjuncture, becomes an additional theoretical tool that opens up possibilities for freeing inquiry about why and how people engage with music from colonialist frameworks. The problematic is a puzzle through which we can locate discourses that organize social practice around music learning, associated with colonialism. The problematic allows us to see the value of disjuncture as site for discovery of social organization based in oppressive relationships. The experience of disjuncture as articulated by music learners allows us to see instances of socialization where colonial-based institutional organization of learning seems flawed in relation to the worlds of learners.

Through PCIE-based macro sociological analysis, I traced the relationships that rule social organization of music learning webs to the macro-based text civilization/development. Such ruling relations direct our attention to how economic, political, or ideological controls organize how learners become subalterns in music learning practices, in ways they may not be aware of. Freire (2000, 2009) and Small (2010) criticized the role of school and education in preparing students to be uncritical participants and reproducers of the dynamics of capitalism. In light of the flexible and broad meanings and contexts of colonization, PCIE provides a theoretical and methodological approach to frame colonial power, and/or violence-based issues in music learning situations in other postcolonial contexts.

Worth emphasizing again is that, however exhaustive the exploration of diverse standpoints can be, we cannot claim that PCIE provides a full, finished picture of ruling relations. The ruling relations are contingent on whose standpoint the researcher focuses on, and on the specific conceptual framework the ethnographer uses to approach coloniality. PCIE draws particular attention to those who remain invisible within colonizing educational processes, those about whom researchers do not usually talk, and those whose experience becomes abstracted through theorization. It is of crucial importance, then, to explore other, often-overlooked standpoints in music webs, and ask: *What relationships are explored, affirmed or celebrated in music making or learning from the standpoint of these specific social*

*actors*? For example, this research did not explore directly and in depth, the webs of interaction of social actors who controlled to different degrees, music socialization in the lives of the study participants, e.g., parents, teachers, peers, or authorities. However, these social locations are potential sites for other kinds of disjuncture and webs of interaction that inevitably affect learning processes due to their connections with colonialist, institutionalized notions and practices, such as family, school, church, State, and market. Additional ruling relations may be unveiled through studying these sites. Other social locations identified in this study, which deserve to be considered as standpoints for PCIE research, in order to expand knowledge of the social, include:

1. The webs of parents or relatives that exercised considerable control of their children's music learning at home, like Cecilia's, Daniela's, and Julio's fathers. For instance, in light of the unfavorable impact of Daniela's father's hierarchical control over his daughter's material resources and practices in music learning in a new country, his family, nationality and ethnic webs as immigrant parent deserve further exploration as site of disjuncture. Worth exploring, also, are the webs of relatives who at times encouraged or censored music learning, and remained less in control in their children's music learning, like Cecilia's parents and siblings, or Silvia's great aunt, inasmuch as they contribute more knowledge in terms of interweaving webs. They may not necessarily reveal disjuncture, but perhaps there are other texts and webs whose interplay has to do with the organization of music learning, such as, religious affiliation, upbringing patterns, or emotional make-up, roughly visible in the actualities explored in this study.

2. The religious, economic, and civic webs that underpinned the principal's decisions to impose specific pedagogical practices and then fire Roberto, even though he cared about his students' learning needs, may reveal more about other related webs that constrain learning. Webs of other institutional staff who allow the music teacher some curricular or pedagogical flexibility, such as Carlos' boss, may also show us additional relationships that organize music learning.

3. The ethnic, socioeconomic and family webs of peers who treated some music learners as inferior or unable (e.g., Cecilia and Sergio), as well as of those who did not embrace discrimination and exclusion, but somehow contributed to the

forging of their music learners' epistemic disobedience, are also potential standpoints for relationships that coordinate music learning.

PCIE practice needs to be strongly coherent with its contextual and theoretical background, political commitment, and avoid contributing to colonization from within—to use Fanon's expression (1963, 1967). It is important not to emphasize issues that matter only to researchers' own webs of interaction, like their worldview, overall personal background or history, or even their own convictions about social justice and social change. This may happen, too, when researchers promote the agendas controlled by the institutions they represent. Colonization from within may rely on long-standing analytical frameworks that are theoretically useful to detach experience from people or objectify them, like multiculturalism, diversity, and globalization. These categories may serve to homogenize dissimilar or particular standpoints into universalistic constructions that make particular experiences into abstractions, far from what pertains to the experience of the individuals or communities studied. This is how the researcher could truncate the experience of individuals and in doing so, re-enact models of colonization. This is understandable: Just like any other research approach, PCIE could uncritically impose an invented hegemonic tradition, as defined by Hobsbawm (2000).

In addition, as Spivak warned, it may be necessary to be cautious to avoid exaggerated political claims on behalf of postcolonial texts, since postcolonial constructions may provide limited effective vehicles for political change. Even the term postcolonial can be misleading if it signifies a straightforward historical break with the political, cultural, and economic legacy of colonialism. Then, following Spivak (1988), it is necessary to assemble a complex array of theoretical perspectives in PCIE to approach the complexity of the nature of colonization. For this reason, PCIE researchers may need to scrutinize and expand postcolonial institutional ethnography conceptually, theoretically, and methodologically, and even interrogate the political ideals of postcolonial thinking and Modernity/(De)coloniality that ground this analytical method.

### 7.3 PCIE and music learning

The present ethnographic research was about music learners who were the object of colonial-based practices of control and power that guided their construction as inferior *others* in multiple webs, more often than not, in formal schooling. Freire (2000, 2009) and Small (2010) questioned the role of teachers as technocrats through the practice of banking education, within a curriculum packed with capitalist-based practices of recruitment, indoctrination, and assessment. I embodied this kind of teacher in many ways. I thought that I knew my students well and what was good for them. I took as true the institutional assumptions about music learners and learning. In striving to be a good teacher in front of my principal, dean, fellow colleagues, and parents, I intended wholeheartedly to deliver curricula and promote practices socially mandated for the education of productive, civilized citizens and/or cultivated Western Art Music-based musicians. Somehow, I felt I needed to be a worthy representative of institutionalized tradition. At my first teaching job, in an elementary school, I was a fervent advocate of massive recorder playing of Western Art Music and taught the national hymns. I was simultaneously striving to become a classically trained woodwind musician. Coincidentally, much of what I did or claimed in my teaching, emulated values and actions I witnessed in teachers and authorities in formal webs of socialization around music. Not only was I ignoring a lot of what my own music learning was about, but also I was contributing to re-colonization from within through the enunciation of colonialist notions and practices that had restricted or annulled my own learning.

Because of the above, I did not choose to use enough time and efforts to understand the bodies and webs of interaction of the music learners who interacted with me in education institutions. Music education was not necessarily about them; it was about the institution/nation and the demands of the macroeconomic context, the Western Art Music education tradition, but it was a lot about *me*, too. Sometimes I wielded the citizenship and Western Art Music education-based institutional values and knowledge instilled in my body. Other times, I made prominent my bodily ways to engage with music. My mission was to lead learners to remain within civilized/developed coordinates in making or learning music. Nevertheless, through

PCIE, I realized how wrong I might have been. There is no doubt that many of my music students shared a thirst to learn; however, their ways to be in the world through music had very little to do with *my* music, or *my* own life itinerary of music learning. What they felt, thought, did, and liked in relation to music, was very distant from the music and practices of the institution and tradition I represented.

Through this dissertation research, I realized it was time for me to undertake systematic, epistemic disobedience as an educator, that is, to unlearn what I had been doing as a good teacher, and set to understand my students from a macro sociological perspective, rather than my own, familiar micro webs. Even though my gut feeling and some sociological reflection on my colonized bodily experiences had been going on for a while, developing PCIE allowed me to approach my experiences theoretically and methodologically, and in doing so, to close an ontological and emotional gap. I realized that epistemic disobedience entailed first locating who I was in music and learning by listening to my bodily-being speak about who and how I was in the social world *in* and *through* music. This meant becoming aware of past disjuncture, as well as being in touch with ongoing disjuncture. I was able to connect disjuncture with a specific dynamics of alienation, in this case, coloniality of power. I theorized how I may have been my own oppressor by an entire tradition and institution, by establishing theoretical connections between my bodily experience (and that of former students) and a body of thought (postcolonial thinking) that remains somewhat marginal in mainstream Western thinking, even in Latin America. Coloniality stopped being the rationale of an unfortunate and shameful historical process that made Amerindians and their descendants into subalterns, and became a framework to understand the story of *my* music learning disjuncture. After acknowledging my world in disjuncture, it was possible to develop border epistemology, as Anzaldúa (2007) suggests; however, this is not easy or predictable. As I discovered through PCIE, it is conditioned by the interplay of notions and practices embedded in the many webs where social actors around us are located, and the postcolonial context where I live and teach.

Through PCIE in this dissertation, I learned that in learners' bodies-in-webs we could identify social practices that sustain macro realities based on colonialism. We could make connections with the basics that every music learner is able to access:

the sensuous body, guts, and overall experience-in-disjuncture, as-felt/lived in social interactions. Moreover, this could be done from the first-person perspective in ethnographic dialogue, a collaborative task between teacher and students where teachers learn from students. This task may reveal to us unsuspected empirical selves and webs that so far may have remained concealed, beyond norms and conventions embedded in webs of schooling and music, and also beyond our personal goals and expectations. Sociologically speaking, this means that we have the opportunity to expand our awareness beyond the micro webs and develop a fuller macro awareness of what we do with and in music on a daily basis, always returning to the experience of the music learners.

To conclude, in the light of this PCIE research, I emphasize that the bodily experience of the learner, as experienced in webs of interaction, *matters*. The ways to feel, think, speak, express, act, and be, do matter, perhaps more than how we teachers are, or were taught to be, in our own bodies-in-socialization as teachers. How else can we attempt to understand social-based learning more fully? Cecilia's, Silvia's, Sergio's, Daniela's, and Roberto's informal-based webs of music should have mattered to their conservatory and college teachers. The bodily manifestations of disjuncture (and resistance) in their attempts to comply with pedagogical practices and assessment should have been listened to as realities of worlds and particular webs that affected learning in specific times. Local worlds where learning became disjuncture, can be read in Cecilia's muscular stiffness when she first engaged in the dynamics of a conservatory recital, and in Daniela's pharyngitis and psychological pressure at the moment of a conservatory voice exam. Also important are Silvia's discomfort while trying to adjust her body to the oversize double bass, and Roberto's emotional pain when called dyslexic in front of his class, after his efforts to play well. These instances of disjuncture unveil that the learning bodily location is often unrelated to the institutional or invented traditions, and the civilization/development discourse, in the ways that many of us may be teaching. In addition, this means that colonialist structured oppression may be read as experience in our bodies and physical performance.

In sum, a sociology for music learners that informs music teaching, may have more to do with understanding the organization of bodily experiences in music

learning webs, “implicit in the everyday world into forms of discursive representation” that “can be subjected to inquiry” (Smith 2005, 40). Sociology for music learners may attend to “a set of puzzles” that are “‘latent’ in the actualities of the experienced world” (Smith 1975, 368), through “coordinated and intersecting work processes and courses of action” (Holstein & Gubrium 2011, 351). In the context of postcolonial countries, institutionalized education has neglected or overlooked such bodily-located experiences based on concepts, norms, and procedures produced by the state, culture, and the market. Their purpose is “to manage and contain cultural difference” by enforcing “outmoded conceptions of culture that require individuals to embrace narrowly essentialized identifications that have significant—and often negative—political consequences” (Gaztambide-Fernandez 2012, 43-4). The latter can be traced to historical projects of colonization or oppression, including those that serve as backdrop to music and education socialization in Costa Rica.

A sociology for music learners may need to engage strongly in unlearning the ideas of learner, music, and learning that are passed down through music and education, and which conceal the dark side of modernity as well as newer forms of colonization. This entails becoming epistemically disobedient to the establishment traditions, structures, and related social practices. It entails “delinking, or regaining your pride, your dignity, assuming your entire humanity” in front of dehumanizing beings or institutions that makes you believe “you were abnormal, lesser, that you lack something” in relation to the path of Western civilization (Gaztambide-Fernández 2014, 207). Once learners realize that their mind, body, senses, sight, and hearing have been shaped through this colonial matrix of power, it is possible to begin to heal. “The process of healing is that of becoming a decolonial subject, or “learning to be” (207). A sociology for music learners might encourage learners and teachers to engage in epistemic disobedience and regain or become new selves—instead of remaining chickens—in their own ways and terms, detaching from institutional values and practices that we unknowingly uphold. It means the oppressed or marginalized learner/teacher would need to assume a full, bodily-located humanity in music learning socialization.

One conceptual clarification is pertinent here to round up the idea of a sociology for music learners. As implied in these ethnography findings, we all partake of colonial structures in different degrees, whether we are aware of it or not. Epistemic disobedience, as defined and discussed from the experience of postcolonial music learners, becomes a point of start towards decolonization. It cannot be viewed as the conclusion or resolution to an itinerary of liberation, or even decolonization itself. Not even the flight of Aggrey's (1998) eagle is a full metaphor to liberation from colonization. Epistemic disobedience may become the start to the political act of stirring and unsettling a colonizing order, from a specific bodily location-in-disjuncture. The act of unsettling colonial structures involves that those in control of colonized resources be willing to de-occupy or relinquish what has been taken—from lands to bodies—and to give up power and privilege. Such act concerns, too, to individuals who have been othered as inferior/subaltern in music socialization, but still keep participating of political projects constructed on colonial structures, despite they engaging in epistemic disobedience in some ways.

In order to aspire to decolonization, epistemic disobedience should seek to transcend emancipatory pedagogies of social justice and transform the very material, bodily structures of the social order. Despite they mean well, such pedagogies often fall into turning politics of the colonized into a doctrine of liberation, helping or alleviating “at risk” individuals, or struggling against oppression, without changing the terms of sociomaterial oppression. They may become “settler moves to innocence-diversions, distractions, which relieve the settler of feeling of guilt or responsibility, and conceal the need to give up land or power or privilege” (Tuck & Yang 2012, 21). In doing so, they “escape or contain the unbearable searchlight of complicity” (9). Fanon (1963) spoke of a change in the sociomaterial order of the world, a change which does not “bring neat closure to the concerns of all involved—particularly not for settlers”, and for this reason decolonization “is incommensurable” (Tuck & Yang 2012, 51). Therefore, the path that begins at epistemic disobedience is bodily and material, but most of all, a radical political project.

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## Appendix A: Number and duration of interviews, per participant

Participant	Number of interviews	Total time (hours)
1	3	2,13
2	4	3,05
3	2	1,46
4	2	2,42
5	2	1,37
6	3	2,53
7	4	3,54
8	2	1,53
9	2	1,36

## **Appendix B: Informed consent form (English translation)**

I, (name of participant and ID number), hereby accept to participate in the research *Music learning in Costa Rica: a postcolonial institutional ethnography*, by Guillermo Rosabal-Coto. I have been satisfactorily explained the purpose, procedures and goals of the study. I have also been informed that the study offers no risk for harm to participants, that my participation is voluntary and therefore that I can withdraw at any time. I am also aware of the ethical measures the researcher will take to protect me as a participant as well as the research data. I will take part in interviews and revision of transcripts, as possible to me, in negotiation with the researcher.

(Signature of the participant)

(Date)

## **Appendix C: Confidentiality agreement (English translation)**

I, (name of research assistant and ID number), in my position as research assistant to the project *Music learning in Costa Rica: a postcolonial institutional ethnography*, commit to maintain confidentiality about information and participants, during and after the study. I will also handle confidentiality of recordings, interview transcripts, and discussions. I commit to conceal information to third parties and handle information in the most impartial way possible, and to communicate to the main researcher any conflict of interests or difficulties of ethical implications that arise in the process.

(Signature of the research assistant)

(Date)



ISBN: 978-952-329-025-9 (PRINT)  
ISBN: 978-952-329-026-6 (PDF)  
STUDIA MUSICA 68 (ISSN 0788-3757)

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