Anthropology of Music: A Review of History, Theory, and Development

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Abstrak

Tujuan: Artikel ini secara umum membahas antropologi musik sebagai bidang kajian multidisiplin yang mengeksplorasi hubungan antara musik, budaya, dan perilaku manusia. Masalah yang diangkat dalam artikel ini adalah minimnya pemahaman mendalam bagaimana musik berperan sebagai cerminan, pembentuk, dan penghubung dinamika budaya, terutama di era globalisasi yang membawa perubahan yang signifikan pada kajian antropologi musik. Fokus utama tulisan ini mencakup definisi antropologi musik, sejarah perkembangannya, teori-teori yang mendasarinya, juga perbandingan antara pendekatan antropologi klasik dan kontemporer.Dengan menggali akar sejarahnya dalam etnomusikologi hingga perkembangannya di era modern, artikel ini menggaris bawahi tranformasi dan relevansi kajian musik dalam memahami dinamika budaya dan sosial di berbagai macam konteks, dengan harapan memberikan wawasan teoritis dan praktis dalam memahami, melestarikan, serta mengintergrasikan musik tradisional ke dalam konteks modern. **Metode:** Penelitian ini menggunakan metode kualitatif dengan mengintegrasikan tinjauan literatur, analisis komparatif, dan eksplorasi tematik terhadap teks-teks dan studi kasus utama dalam bidang ini. Sumber data berasal dari buku-buku dan artikel-artikel ilmiah yang relevan dalam memberikan perspektif yang komprehensif. Teknik triangulasi digunakan dalam memvalidasi data melalui perbandingan antara definisi, teori dan konteks sejarah, sehingga dapat memastikan konsistensi temuan dalam berbagai pendekatan. **Hasil dan Pembahasan:** Hasil dalam kajian ini menunjukkan bahwa antropologi musik, baik dalam pendekatan klasik maupun kontemporer, tetap relevan sebagai alat analisis budaya. **Kesimpulan:** Kajian ini menegaskan tentang pentingnya kolaborasi antar bidang ilmu dalam memahami musik, tidak hanya dalam ekspresi artistik, namun juga dalam cerminan identitas dan dinamika yang terus berkembang.

Kata kunci: antropologi musik; sejarah; perkembangan; dinamika; budaya.

Proses Artikel

Abstract

Purpose: This article generally discusses music anthropology as a multidisciplinary field of study that explores the relationship between music, culture, and human behavior. The problem raised in this article is the lack of in-depth understanding of how music acts as a reflection, shaper, and connector of cultural dynamics, especially in the era of globalization which brings significant changes to the study of music anthropology. By exploring its historical roots in ethnomusicology to its development in the modern era, this article underlines the transformation and relevance of music studies in understanding cultural and social dynamics in various contexts, with the hope of providing theoretical and practical insights in understanding, preserving, and integrating traditional music into the modern context. **Method:** This research uses qualitative methods by integrating literature review, comparative analysis, and thematic exploration of key texts and case studies in the field. Data sources came from relevant books and scholarly articles to provide a comprehensive perspective. Triangulation techniques were used to validate the data through comparisons between definitions, theories and historical contexts, thus ensuring consistency of findings across approaches. **Results and Discussion:** The results in this study show that music anthropology, both in its classical and contemporary approaches, remains relevant as a cultural analysis tool. **Conclusion:** This study emphasizes the importance of interdisciplinary collaboration in understanding music, not only as an artistic expression, but also as a reflection of identity and its evolving dynamics.

Keywords: anthropology of music; histoy; development; dynamics; culture.

Introduction

The background of the problem in this research is based on the importance of music as a key element in human life and the culture that accompanies it. Music not only functions as an artistic expression, but also as a reflection of social values, cultural identity, and political dynamics that exist in society (Thomas Turino, 2008). In this context, there is a need to understand music from an anthropological perspective, which seeks to see how music is produced, perceived, and used by social groups in various cultural situations. Music anthropology as a discipline has developed since the late 19th century and focuses on the cross-cultural study of music, providing a broader perspective on how music influences and is influenced by human social life.

However, over time, the approach as well as the focus in music anthropology changed significantly. In the classical era, the main focus was on the music of western colonies, with an emphasis on composition, theory, and musical form. In the contemporary era, the focus has shifted to more heterogeneous music, including the emergence of popular genres and cross-cultural musical practices that continue to thrive in the era of globalization and digitalization. For example, the phenomenon of K-pop music on the global stage shows not only how digital technology and social media are revolutionizing music distribution, but also how local cultural identities can be integrated into global products. Studies conducted by Jang & Park (Jang & Chang, 2023; Park et al., 2023)noted that, the expansion of K-pop through platforms such as Youtube not only expanded the influence of Korean culture but also encouraged the formation of cross-cultural communities around the world. On the other hand, traditional music such as Balinese gamelan also shows adaptation to modern contexts. Recent research by Sugita & Wardhana (Sugita et al., 2023; Wardhana et al., 2022) noted that gamelan communities in Bali and Betawi music performers(Sugita et al., 2023; Wardhana et al., 2022) are utilizing digital media to maintain tradition while also reaching international audiences through online concerts during the COVID-19 pandemic. This phenomenon illustrates the dynamics of tradition preservation and technological innovation. From the previous phenomenon, a question arises about how music anthropology as a discipline is able to respond to ongoing social, cultural and technological changes, especially in the midst of the growing complexity of global cultural identities.

The urgency of understanding music anthropology is also increasing in the midst of globalization, where cultural boundaries are blurring and the exchange of music across countries and traditions is intensifying. Music anthropology becomes an important tool in understanding how music can function as a means of cross-cultural communication, as a form of social resistance, or as a medium of resistance in the process of decolonization. For example, the re-exploration of traditional music in formerly colonized countries shows how local communities use music to reclaim cultural narratives that were previously dominated by colonial perspectives.In addition, in an era of cultural polarization reinforced by digital media, this study is also relevant to see how music can be a space for negotiation between local and global identities. A concrete example is the cultural conflict in the adoption of traditional music elements by the global music industry, which often triggers debates about cultural aphorisms and the legitimacy of representations.

However, the differences between classical and contemporary approaches in music studies are often overlooked, whereas a more thorough understanding of the evolution of

music in a socio-cultural context can help address the challenges of decolonization as well as understand the dynamics of cultural polarization in today's world.

Therefore, this research aims to explore the definition, history, main theories, and differences in music anthropology from the classical to the contemporary era. Thus, this research is expected to provide deeper insights into the role of music anthropology in understanding social and cultural dynamics, as well as the urgency of this study in the midst of rapid global change.

Methods

The current research uses a qualitative approach to explore concepts and theories related to music anthropology, as well as the changing perceptions of money that arise between classical and contemporary approaches to the discipline. The qualitative approach was chosen because it allows for further exploration of the relationship between music and culture, as well as how music is understood and interpreted in different social contexts (Ichsan & Ali, 2020; Razzak, 2021; Sugiyono, 2022). As part of the data collection, this study also utilized netnography, which is the analysis of qualitative data sourced from online activities and interactions, to explore current perceptions and discussions on music anthropology on digital platforms such as social media, discussion forums and academic blogs. This method is considered relevant for exploring contemporary perspectives and socio-cultural dynamics that emerge in the digital era (Robert V & Gretzel, 2024).

The initial stage of this research began with a comprehensive literature study of various primary and secondary sources, including books, academic journals, scientific articles, previous research results, as well as digital data from online sources. The literature review aimed to identify the definition of music anthropology, the history of its development, key theories, and important differences between classical and contemporary approaches. In addition, this research conducted a text analysis to thematically examine the patterns, key concepts, and main arguments in the analyzed sources, including relevant digital content. The main focus of the analysis is on how the anthropology of music is defined and implemented in different cultures, and how concepts evolve over time, especially with the emergence of technology and online media.

The data collected through the previous literature study was analyzed qualitatively using interpretative ideas, where each concept as well as theory was considered in a specific cultural and social context. In addition, the researcher also made direct and indirect observations (through video) of traditional music performance sources, relating to musical practices from various cultures, useful to enrich the theoretical analysis in a practical context. The results of this study were also sharpened through the data triangulation validation method, which is a comparison of findings from various sources of analyzed literature (Thurmond, 2001). The main purpose of this triangulation is to ensure the reliability and validity of the findings, so that the resulting conclusions can provide a holistic picture of the role of music anthropology, both in classical and contemporary studies. It is also important to understand that this research is limited to a review of literature related to music from various cultures in the world, with a focus on the role of music in social dynamics and how technology and globalization play a role in the development of music anthropology studies.

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Result And Discussion

Definition of Music Anthropology

Music Music anthropology is a branch of cultural anthropology that identifies music as a cultural phenomenon that exists in human life. The general definition of music anthropology includes investigating how music functions in human life, in relation to historical and contemporary contexts, and in relation to aspects such as social, cultural, and environmental. In the perspective of music anthropology, music is not only seen as a collection of sounds produced from several instruments or vocals, but music is also closely related to the reflection of values, cultural identity, and beliefs that exist in society. In today's context, music anthropology not only traces the function of music in human life historically and contemporarily, but also explores the dynamics of music in the midst of social change, technology, and globalization. Music is now an integral part of many aspects of modern life, from digital identity to social activism. For example, music is used as a means of expression in protest movements, a medium for building global solidarity, and even as a therapeutic tool in the context of mental health. The discipline also highlights the role of digital technology and online media in changing the way music is produced, disseminated and received by society. With the development of platforms such as Spotify, Youtube and social media, music now transcends geographical boundaries and creates global communities based on musical preferences and identities.

Furthermore, the discipline of music anthropology explores aspects of music from several perspectives such as; performance, action, music consumption, and the social meaning of music for the views of a particular society. Music anthropology also places great emphasis on the cultural context in which music is produced and consumed, and how music can play a role in building and maintaining social, ritual, and symbolic relationships between individuals and groups. With a multidisciplinary approach, music anthropology also highlights the impact of globalization and the development of modern technology that affects the transformation of traditional music practices to contemporary music practices. This transformation not only changes the practice of music itself, but also opens up new discussions about cultural preservation, copyright, and the sustainability of local arts. An extreme example is the challenge of cultural homogenization, where traditional music can be marginalized by the dominance of global popular music. It also raises issues of copyright and economic inequality in the music industry, as local artists often receive unfair royalties compared to digital platforms or major labels. On the other hand, there are also opportunities to introduce traditional music to a global audience, although its sustainability depends on adaptation and preservation strategies. It can therefore be concluded that the anthropology of music is making a valuable contribution to understanding the role of music in human life, along with the complex interactions between music, society and culture.

General History of Music Anthropology

In general, the history of the discipline of music anthropology began in the 19th and early 20th centuries, with scholarly interest in the study of non-western musical cultures and practices. Anthropologists, also known as ethnomusicologists (for those anthropologists who study music), first collected and analyzed the music of societies that were considered traditional or primitive, with the intention of understanding the similarities and differences in musical expression of individuals or groups from various cultures around the world. The

first 19th-century figure to be considered important in the study of music anthropology was Alexander John Ellis, a British phonetician and mathematician who contributed significantly to the study of cross-cultural music with his findings in analyzing the tonal system called "Cent", which is a unit of measurement of tonal intervals in music that allows precise comparisons between tonal systems from various cultures in the world (Stock, 2007). Ellis pointed out that tone systems are not universal, but vary according to culture. For example, if in western music, two notes move 200 cents apart, but in traditional Indian music, the distance is 250 cents, this shows a difference in the way the two cultures divide the scales. This finding certainly challenges European-centric assumptions about music and opens up new avenues in comparative approaches to music anthropology. Thus, Ellis' concept inspired the next generation to study music as a part of a broader cultural context, making him one of the most important figures in the development of 19th century music anthropology. The second figure who is considered no less important in the study of music anthropology in the history of the 19th century is Carl Stumph, a scientist with a psychologist background and is a musicologist from Germany. In his role, Stumph founded the phonogram archive in Berlin in 1900, which would later become one of the world's most important collections of ethnographic recordings (Elliott S Cairns, 2020). The establishment of the phonogram archive was followed by the development of recording technology that enabled researchers to collect or store music from various cultures accurately at that time. Stumph's methodological approach emphasizes the importance of an empirical approach to music studies. He combined experimental psychology and philosophy in analyzing how humans hear and respond to music. His methodology provides a foundation for an interdisciplinary approach in modern music anthropology. Further insight into Stumph's thinking can be found in his work *Die Anfänge der Musik* (1911), which examines the origins of music through basic elements such as melody and rhythm (Carl Stumph, 1911).

Fig 1. *Alexander John Ellis. Source: https://stancarey.wordpress.com*

Fig 2. *Carl Stumph. Source: https://sciencephotogallery.com*

In the mid-20th century, the field of music anthropology experienced rapid development with many new theories and methods emerging. The first figure of the century was Alan Lomax, an ethnomusicologist, cultural researcher, and also a pioneer of folk music documentation in the United States and various parts of the world. Lomax is known for his dedication to collecting, preserving, and studying traditional music from various cultures, often recorded directly from musicians or local communities. Alan Lomax's contribution to collecting traditional music was not done alone, but was assisted by his father John Lomax, in documenting American folk music, including songs from Afro-American communities, farm

workers, and rural communities. The project generally utilized field recording technology, which was still very rare at the time. In the course of his research, Lomax also helped develop the Folk Music Archive at the Library of Congress, which has become an important collection in the study of traditional music. In addition, Lomax also produced an important theory during his lifetime, the theory of Cantometrics. This theory was developed by Alan Lomax to analyze the relationship between singing style (the way a song is sung) and cultural aspects of the society that created it. It proposes that vocal patterns in traditional music reflect a society's social structure, economy, and cultural values (Jeef Tood Titon, 2009). For example, traditional music in many African societies uses group singing with call and response patterns, reflecting a communal culture, where collective participation is more important than individuality. Traditional Classical European music, on the other hand, tends to be more complex, with a focus on harmony as well as individual technique, reflecting the more hierarchical structure of society, where there is specialization in social roles. It can be concluded that Lomax's findings will help broaden the scope of music anthropology by showing how music reflects the social structure, traditions and identity of a society. In addition, his previous documentation will also create a cross-cultural archive that will be a valuable resource for music anthropologists and cultural researchers.

The second 20th-century music anthropologist was Mantle Hood who introduced the concept of "bi-musicality," which had the effect of encouraging anthropologists to do more music research through learning the musical instruments being studied, so not only observing, but also acting as a music player (Maria Mendoca, 2011). The benefit of this sensitization is to gain direct experience or participation in understanding music in its cultural context. Mante Hood himself is also known as an expert on Javanese and Balinese gamelan. He was the one who introduced gamelan to many universities in the United States (Mantle Hood, 1972), helping to increase international recognition of this traditional Indonesian music. In addition, he founded the Institute of Ethnomusicology at the University California, Los Angeles (UCLA), which has become a world-renowned center for cross-cultural music studies. It can be concluded that Hood inspired and trained a generation of ethnomusicologists who later became important figures in the field. His work and approach continue to inform the study of music anthropology.

Fig 3. *Mantle Hood leads a Balinese gamelan ensemble.*
Source: https://es.wikipedia.org/

Generally in the 20th century, music anthropology was heavily influenced by the development of broader cultural theories, including structuralism and functionalism, which would help anthropologists understand how music structures and functions within the social and cultural systems of a society. In the following decades, the focus of music anthropology research has also begun to shift towards the collection and descriptive analysis of music, which has transformed into a greater understanding of the role of music in identity, politics and globalization. In short, anthropologists of music began to explore how music can reflect and influence conflict, social change, and power dynamics. They also examined how globalization has affected local musical traditions and how musicians in different parts of the world have responded and capitalized on this momentum.

Due to these further developments in scholarship, research methods in music anthropology have also transformed. While still relying on field research as the main method, it is also complemented by media analysis, historical studies, and various other interdisciplinary approaches. The advent of digital technology and the internet has also opened up new possibilities in research such as virtual ethnography and big data music analysis. Today, in the 21st century, music anthropology is increasingly recognized as a dynamic field that understands the complexity of human beings through the prism of music and its values.

The Urgency of Studying Music Anthropology

The study of music anthropology has a significant urgency in understanding the complexity of human cultures from around the world. Music anthropology not only focuses on the concept of music as part of an art form, but is also seen as a social phenomenon that influences and is influenced by various aspects of human life itself, including identity, belief, politics, and economics. In the current context of globalization, where intercultural interactions are increasingly intense, music anthropology helps reveal how music can be used as a tool that bridges cultural differences, strengthens community identity and even gives voice to social and political issues. Through the study of music anthropology, we can understand how music functions in religious rites, community celebrations and traditional ceremonies. In addition, music anthropology provides insight into the transformation of musical traditions in rapid social changes, such as urbanization and human migration that will affect musical phenomena. The presence of music anthropology also indirectly contributes to an invaluable cultural heritage, it allows us to appreciate the diversity of human musical expression, and will strengthen intercultural dialogue, especially in this era of potential cultural homogenization that is a real threat today. Therefore, studying the anthropology of music is a productive step towards creating a more understanding, harmonious, and inclusive world atmosphere, where music can continue to serve as a universal language that connects the world's peoples.

Key Sources

The sources or references that are considered influential in the study of music anthropology that provide deep insights into theory, case studies, and methods are first, Alan P. Meriam's *The Anthropology of Music*. In this book, Alan P. Merriam explains a holistic approach to the study of music in a cultural context that includes a dimension of theory, field research methods, and music analysis. Furthermore, this book views music not only as an aesthetic phenomenon, but also as an expression of human culture that reflects and shapes their social life (Alan P Merriam, 1964). Second. John Blacking's *Music, Culture, and*

Experience. In this book, John Blacking curates several essays that he considers important in exploring how music expresses human experience and influences social structures. Blacking also underscores the importance of musical experiences that are universal but colored by specific cultural contexts (Blacking, 1995). The third is a work of many ethnomusicologists edited by Gregory F. Barz and Timothy J. Cooley entitled *Shadow in the Field: New Perspectives for Fieldwork in Ethnomusicology*. This collection of essays generally discusses the challenges and methodologies in ethnomusicology fieldwork. In more detail, the essays critically examine the role of the researcher, ethics in research, and an interdisciplinary approach in the context of studying music across cultures. Therefore, this book is very useful for students and researchers who will conduct field research related to the discipline of music anthropology (Barz & Timothy J. Cooley, 2008).

Fourth, is a work edited by Jeff Todd Titon entitled *World of Music: An Introduction to the Music of the World's Peoples*. This book is a comprehensive introduction to musical traditions from around the world. Each chapter in the book is written by experts in the cultural context, history and musical characteristics of various peoples' cultures. The book is also supplemented with sample recordings that allow readers to listen to live examples of the music discussed (Jeef Tood Titon, 2009). Fifth, is a work written by Lisa Gold entitled *Music in Bali: Experiencing Music, Experiencing Culture*. This book offers an in-depth study of music in Balinese pulu in its cultural and social context. Gold combines her ethnographic approach with musical analysis to explore how Balinese music is also integrated into daily life, religious ceremonies, and expressions of cultural identity. The book also includes interviews with local musicians as well as analysis of scores in traditional Balinese music (Lisa Gold, 2005). The sixth book is *Music Grooves: Essays and Dialogues* by Charles Keil and Steven Feld. This book is a collection of dialog essays between two ethnomusicologists who explore the concept of "groove" from the perspective of music anthropology. Furthermore, Keil and Feld discuss how musical rhythms and patterns create a collective experience and cultural identity. The book is also complemented by an exploration of the concepts of aesthetics, performativity, and politics that exist in musical phenomena (Keil & Steven Feld, 2005). The seventh book entitled *Ethnomusicology: A Very Short Introduction* written by Timothy Rice. This book generally provides a brief but comprehensive introduction to ethnomusicology, covering the history of the discipline, research methods, and contemporary issues in global music studies. Rice further highlights the importance of understanding music in its social and cultural context and the role of ethnomusicologists in documenting and analyzing musical traditions around the world (Timothy Rice, 2013).

Theories in the study of Music Anthropology

To understand the study of music anthropology can be done with several approaches or theories, here below researchers present several that can be an option.

1. Functionalism Theory

The theory generally highlights how elements in culture (including music) function to maintain a social structure. In the context of music in particular, functionalism examines how music can fulfill needs in society, such as strengthening group identity, by providing a means of emotional expression and facilitating ritual and ceremonial performances.

2. Structuralism Theory

Structuralism is a theory popularized by Claude Levi-Strauss, viewing culture as a structured system of signs. In music in particular, this theory is useful for examining the internal structure of the music itself, such as the rhythmic and melodic patterns used, as well as how a previous structure reflects the social circumstances and imagination of the society that applies it.

3. Cultural ecology theory

This theory emphasizes a relationship between humans and their environment, and further how the environment can influence the cultural practices of the people around it. More specifically in music anthropology, this theory can be used in analyzing the physical and social environments that shape the development and use of music.

4. Identity and ethnicity theory

This theory highlights how music can shape and reflect ethnic and group identities. It also involves the study of how music is used as a medium to build and strengthen ethnic identity, as well as how music becomes a field of identity negotiation in multicultural contexts.

5. Cultural materialism theory

Influenced by the work of Marvin Harris, this theory focuses on economic and material factors in shaping a culture. In music studies, this theory can be used to see how economic conditions play a role in the production, distribution and consumption of music.

6. Postcolonial Theory

This theory generally analyzes the impact of colonialism and imperialism on local cultures, including music. In the more general context of music interopology, this theory can investigate how traditional music is affected or changed by contact with colonial culture and how music is used as a medium of resistance and shapes people's postcolonial identities.

7. Performativity Theory

Influenced by Judith Butler and her performative theory, this theory generally sees music as a form of performative action that produces or reinforces social meaning. In the context of musical anthropology, this means that exploring performance in music serves to create identity, meaning, and social relationships.

8. Interpretive Theory and Hermeneutics

The theory emphasizes the importance of understanding the symbolic meaning of music in a particular cultural context. Music can be seen as a text that can be interpreted to understand underlying values, beliefs and ideologies.

9. Globalization and Diaspora Theory

This theory will examine the impact of globalization on music, including the cross-cultural spread of music and how diasporic music can contribute to a global identity and community. This theoretical approach will also include a study of hybridization in music and its influence on global cultural exchange.

10. Mediation Theory and Technology

Theory will focus on the role of technology and media in the production and consumption of music. In music anthropology, this could also mean studying how recording technology, social media and digital distribution affect the way music is created, enjoyed and disseminated.

All of these theories offer a different lens through which to understand the phenomenon of music in cultural, social and historical contexts, and how music can be influenced and affected by these complexities. However, the number and definition of these theories are not rigid, and can take different forms depending on the ideas of each researcher.

Differences between Classical and Contemporary Music Anthropology

The main difference between classical and contemporary anthropology of music lies in the social context, technology, and method of approach in studying music itself. Here are some fundamental differences between the two eras:

1. Social and Cultural Context

Classical music anthropology generally focused on music in the context of traditional or pre-modern societies, with a particular focus on music as part of rituals, ceremonies, or spiritual practices. Moreover, research focused on isolated or exotic societies and how music affected their social structure and cosmology.

Whereas in the contemporary era, music anthropology research is not only limited to local or traditional communities, but also includes urban communities, diaspora communities, and global music phenomena. Music is viewed in a more dynamic context, with a focus on how identity, politics, and globalization affect the production and consumption of music.

2. Effects of Globalization

In the classical era of music anthropology, music was studied relatively in a more local or regional context, and had little contact with direct influences from outside the culture. In many cases, traditional music will be preserved in a form that is considered pure and not much influenced by other cultures.

Whereas in contemporary music anthropology, globalization has encouraged the acceleration of cultural exchange, so that music around the world has become more mixed and interacting. Music anthropology in the contemporary era pays attention to a transcultural phenomenon, where traditional and modern music genres influence each other and how music functions as an identity tool in a highly mobile society.

3. The Role of Technology

In classical times, music production and distribution relied heavily on manual and traditional methods. The use of modern technology, such as recording devices or electronic media, was still quite limited or minimal. At that time, music was generally passed on from generation to generation through oral tradition.

Whereas in the contemporary era, technology plays a considerable role in music, from production using digital music software to distribution through streaming platforms and

social media. Anthropology of music in this era needs to take into account how technology changes the practice, meaning, and consumption of music, as well as how musicians utilize technology in creating and disseminating their works.

4. Research methods

Classical music anthropology research methods often focus on ethnographic approaches with direct and participatory observation in the field. Researchers will usually stay in the community for a period of time sufficient to understand the social context in which music is produced and performed. The data is often qualitative and collected through interviews, observation and direct recording.

In the contemporary era, the methodology has evolved considerably by utilizing modern tools such as voice recorders, video cameras, and digital data analysis. In addition to field observations, researchers can also use online methods by analyzing activities on social media, streaming platforms, or online music communities. Multimodal methods are becoming quite important, where researchers combine visual, audio, and digital data to provide a more comprehensive analysis.

5. Music and Identity

In the classical era, music was often studied in religious, ritual or traditional contexts that were closely related to the belief system of the people. Identities expressed through music are generally rooted in tradition and are often static, such as ethnicity or religious affiliation.

Contemporary music, on the other hand, is more associated with more dynamic identities, such as personal identity, gender, or subculture. It is also not uncommon for music to become a tool for expressing global identity, where musicians and listeners can relate to international cultural trends, while also maintaining their local roots. Music becomes a tool for political resistance or social expression, such as in the hip-hop, reggae, or punk genres.

6. Multidisciplinary Approach

In the classical era of anthropology, music was more focused on pure anthropological methods, such as ethnography and cultural analysis. Researchers also often focus only on traditional or rural communities. Contemporary music anthropology, on the other hand, adopts a more multidisciplinary approach, incorporating elements from other disciplines such as sociology, media studies, cultural studies, and even technology. Researchers in the contemporary era are also required to understand global and local dynamics simultaneously, and often integrate economic, political and cultural analysis in their music studies. This multidisciplinary approach allows for a richer understanding of music in modern and complex contexts.

Comprehensively, the difference between classical and contemporary music anthropology lies primarily in the way music is viewed in the context of social change, technology, and globalization, as well as the methodologies used to study music in this increasingly connected and dynamic world.

Field Research Steps In Music Anthropology

The steps of field research in music anthropology include theoretical, methodological, and practical approaches:

1. Initial preparation

   First try to understand the musical culture under study, do a literature study on the target musical tradition, culture or society. Second, choose the research site. a specific community or place to focus on, such as a traditional village with an active music ensemble. Thirdly, permission and ethics must also be considered, contact traditional leaders to obtain research permission, explain what the purpose of the research is, and make sure to respect existing cultural norms.

2. Field observation

   We can do participatory observation or be directly involved in musical activities in the community, such as watching rehearsals or ceremonies. If possible, you can also play music with them, for example by learning to play the kendang instrument in Javanese gamelan. Field notes are equally important, documenting the experience, atmosphere and interactions that occur, for example writing about descriptions of the structure of the performance, the role of the musicians, and the reactions of the audience watching the performance.

3. Interviews and Interactions

   Try asking questions to musicians, community leaders, or community members. For example, "what does this song mean in traditional rituals?" or "how did you learn to play this instrument". It is also important to observe social interactions around the music, such as gender roles or social status in the ensemble.

4. Music Documentation

   Record musical performances, rehearsals or interviews. Be sure to ask permission before recording. For example, record a gamelan performance during a wedding ceremony. If possible, also make musical notations of songs or rhythmic patterns you encounter for further analysis. Finally, photograph or document the musical instruments, costumes, or other visual aspects of the musical tradition being observed.

5. Analyze field data

   First, analyze the social context, relating the music to the social or cultural context of the community, such as its relationship to ritual or group identity. Second, analyze the musical structure, study musical elements such as melody, rhythm, harmony, or improvisation that appear in the object of musical study. Third, compare with literature, matching field findings with theory or previous research to find similarities or differences.

6. Reflection and ethics

   Reflect on your experience as a researcher, including how your role influenced the outcome of the research. Also show respect for the community in which you conducted the research, such as by providing them with a copy of the research results.

7. Reporting the results

   Write up the research results in the form of a report, academic article or presentation. For example, (1) musical description, describe the musical style, technical elements, and cultural context. (2) Social narrative, present insights into the role of music in people's lives. (3) supporting media, use recordings or photos as illustrations.

Music Anthropology Research Case Study

A phenomenal case study in music anthropology is the research of Bruno Nettl, who studied the music of the Blackfoot tribe in North America. Bruno Nettl, a leading ethnomusicologist, conducted long-term research on the Blackfoot people, a Native American community with unique and rich traditions. The research aimed to understand the relationship between music and the cosmology, social structure and cultural dynamics of the community. In his research, Nettl noted that traditional Blackfoot music plays a central role in religious rituals, community celebrations, and the teaching of cultural values. For example, certain ceremonial songs are used in religious practices to strengthen connections with ancestral spirits or spiritual beings. Nettl observed that this music has a complex structure with rhythmic and melodic patterns that reflect the social hierarchy of Blackfooot society. Through an in-depth qualitative approach, she also shows how Blackfoot musical traditions continue to thrive, despite facing challenges from modernization and cultural assimilation.

Nettle's study focuses not only on the documentation of music, but also how Blackfoot music is used as a tool to maintain cultural identity amidst pressures from colonialism and globalization. This work serves as an important example in music anthropology of how indigenous musical traditions can survive and adapt in the modern world, while also providing new insights into the relationship between music, identity, and cultural sustainability. This research has far-reaching implications, especially in contemporary issues such as indigenous culture and the preservation of traditional musical heritage (Bruno Nettl, 2024).

Another phenomenal case study in music anthropology is Margaret Kartomi's research on traditional community music in Sumatra, Indonesia (Jennifer Goodlander, 2022). Kartomi, an Australian ethnomusicologist, has spent decades studying the traditional music of the Minangkabau, Batak and other indigenous groups. His research focuses on how music reflects social, religious and political dynamics, and how it serves as a medium for maintaining cultural identity amidst changing times. One of Kartomi's major contributions is his analysis of saluang, a traditional Minangkabau wind instrument, which is often used in entertainment and ritual contexts (Rustim et al., 2023). He shows how saluang is not just a musical instrument, but also a medium of communication that conveys social criticism and humor in society. Through this music, saluang players can convey messages that are often taboo to express directly, such as social injustice or gender dynamics. Kartonomi also notes that lyrics in traditional music are often infused with local wisdom that teaches values such as gotong royong, patience, and respect for ancestors (Katia Chaterji, 2023).

Her research also highlights how traditional music in Sumatra is transforming in the face of globalization and modernization. Kartomi documents how traditional musical instruments and song repertoires are integrated into new contexts, such as popular music and tourism, without losing their traditional values. The study illustrates the resilience and cultural flexibility of traditional music, as well as the important role music plays in maintaining a community's collective identity. Through an in-depth ethnographic approach, Margaret Kartomi not only helps document traditional Sumatran music, but also provides an understanding of the complex relationship between music, culture and social change. Her research has become an important reference in discussions about preservation of local cultures in Southeast Asia, making him one of the leading figures in musical anthropology.

Conclusions

Music anthropology, as an interdisciplinary field of study, has evolved from the mere documentation of traditional music to an in-depth analysis of the role of music in the social, cultural and political life of societies. The early history of music anthropology emphasized the collection and archiving of music from different parts of the world, but later evolved with the emergence of more complex theoretical approaches, such as theories of performativity and symbolic meaning. Pioneers such as Alan Lomax and Curt Sachs laid the foundation for cross-cultural music research, while subsequent theoretical developments brought more contextualized and critical perspectives.

Theories in music anthropology highlight the role of music as a universal language that connects people across geographical and social boundaries, while maintaining the uniqueness of each cultural context. Music is understood as a means of identity expression, a social marker, and a tool for building solidarity and resistance to injustice. Ethnographic studies also emphasize the importance of understanding music in its local context, by linking it to ritual practices, politics and everyday life.

The development of music anthropology in the contemporary era is further enriched by studies on globalization and technology, which highlight how music spreads and transforms in an interconnected world. Research on musical hybridity shows that, although music often crosses cultural boundaries, there remain dynamics of power and resistance that influence the process of cross-cultural musical adoption and adaptation.

As such, the anthropology of music is not about studying sounds or compositions, but understanding the role of music in shaping and reflecting complex social realities. The development of the field continues to respond to the challenges and opportunities that arise in the modern era, combining classic ethnographic approaches with critical analysis of the influences of globalization, identity politics and technological advances. In the future, music anthropology is expected to continue to make significant contributions to understanding how music functions as a dynamic force in shaping cultures and human interactions around the world.

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