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### Technological Encounters in the Interculturality of Istanbul's Recording Studios

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"Music and Interculturality"

Antenor Ferreira Corrêa and Maria Westvall (Guest editors)

## Technological Encounters in the Interculturality of Istanbul's Recording Studios

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### Abstract

This essay questions what is cultural within a recording studio, and the extent to which interculturality could be a useful lens for examining studio encounters and by extension other forms of artistic-technological labor. As I will show, when the concept of interculturality surfaces it rarely is accompanied by a sufficiently nuanced concept of "culture," and additionally relies upon an assumption that the "inter-" is mapping an encounter between individuals representing discrete cultural units, typically defined in reductive demographic terms. Interculturality may be able to be partly recuperated, however, through a more flexible and realistic conceptualization of culture that is more responsive to specific local practices and discourses, and through a more sustained engagement with the materiality of the lived world. For a case study, I will explore professional Istanbul recording studios active between 2004-2011. Beyond the complex and polyethnic identity of many of the individual participants, cultural differences were typically framed by arrangers, engineers, and studio musicians in relation to specific professions, particularly in regard to ways that people inhabited the space of the studio, training and knowledge systems, and participants' distinctive modes of engaging with technological objects.

**Keywords:** Interculturality, technology, recording studios, Istanbul, technicity

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### Encuentros tecnológicos en la interculturalidad de los estudios de grabación de Estambul

#### Resumen

Este artículo se pregunta qué es cultural en un estudio de grabación y en qué medida la interculturalidad resulta útil para examinar los encuentros en un estudio y, por extensión, en otras formas de trabajo artístico-tecnológico. Voy a demostrar que cuando el concepto de



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interculturalidad se usa, raramente está acompañado por un concepto de “cultura” suficientemente matizado, y que, generalmente, depende de la suposición de que el prefijo “inter” describe el encuentro entre individuos que representan unidades culturales discretas, típicamente definidas en términos demográficos reduccionistas. La interculturalidad podría ser recuperada parcialmente, con una conceptualización más flexible y realista de la cultura que responda a las especificidades de las prácticas y los discursos locales y mediante un involucramiento sostenido con la materialidad de mundo vivido. En este estudio de caso voy a reflexionar sobre estudios de grabación profesional asentados en Estambul que estuvieron activos entre 2004 y 2011. Más allá de la compleja y poli-étnica identidad de muchos de los individuos participantes, las diferencias culturales estaban típicamente enmarcadas por arreglistas, ingenieros de audio y músicos de estudio en relación con sus profesiones específicas, particularmente en consideración con las formas en las que las personas habitan el espacio del estudio, con los sistemas de entrenamiento y conocimiento y con las distintas maneras en que los participantes se relacionan con los objetos tecnológicos.

**Palabras clave:** interculturalidad, tecnología, estudios de grabación, Estambul, tecnicidad

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## Encontros tecnológicos na interculturalidade dos estúdios de gravação de Istambul

### Resumo

Este artigo questiona o que é cultural dentro de um estúdio de gravação, e até que ponto a interculturalidade poderia ser uma lente útil para examinar encontros em estúdio e, por extensão, outras formas de trabalho artístico-tecnológico. Como mostrarei, quando o conceito de interculturalidade emerge, este raramente é acompanhado por um conceito suficientemente matizado de “cultura”, e, adicionalmente, baseia-se na suposição de que o “inter-” está mapeando um encontro entre indivíduos representando unidades culturais discretas, tipicamente definidas em termos demográficos reduccionistas. A interculturalidade pode ser parcialmente recuperada, no entanto, através de uma conceitualização mais flexível e realista de cultura que seja mais sensível às práticas e discursos locais específicos, e por meio de um envolvimento mais sustentado com a materialidade do mundo vivido. Como estudo de caso, explorarei estúdios profissionais de gravação em Istambul ativos entre 2004 e 2011. Além da identidade complexa e poliétnica de muitos dos indivíduos participantes, as diferenças culturais foram tipicamente categorizadas em arranjadores, engenheiros e músicos de estúdio em relação às profissões específicas, particularmente no que diz respeito às maneiras pelas quais as pessoas habitavam o espaço do estúdio, treinamento e sistemas de conhecimento; e distintos modos dos participantes se engajarem com objetos tecnológicos.

**Palavras-chave:** interculturalidade, tecnologia, estúdios de gravação, Istambul, tecnicidade

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Fecha de recepción / Data de recepção / Received: septiembre 2018

Fecha de aceptación / Data de aceitação / Acceptance date: diciembre 2018

Fecha de publicación / Data de publicação / Release date: febrero 2019



In this essay I will reflect on the experience of working in Istanbul recording studios to frame studio work as constituting a complex and multivalent kind of intercultural encounter. Through this, I draw upon certain circulating discourses about culture within Turkey to rethink questions around the ways culture gets framed and staged in situated, embodied encounters. I extend that through a focused discussion of architecture's and technology's constitutive role in shaping or producing culture. As a consequence, I rethink the term "intercultural" beyond more commonplace demographic questions or externally imposed ideologies towards a more nuanced and ethnographically-informed understanding of encounters where technology (including architecture-as-a-technology, and massless digital objects) and specific modes of human-technological interaction and intra-action (Barad 2003) structure the nature of intercultural encounters<sup>1</sup>. My approach to analyzing interculturality in Turkey's recording studios is inspired in part by a comment by architectural historians Sibel Bozdoğan and Gülru Necipoğlu, who suggest that interculturality in the former Ottoman Empire can be defined as the sharing of architectural thinking across a wide territory –one that today would be described as crossing national borders (2007: 4). Heeding Chandra Mukerji's warnings that we should avoid "the disappearance of the material world behind language" and instead "approach material culture without reducing objects to instantiations of discourse or realizations of cognitive representations" (Mukerji 1997: 36), I utilize ethnographic work within the science and technology studies (STS) subfield of user studies, as well as critical organology, in order to investigate how, through their direct use, indirect use, and strategic non-use, objects "may themselves be constitutive of a certain social relation" (Miller 1987: 122).

Since 1991, recorded music has provided the primary publicly circulating media form where consumers encounter cultural practices articulating Kurdish, Zazaki, Lazuri, Hemşince, and other Anatolian languages not officially recognized by the state. This results from very limited print publishing in non-Turkish languages, linguistic prohibitions concerning domestic radio and TV, and foreign satellite stations being frequently blocked or shut down at the urging of Turkish authorities (Hassanpour 1998). But Istanbul's recording studios had not historically been sites for making musics in Anatolian languages other than Turkish. Between 1983-1991, Law 2932 effectively banned recording and broadcast in "minority" languages, especially Kurdish and Zazaki, so recording/broadcast transpired across the border in Syria or Iraq, and in European exile communities (Reigle 2013). Even outside that period, police had broad authority to seize recordings and arrest performers they deemed problematic, and to this day all recordings must be approved by RTÜK, the government-controlled censor bureau. Starting in 1991, loosening restrictions contributed to a surge of interest in producing non-Turkish popular musics and to the growth of the Kurdish-language *kom* (group) movement (Aksoy 2006). Several

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<sup>1</sup> Throughout this essay, I echo Karen Barad's insistence that many phenomena we often describe as interaction are perhaps better characterized as intra-action. While I do not have enough space to do justice to her derivation of this idea from the quantum physics of Niels Bohr, my main intent here is to note both that the alleged autonomy of the two or more actors that are "interacting" needs to be questioned, as does the idea that they are "untouched" by the encounter.

ensembles founded on university campuses (e.g. *Zuğışı Berepe* and *Kardeş Türküler*) or who drew much support from university students (e.g. *Grup Yorum*) started a trend of recording multilingual albums (Akkaya 2008). Concurrently, many Turkish citizens who had comfortably assumed they were “Turks” discovered that their families had once been Armenian, Laz, Greek, or one or more of the several dozen Anatolian ethnicities. This music, which explicitly or implicitly articulated a discourse of multiculturalism (*çokkültürlülük*), became financially successful for record labels (especially *Kalan Müzik Yapım*), resulting in the style known as *etnik müzik*. However, in both production and circulation many *etnik müzik* recordings influenced each other, leading to inter-ethnic fusions that would not have happened organically through performing musician collaborations.

In preparing for my own field research in 2004, I had read so much from scholars concerning debates around “Turkishness” that it figured significantly in my own initial prospectus; I assumed that everything I would experience in the studios would be framed around the presence, or contestation, of this identity trait, the only question being the extent to which Turkishness was conceived of in national terms or in ethnic/cultural terms (on the musical front see O’Connell 2000, Markoff 1990, Değirmenci 2006), which mirrored similar work in social sciences. The notable dissenting view in social anthropology at the time was Yael Navaro-Yashin, who denied that there was indeed any coherent thing called “Turkish culture” at all (2002: 10).

What I encountered whilst working as an audio engineer and (occasional) studio musician, whether the music being produced was Ottoman or early Turkish Republican art music, the aforementioned “ethnic” music, the protest folk-rock of *Grup Yorum*, Turkish-language baby lullabies, a percussion instructional CD, the industrial dance music of *Neoplast*, “ethnic tinged” TV series soundtracks, indie rock, or just “good old” Turkish-language folk music, had little to do with these debates. Turkishness was simply a non-issue, the accompanying vocabulary (e.g. *Türkçülük*) never uttered in the studio, and absent even in the marketing/packaging of most commercial recordings. I found no evidence that most of the studio professionals in the sessions I engineered or observed would regard it as accurate that they were “performing Turkishness”, or “performing Lazness” or whatever, although some soloists might have when on stage. There certainly was performativity, though—the performance of social relations, technical knowledges, and Anatolian repertoires—but it didn’t map onto discrete ethnic/national demographic categories.

Besides the album artist and perhaps one specialist studio musician, for all studio professionals involved with production, their social identities did not correlate with the purported identity category ascribed to the music, or their multiple ethnic identities, compounded by all of the other kinds of cultural identifications, made it impossible to say which of those identity categories was being performed in any moment<sup>2</sup>. Neyzi had noticed something similar in 2002

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<sup>2</sup> Although I would probably not have been asked to sing or play oud on an album of Turkish folk or Ottoman art music as there was sufficient local talent specialized in that, I was asked to contribute an oud part to one song with an Iraqi subject matter, and I sang backup vocals on Lazuri language songs. In both cases, there were no known

when discussing the music of Metin-Kemal Kahraman, brothers from the city of Dersim whose plural identities encompassed Dersimli (of the city of Dersim), Zaza (a linguistic ethnicity), Kurdish (a related linguistic ethnicity), Alevi (a religious ethnicity), and of course Turkish (a citizenship). Musicians with whom I worked possessed similar multiethnic identity configurations. In social encounters, if they emphasized an identity, they chose one in relation to the perceived identity of others they interacted with (i.e. Alevism might be foregrounded when talking to Sunni Muslims, Zazanness foregrounded when talking to Kurds, Turkishness foregrounded when talking to non-Turkish citizens). This situational, negotiated tendency suggests something akin to Swidler's concept of culture as a strategic tool kit (1986), or as Yıldız (2018) notes, can be productively framed through Podur's concept of polyculturalism. Even in strategic/polycultural form, this doesn't get at the main ways that culture was articulated in the studio on a daily basis.

By focusing on the reception or indexicality of products, and ignoring the details of the production of culture, we gain a misleading understanding of the thing itself that comes to constitute Laz music, Hemsin music, etc. The sociotechnical aspects of Istanbul studio life complicate the neatness of describing such productions as actually being indexical of a particular ethnicity. Many of the same musicians, audio engineers, arrangers, and producers involved with the representation of Turkish language repertoires for local markets are equally active with producing divergent ethnic representations. But rather than dismissing such works as inauthentic due to their multiple contradictory influences, my interest is to take their production and cultural valences seriously. As I will show, the normative division of labor, which largely regulates how different kinds of actors are able to engage with the materiality or technicality of the studio, automatically frames Istanbul's recording studios as sites of intercultural encounters. By studying how studio professionals working for record labels create productions intended to be Anatolian and ethnic but *not* Turkish, we gain new insights into the *normative* modes of production in Turkey –situating production within a century of Turkification (*Türkleştirmek*) of non-Turkish Anatolian musics (Hasgül 1996, Bates 2016).

In order to arrive at a suitable conceptualization of interculturality, my approach involves navigating through a map of interrelated domains. I begin with the introduction of the word *kültür* to the nascent modern Turkish language, comparing competing nationalist discourses with failed attempts to incorporate Anglophone social science thinking, and considering popular anxieties about the role of materiality in inculcating detrimental cultural change. One domain that has been especially fruitful for culture theorization amongst Turkish scholars is architectural criticism, and in addition to my hopes to amplify certain discourses that have broad sociocultural relevance but have circulated mainly within architectural criticism, I hope to contribute to this literature a consideration of recording studios –reconfigured spaces that haven't received much attention. From architecture-as-culture I turn to technology-as-culture, examining formative questions within the STS (science and technology studies) subfield of user studies with recourse

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musicians “of those cultures” who could be called on in short notice to do the work, and ultimately, *all* of us in the studio milieu were equally foreign to the representations being made.



to the specific technologies of the studio. I then present a more involved case study on how architecture, technologies, discourses and embodied practices come to construct Istanbul's studio-based professions as somewhat discrete cultures. In conclusion, I compare a site-specific definition of interculturality with extant uses of the term, examining the term's utility for music studies.

### Culture to *kültür*

Culture-thinking does not just transpire in Anglophone discourse, and we should not assume that English-language conceptualizations, or by extension derivative concepts like multiculturalism and interculturalism, will be wholly applicable when transported to a different linguistic context where culture has a differential relationship with neighboring terms (Wieviorka 2012). *Kültür*, in Turkish, became a loan-word in the few years leading up to the formation of the secular Republic in 1923<sup>3</sup>. It was intended to replace but ultimately resided alongside several preexisting terms of Arabic origin: *hars/ekin* (referring to the cultivation of fields) and *irfan* (knowledge, discernment) (Lewis 1999: 112). Some of the earliest writings come from Ziya Gökalp, one of the key ideologues of the Young Turk and early Republican era. Gökalp was particularly taken with the sociology of Durkheim and drew upon it (as well as somewhat contradictory inspirations from Rousseau and Bergson) to fashion his own conceptualization of the dichotomy between culture and civilization, defined here in national versus international terms (Parla 1985, Gökalp 1959: 104-112). He is inconsistent with his definitions and by extension the ontological nature of culture, except with his continuing insistence on culture's national nature (Davison 1995: 203). Culture, accordingly, is a characteristic denied to those without nations, which may explain why there's a considerable amount of Turkish writing on "Turkish culture" but almost none on "Kurdish culture"<sup>4</sup>.

In Turkish academic publications, typically the narrative ends with the Gökalp-inspired culture/civilization dichotomy, even though Gökalp's definitions don't match contemporary usage, to the extent that using Gökalp's preferred term of *hars* (with all its agricultural and farm-sowing baggage) in conversation is more likely to provoke giggles than to arouse feelings of nationalist sentiment. Following the publication of Mümtaz Turhan's (1951) book on cultural change, Anglophone definitions of culture, especially those of Tylor and Kroeber, began to circulate amongst Turkish social science students. Therefore, Tylor's oft-cited formulation: "that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, custom, and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society" (Tylor 1920 [1871]: 1) became well known, although typically dissociated from Tylor's broader concerns with cultural evolution. However, such formulations never replaced earlier approaches to defining culture/civilization in national/international terms, again, inspired by but not wholly invoking a

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<sup>3</sup> According to the *Güncel Türkçe Sözlük* published by the official Turkish Language Foundation, *kültür* comes from French, perhaps due to Gökalp's interest in Rousseau, but the word has Latin origins.

<sup>4</sup> Although Gökalp was ethnically either Kurdish or Zaza, this didn't curtail a line of thinking that was one of the greatest ideological inspirations on Mustafa Kemal Atatürk's subsequent cataclysmic military actions against minorities, including what has been termed by many scholars the genocides of Armenians, Assyrians, Kurds and Zazas, and Pontian Greeks (Akçam 2004, Üngör 2011).



selective reading of French-language philosophy and sociology.

*Kültür* has come to be used in quite different ways than the Gökalp-Atatürk paradigm. In secular-leaning forums such as the social dictionary Ekşi Sözlük, several contributors describe *kültür* as residing in the primary relation between *maddî* (material) and *manevî* (psychological, spiritual, and/or moral, depending upon context). This echoes the first two official definitions of the term *kültür* in the *Güncel Türkçe Sözlük*, which hinge upon “material and psychological/spiritual/moral values” (*maddî ve manevî değerler*) and “artistic works” (*sanat eserleri*) –not their incommensurability or disjunctions, but the intersection/overlap between these categories. The *maddî ve manevî* diptych predates the importation of the word *kültür*, surfacing in the work of another Turkish nationalist, Yusuf Akçura, who himself was quoting Azeri nationalist Hüseyinzade Ali Bey on the material and moral/spiritual development of a pan-Turkic nation (Akçura 1915).

This becomes strikingly adapted in the works of populist, non-academic writers, who go to great lengths to argue that culture, again framed in terms of nation-states, is unchanging (despite the very recent formation of nation-states). In *Kültürümüzün Kimliği*, such a proclamation was immediately preceded by this lively passage:

Drink Coca Cola or Persi [sic] Cola [...] Akşama buyurun fakirhaneye, yerli yemeklerden atıştırırken Philips teypten, Grundig TV den yararlanabiliriz [Drink Coca Cola or Pepsi Cola... at night well look here you are in the poor-house, while you gobble local foods you use Philips tapes and Grundig TVs] (Işık 1990: 19).

It is unclear why these particular objects (*maddî*) were selected, although all are products of transnational corporations headquartered in the USA or Germany<sup>5</sup> (and therefore part of what Işık terms “culture imperialism”), or why Islam, which after all was a foreign import and is of more recent origin than the purported many-thousand-year history of Turkic peoples, is somehow an innate and therefore *unchanging* part of Turkish culture (this book ultimately becomes a work of Islamist propaganda). No mention is made of Turkey’s transition away from indigenous herbs, fruits and vegetables and towards foreign imports that were popularized during the Ottoman era, including tomatoes and peppers (from Central/South America) and citrus and eggplant (brought by Arab traders from China), not to mention the “Turkish tea” with Russian origins, which would likely constitute much of the “local foods” being referenced. While texts such as this fail to provide a transportable or fully coherent concept of culture, they do index some of the anxieties around the term, and also suggest that culture, in this local and popular configuration, is entirely bound up with the relations between people and the material world, whether that concerns questions of the provenance of *some* objects but not others, or the extent to which the adoption of such objects may negatively alter local beliefs and practices –and the psychological/spiritual of *manevî*. Later in the book, we find the concern with foreign culture and imperialism is *not* a worry about symbolic or representational aspects, but rather about the tangible effects that engaging with such objects has *on Turkish subjects*, primarily regarding

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<sup>5</sup> Ironically, Grundig in 2007 became a wholly Turkish-owned subsidiary of the Arçelik A.S. group.

Islamic beliefs/practices, and secondarily on the flood of money leaving Turkey due to unreflective consumerism (Işık 1990: 24). Another domain where we see related anxieties routinely discussed in cultural terms is in architecture.

### Architecture as culture

One site where we can understand architectural culture *as* culture is in situations when buildings fail to work in their intended way –or even fail to work at all. Discussions of architecture in Turkey often focus on the long history of monumental architecture (Bozdoğan and Necipoğlu 2007: 2) in the Ottoman Empire, despite similarly long-standing traditions of urban workplace and rural domestic architecture. With the nineteenth-century decline of the Ottoman Empire, especially with regards to the low production of export goods, Ottoman elites enlisted German and French architects to design European-style factories in order to increase productivity. But as Bozdoğan notes, many of these failed since the placement of machinery and workers in factories was not conducive to normative modes of work (2010: 21). Yet, a century of ideology about the “civilizing mission” of industrial architecture continued unabated, and even in 1937 “the industrialization of towns was geared towards building a moral and social institution of culture and civilization” (Bozdoğan 2010: 26). Concurrently, experiments in incorporating Soviet-style social condensers (Bozdoğan 2010: 29, see also Murawski 2017 on condensers in other national contexts), or in transforming village homes through a rejection of Ottoman relics and promotion of European-style modernism, especially in the designs of famed early Republican Era architect Sedad Eldem, largely failed at their stated missions. As Nalbantoğlu notes, “the rationalist discourse gives precedence to architecture in attempting to locate a projected cultural discourse and practice within given forms. Architecture takes the backseat in the nationalist discourse in which forms are justified in the name of culture” (1993: 73).

Recording studio architecture in southeastern Europe and west Asia has attracted far less attention from architectural critics, perhaps since few extant studios entailed a ground-up build of a new building, relying instead on creative reconfigurations of existing architecture. Yet we can trace similar issues when comparing the many Turkish-designed studios I worked at with one big-budget, high-profile studio that was foreign-designed. During my research in 2004-9, the MİAM Stüdyo, located within Istanbul Technical University, was widely lauded as Istanbul’s “best” facility, and was in-demand for doing Western art music and jazz recordings. Yet, most professional studio musicians, arrangers and engineers I knew refused to work there. It had been designed by British acoustician Roger D’Arcy and his firm Recording Architecture, and the attention to detail in the acoustic treatments resulted in a room sound that avoided the problematic resonances and room modes that were characteristic of nearly all other Istanbul studios. However, interviews with several dozen studio professionals I worked with revealed that they found the studio design, and its effects on the social aspects of studio work, made the studio incapable of being inhabited in culturally appropriate ways for the creation of indigenous folk and art musics. Instead, the studios where we worked were local redesigns of concrete substructure homes and former light industrial workplaces that were *visually* inspired by imitating certain acoustical treatments from the West –including the wooden diffusors that

D'Arcy had installed at MIAM and later at Studio Babajim— although the treatments were used in rooms of different construction and dimensions and as such did not *acoustically* work at all like foreign-designed rooms (Bates 2012b). Despite what could be perceived as the “failures” of such rooms to properly function as, say, RFZ, LEDE, or non-environment rooms (Newell 2017), they consistently enabled the concrete containment shell on which treatments had been applied to impart a distinctive sound on recordings. Only one local acoustician I encountered, Sorgun Akkor, attempted to use acoustic measurements and more deliberate acoustic treatments to attenuate what elsewhere might be described as audible defects, but his rooms still fell within the broader acoustical conventions I'm describing. I wasn't the only person to comment on Turkish acoustics, as interviews with audio engineers veered towards unprompted complaints about *çamur* (muddiness, meaning excessive buildup of the low-midrange frequencies), and how low frequencies *yok oldu* (disappeared) due to room modes. In addition to audible features, elements like the striking and idiosyncratic color schemes, some of the specific construction materials (e.g. luxurious local green velvet fabric on the walls at Stüdyo Sistem, or the bluish-brown laminate fake hardwood floors that are sold wholesale by an industry cluster located directly underground from the central industry cluster building of the Turkish recorded music industry) articulated a distinctly Istanbul material culture.

Starting with architecture, but working outwards to related domains such as nationalist ideology and material culture in the form of durable goods, Bozdoğan ends up framing culture in six ways: first, architectural culture (inspired by Roy Landau) and architectural culture's relation to the materiality of “nature” (2001: 259); second, domestic culture (2001: 193); third, culture as representing “national” characteristics (e.g. Greek culture, Turkish culture) or transnational forms of belonging (e.g. Islamic and Ottoman culture); fourth, culture as representing an era (e.g. 20th century culture); fifth, culture in the form of a political project (specifically, Kemalist culture); and sixth a “visual culture of modernity” (Bozdoğan 2001: 13). As she argues, these are not discrete or unrelated kinds, and she provides many examples of when ideas about architectural culture led to political ideology or language politics. For example, one justification for the now discredited Sun-Language Theory (*Güneş-Dil Teorisi*), an argument for the existence of a pan-Turkic nation encompassing most of Asia, drew upon allegations of similarities in how Hittites and Central Asian Turkic peasants made rural homes (Bozdoğan 2001: 246). As she concludes, elaborating on an argument by Günkut Akın, “the architectural culture of the early Turkish republic amply illustrates how high modernism as an ideology appealed particularly to planners, engineers, architects, scientists and technicians who wanted to use state power to bring about huge, utopian changes in people's work habits, living patterns, moral conduct and worldview” (2001: 6).

But one deficiency with architectural criticism concerns a tendency to treat buildings as intact entities in and of themselves, with less attention to how they end up getting inhabited, populated with technologies, and remade over the years. The considerable social and cultural effects attributed to buildings-as-workplaces (Gieryn 2002) result not just from the architecture, but rather architecture in tandem with non-architectural technologies, both infrastructural ones (e.g. wires, furniture, mic stands) and directly engaged ones (e.g. technologies of audition,

computer digital audio workstations, musical instruments).

### Technological objects as culture

Where, specifically, is culture situated within the act of and sites of producing recorded music? Making recordings is first and foremost an act that depends upon many kinds of technology: in the case of the recordings I analyzed, which were built upon new multitracked digital recordings of acoustic and electric instruments (rather than existing pre-made samples), the essential studio technologies consisted of transducers (microphones, speakers and headphones), electrical technologies, a digital audio workstation (DAW) that enabled the storage of digital data and subsequent processing and visualization of it, and additional infrastructural technological objects. Therefore, in studios it makes less sense to conceive of culture *primarily* as a set of symbols and representations, since doing production work relies less how people perceive their relation to an *abstract* external world, than it does on how people engage with each other and with technical objects (including “recording,” instrumental, and architectural technologies) –and moreover how technical objects *engage with each other*. After all, if you record a guitar through a microphone, while human input helps activate the strings and adjust the string length by fretting, ultimately what is captured is the interaction between a vibrating guitar string, a resonating guitar body, air, an idiosyncratic acoustic environment, and microphone –*not* the guitarist and microphone. During production people find divergent ways to engage with a fairly predictable set of technologies (alongside regional variations like local instruments and acoustic treatments), and the same technologies attain different sociotechnical positions within different production networks. These divergences and differences become codified in the workflows of particular production networks, supporting the presence of variables we can productively conceptualize in cultural terms.

Of all the types of music technology, we have the most extensive knowledge about the cultural power and valence of musical instruments, whether considering the gendering role of the lyra in constituting the body politic of Crete (Dawe 2003), the anxieties surrounding the agentic capacity of the saz in forming the Turkish nation (Bates 2012a), the ability of traditional and robotic gamelans to produce atmosphere and affective relations amongst audiences (McGraw 2016), the relation between tabla making, global climate change and the container shipping industry (Roda 2015), or the role of the viol in performing political diplomacy in the early 1700s Europe (Ahrendt 2018). None of these examples are especially surprising; regionally specific popular instruments often gain a sociocultural importance beyond their basic role as sounding objects. But which technologies of foreign origin and/or manufacture become successfully indigenized, to the point that they seem either less foreign or wholly Turkish in character?

Such questions necessitate an ethnographic approach that is attentive to the things that people do, but framed in relation to *the things that do things to people*. We tend to linguistically enforce an a priori distinction between technological objects, built environments, social interactions, music, and economies, rather than understanding their intra-actions and interactions. While leaving these as distinct categories allows us to understand their ontological differences, neologisms such as sociotechnical, sociomusical, socioeconomic and technoculture already

indicate that certain pairings of phenomena often cohere, if not inherently then at least temporarily. Gilbert Simondon argues that the culture concept is insufficient due to its lack of attention to the world of technical objects, and that our understanding of the human is insufficient as we haven't sufficiently examined the design and structure of technical objects (related to what he terms the individuation and individualization of objects):

Culture is unbalanced because it recognizes certain objects, like the aesthetic object, granting them citizenship in the world of significations, while it banishes other objects (in particular technical objects) into a structureless world of things that have no signification but only a use, a utility function (Simondon 2017 [1958]: 16).

While Simondon idealizes that the world would be better if we knew how to understand, embrace and engage properly with technical objects, and if we championed technical objects that require the user to be attentive to their very technicity rather than those that produce alienation through inattention, others are more pessimistic about the proposition. Alf Hornborg, for example, views global modernity as revolving around the "belief in the magical agency of objects" (2017: 96), a belief that obscures our perception of the role of these very same technologies in supporting global economic systems that maintain gross economic inequalities across societies.

We can attend to ethnographic concerns by analyzing the divergent attitudes towards and practices that involve a particular studio technology. In the case of microphones, for example, they are obviously *material things* that are ontologically definable as transducers; once they are connected to a powered mic preamp with a cable, they automatically and continuously convert changing air pressures to electricity, regardless of whether people want them to or not. This has cultural valences to an extent, but mics don't just transduce, and numerous non-obligatory modes of human-mic interaction/intra-action fall outside of transductive concerns. Microphones are affective-aesthetic devices "with a *sound*," the result of (in the case of the Neumann mics favored in Turkish studios) a German *design* philosophy that "imagined" and "configured" particular kinds of users (Woolgar 1991), and in the circulation of their broader cultural representations can become symbolic or *iconic* of recorded music and selfhood themselves. Mics are also a charged *place* within studios that can become the site of performance, they are socialized with or *used* differentially by different kinds of studio users (including modes of indirect use or strategic non-use), and they have the capacity to be *simultaneously* used directly and *indirectly* in different ways.

For example, percussionist Mısırlı Ahmet insisted on recording with one very specific mic (AKG SE300B with a cardioid capsule, an unusual but not particularly expensive mic) that had to be positioned exactly the same, regardless of the varying acoustics of specific tracking rooms. He developed his *darbuka* and *bendir* playing style, especially concerning the amplitude and dynamics of individual drum strokes, to work with this particular transducer and spatial organization of human and non-human objects in the room. Beyond audible aesthetics and performance practice, such human-technological performances were also a performance of social status within the networks of the recorded music sector. In contrast, some studio musicians



attempted to ignore mics altogether, and would sit down and perform their part regardless of where their chair or the mic had been positioned. Others, such as clarinetist Serkan Çağrı, *mey/balaban* player Ertan Tekin or violinist Adnan Karaduman (Figure 1), would adjust their bodies and the position of their instrument in relation to the mic with every phrase, playing it “like an instrument.” Audio engineers were usually nominally given the choice of which mic to use, but in some studios, for example Stüdyo Sound, engineers almost never touched or moved mics, leaving the studio's main Neumann U87ai mic in the same position in the room regardless of what was to be recorded, even if the sound might be perceived by other participants as compromised (musicians were free to move it, if they wanted). Other engineers, myself included (Figure 2), took considerably more time with mic positioning and made it an integral part of their job. Engineer/percussionist Yılmaz Yeşilyurt was more obsessed than most with esoteric and boutique mics, and on several occasions, I brought him unusual mics from the US (ShinyBox ribbons, Peluso CMC6 condensers), or he'd buy them when touring with Kurdish and Zaza musical groups in Germany (his beloved Brauner VM1). Arrangers were strictly indirect users (Bates 2016: 159) of mics while working in that capacity. Therefore, there was a variety of attitudes and practices towards mic use and handling, ranging from thinking of them instrumentally, to attempting to ignore them, to manipulating them to enact a certain kind of techno-artistic labor, to only indirectly engaging with them. These attitudes and practices might be all simultaneously in action.



Figure 1: Adnan Karaduman recording at Kalan Stüdyo. Photo by Ladi Dell'aira.



Figure 2: The author miking up a session for Ulaş Özdemir. Photo by Ladi Dell'aira.

Within science and technology studies, related issues have been framed in different ways. Taking a largely Latourian-influenced approach to understanding technological agency, Akrich (1992) introduces the tripartite scripts, program, and anti-program conceptual frame to analyze the dichotomy between the ways that inventors *script* uses and users through their inventions, and the extent that users are locked-in (*programs*) or can deviate from these scripts (*anti-programs*). Taking a social constructivist approach to similar problems, Pinch and Bijker (1987) explore the *interpretive flexibility* that enables users to craft divergent uses and meanings for technological objects. They differ primarily with regards to the boundaries between the social and the technical; Akrich argues against any a priori distinction, while Pinch and Bijker uphold a concept of the social that is restricted to human participants. However, returning to the mic, neither the scripts nor the interpretive flexibility concepts explain how and why the mic becomes a particularly charged site in the studio –a site of power. There may be many ways to “use” a mic, but they all work within what Feenberg terms a *technological hegemony*, “that aspect of the distribution of social power which has the force of culture behind it” (1999: 86). In Istanbul, the power accorded recorded music as noted earlier, in tandem with normative modes of organizing work and workplaces, all served to nuance the scripts and interpretive flexibilities that came to uphold a prevalent, culturally specific technological hegemony.

In a related vein, Louise Meintjes (2012) provides a paradigmatic account of the fetish-nature of studio technologies and environments within South African recording studios. Harkening back to Hornborg, studio technologies are magical objects with power; certain individuals (typically white engineers) are entrusted to control/operate the technology, while others (typically black musicians) work indirectly with non-instrumental technologies. Meintjes doesn't define the term fetish, but in my reading it seems that her work creatively plays on the ambiguity between the original fetish concept in sub-Saharan Africa, where the fetish was a modern technology created to resist colonial power (Pietz 1987), and Marx's notion of the



fetishized commodity. Hornborg (2014) has persuasively argued that *both* kinds of human-technological fetish relations articulate contemporary political economies.

### **Istanbul's Recording Studios**

The primary studio I worked at in Istanbul, ZB Stüdyo, was built by Zuğuş Berepe co-founder and Laz rock artist Kazım Koyuncu as his personal studio but was used for commercial projects too. It became a major node for *etnik müzik* production. Following Kazım's tragic passing in 2005 from cancer, the studio management changed hands, but ZB continued to be a place where many albums in Karadeniz rock/pop styles (arranged *etnik müzik* specifically from the Eastern Black Sea Region) were produced. Few Istanbul studios are style-specific places, meaning we also did a Grup Yorum *protest* album there (Bates 2014), straight-up Turkish folk music productions, and soundtracks to feature films and TV drama series (Bates 2018). As mentioned before, session personnel were amongst the most sought-after studio musicians within the broader Turkish recorded music industry –regardless of musical style or the language of music being created.

As I visited other studios as a participant and/or observer, and over the next seven years talked with engineers, musicians and record label personnel about their production experiences, it became clear that normative ways of working and socializing that were specific to Istanbul's commercial and project studios in part resulted from the broader cultures of work in Turkey, including inherited structures from Ottoman era craft guilds, and locally-specific ways of engaging with technological objects. The Turkish record industry, headquartered in a single purpose-built complex in the Unkapanı neighborhood of Istanbul next to several other clustered guilds (Figure 3), enforced a standardized division-of-labor and workflow for making recordings –one which depended upon professional studio musicians, album arrangers, and audio engineers, and where the named artists featured on the covers of albums were typically kept distant from the bulk of production labor. Despite shared spaces for engaging in production work (the studio, the record label office), each recorded music industry profession was distinct regarding things like apprenticeship/training, social/conversational norms, ways of interacting with various kinds of technologies, and status/power within broader industry structures.



Figure 3: The music industry at Unkapanı. Photo by Eliot Bates.

I recently discussed the studio-sited “culture question” with Burcu Yıldız, an Istanbul-based ethnomusicologist and specialist in Armenian-language singing, and her husband Aytekin Gazi Ataş, a renowned composer of TV/film music<sup>6</sup>. In fact, the two met whilst they were both members of the Boğaziçi University Folklore Club, the organization that had germinated the aforementioned Kardeş Türküler ensemble, and their introduction to stage/studio music-making was initially within what I’m calling the *etnik müzik* scene. As Burcu noted, from when Kardeş Türküler began in the mid 1990s through the mid-2000s, the very act of singing in multiple languages was a revolutionary act, a form of multiculturalism that contrasted with liberal multiculturalism as a mode of political discourse. Starting around 2005, though, many more musicians previously outside the *etnik müzik* scene started to incorporate songs in Kurdish and Arabic in their stage repertoires. According to Burcu, discussions within Kardeş Türküler extended beyond questions of multi-lingualism, however:

Especially at the concerts where dances were staged, in addition to the question of the representation and exhibition of different languages and cultures, [Kardeş Türküler] discussed how these cultures had been in dialogue with each other, how they conflicted, and how similarities needed to be emphasized alongside their differences, and in this manner designed the core of their performances. For example, while they played a song with versions in different languages in succession, differences in the song arrangement would be observed<sup>7</sup>.

But by 2016, stemming from the swift political consolidation that followed the attempted coup d’état, things had reverted back to the pre-2004 formation. Mainstream musicians were no

<sup>6</sup> Personal communication, April 27, 2018. This and all subsequent interviews and personal communications were conducted in Turkish.

<sup>7</sup> Personal communication, May 7, 2018.

longer singing in minority languages, and the *etnik müzik* industry's particular brand of musical multiculturalism was radical once again.

We then talked more generally about how a term like intercultural might apply within a studio setting. The first “culture” as part of the intercultural configuration of the studio that came to mind for Burcu and Aytekin was what are typically termed Roman(i) string ensembles or sometimes *alaturka* string ensembles. For them, it wasn't primarily the Roma *identity* of the participants that culturally defined the group as intercultural participants, but rather the *way* that musicians within these ensembles did what they did in a studio setting, which included elements of musical-performative behavior and social behavior (both during recording and in casual social interactions). Groups like the Kempa Yaylı Grubu (or before them the Şenyaylar family), whose sound grew to prominence during the 1990s-early 2000s period of post-*arabesk* Turkish pop music production, are legendary within Istanbul's recording industry, and attain a distinctive and inimitable sound that is highly desired within and outside Turkey. However, if an arranger desires a string ensemble sound that is, say, more reminiscent of Hollywood film music underscoring, it was impossible until recently to accomplish this with Kempa and other Roman/*alaturka* string ensembles –both with regard to musical aesthetics and the required social negotiations. If you hire Kempa, you provide them with a song melody, and one of the musicians in the group does the string arrangement and rehearses the ensemble. The recording workflow is a standardized one (for them) entailing a lot of overdubbing with strategically designed (but not discussed) nonstandard bowing techniques (Bates 2016: 136). In contrast, other non-Roman string ensembles for hire in Istanbul engage in a different workflow, utilize bowings appropriate to Western orchestral music, and might be open to different or more experimental kinds of requests on the part of arrangers. When deciding who to hire, an arranger has to choose the production workflow, the desired musical sound, and the extent of input the arranger is allowed into influencing playing technique. Thus, these other string ensembles could be said to constitute a different culture within Istanbul recording studio interculturalities. As Aytekin noted, there has been a partial change since 2010:

After groups like Kempa and Şenyaylar a young generation of musicians created a group (that could be also labeled *alaturka*) called İstanbul Strings who began to become increasingly popular and play a significant role in studio recordings. One of the most important features of this group (possibly because of their conservatory education) is that they can use either Roman/*alaturka* or western bowing techniques<sup>8</sup>.

String ensembles were an exception, though, as everyone working as a studio musician was required to perform in a wide variety of local and regional styles, in many cases expected to play multiple instruments within an instrument family (for example, Eyüp Hamiş would bring upwards of 100 end-blown flutes and double reeds to a session)<sup>9</sup>. Additionally, studio musicians needed to be able to play in tune with any of the standard tuning systems (e.g. the

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<sup>8</sup> Personal communication, May 7, 2018. Note that İstanbul Strings, despite showcasing younger musicians, also includes several veterans of the aforementioned Kempa and Şenyaylar groups such as Baki Kemancı.

<sup>9</sup> Interview with Eyüp Hamiş, November 17, 2006.

Ottoman/Turkish 53-note system, the 17-note saz tuning, or Western equal temperament)<sup>10</sup>, in any key, and without excessive extraneous noises common to many folk or art music instruments, necessitating a collection of instruments that construction-wise were distinct from the kinds of instruments stage, amateur or local musicians used. Studio musicianship, therefore, was nominally defined as a profession through a combination of repertoire knowledge, performative flexibility, and technological ownership, usage and proficiency –all in relation to the contemporary studio assemblage.

Audio engineer and bassist Metin Kalaç, in his typical humorous style, summarized his view of a culture of Istanbul-based audio engineers as “beer-drinking descendants of tea-makers”<sup>11</sup>. In the guild-based studio workplace, as in several professions within the recorded music industry, apprenticeship may begin when one is very young (sometimes under 10), working as a *çaycı* (tea-boy). Without a formalized pedagogy regarding the technical/engineering/musical aspects of the trade, apprentices are expected to learn while on the job through non-participant observation. The focus on tea relates to its importance, both in lubricating the work that is done in the studio (and many other workplaces), and in facilitating the social encounters that transpire between moments of recording work, where the social network of the recording industry is maintained. My own on-the-job training at ZB Stüdyo was largely in learning how to both make and serve tea, which required attentiveness to the individual preferences of all the studio professionals in our network. However, despite the formidable social training that happens in this apprenticeship, there is still a sense that engineers are more on the “uncouth” side. One popular meme that circulated in the early 2000s on Turkish-language IRC channels was the “Juvenile engineer’s handbook” (Delikanlı tonmaister’in el kitabı), constructed as a set of proverbs written in a coarse, grammatically inaccurate Turkish dialect. Amongst the 34 entries, nine dealt with being a technological neophyte, three with being a luddite or using antiquated technology, four dealt with studio etiquette, and nine dealt with faux-pas committed in certain common interpersonal relations. Many are obviously specific to Turkish studio cultures. For example:

Delikanlı tonmaister Keman grubuna; ‘Kesin giygiy etmeyi, burada ayar yapıyoruz’. der. [The juvenile engineer says to the string ensemble: ‘for sure don’t go ‘giygiy’ (imitating sound of violin vibrato and ornamentation), here we control our tuning].

Delikanlı tonmaister ‘Çay var mı?’ denildiğinde ‘Burası kahvehane mi lan?’ der. [The juvenile engineer, when someone says “is there any tea?” answers “what the hell do you think this is, a coffee-house?”].

Culture, here, is framed as an intersection of social class, technological use/knowledge, and an understanding of social and communicational norms of other studio workers (especially regarding what Metin Kalaç terms the “psychology of musicians”): *maddî ve manevî*.

There was an alternate interpretation regarding the culture of audio engineers, however. I heard voiced on numerous occasions, from studio musicians, arrangers, and producers, that since

<sup>10</sup> Interview with Engin Arslan, November 22, 2006.

<sup>11</sup> Interview, April 10, 2007.

all this technology we worked with came “from the West” or “from America” that it made sense that I’d be the one manipulating it; after all, this was quintessentially “my” culture. Notably, this is one of the few times I heard the word *kültür* uttered during normal studio sessions, rather than in interviews. Never mind that the Neumann U87ai mic, SPL ProMike preamp and Klotz cables came from Germany, the Dynaudio studio monitors from Denmark, the Cambridge Audio amplifier was designed in England, and much of the rack-mount gear (including the Digidesign HD96 audio interface and the studio’s Control|24 mixing surface) was manufactured in East Asia with parts from China, Taiwan and Japan that themselves were built upon raw materials strip-mined, extracted and drilled on every continent in the world. The software was similarly eclectic: the Waves Platinum suite of plugins, designed and coded in Israel, and Digidesign’s ProTools software, coded in Northern California. Despite the mistaken provenance claims (little of this was “American”), more importantly, little of it was perceived as having been effectively or fully indigenized.

In contrast, while I was conducting research in Turkey I witnessed some of the process whereby the *garmon* accordion, an instrument typically associated with Azeri music, replaced the *tulum* bagpipes in some Eastern Black Sea villages, and the *perdesiz gitar*, Erkan Oğur’s local adaptation of the “western” classical guitar, became a legitimate instrument for the performance of folk musics. In the process, both partly lost their status as “foreign” imports. In non-studio contexts, I documented the Turkification of computers, which manifested in sociotechnical institutions like the ubiquitous neighborhood repair shops, business clusters in the Mecediyeköy neighborhood that sold greymarket computer parts for Windows XP boxes, and internet cafes. But our need to use ProTools on a Mac, and the lack of Turkish-language software localization, discursively *and* materially demarcated ZB Stüdyo’s computer as foreign, requiring studio participants to improvise vocabularies and practices conducive to production. For example, on one occasion when I was “comping” (compositing) a studio musician’s performance, he requested “fade in up down yapabilmisin?” This idiosyncratic phrase derived from three linguistic sources: technical English as seen on the menu bar of software (fade in), overheard English (up/down), and Turkish verbs (*yapabilmisin*=can you do). In English “crossfade” would have been technically accurate, but the Turkish phrase is more accurate with regards to the multivalent construction of this studio moment. As a side point, this engagement wasn’t with a *material* object, but rather with a massless set of digital objects (audio files, digital signal processing operations) and their visualizations and parameterizations.

Provenance was one thing, but something that I learned from talking with two experienced audio engineers and one up-and-coming engineer was the difference in how technology, electronics, and computer use figured into conceptions about childhood development. Metin Kalaç’s take was that Turkish teenagers “had football”, while American teenagers had erector sets, electronics kits, and computer programming. My friendship with engineer/arranger Yılmaz Yeşilyurt partly grew out of the limited number of people in Turkey he felt he could geek out with about technological objects and their audible aesthetics; he was obsessed with esoteric and boutique gear, and with the sound of ECM’s jazz albums and Norah Jones vinyl releases, but few



of his peers shared these obsessions<sup>12</sup>. Ömer Avcı, an experienced engineer and percussion arranger/performer (another musician affiliated with Boğaziçi University's folklore clubs and the Kardeş Türküler ensemble), similarly devoted much energy to the pursuit of an ever cleaner (*temiz*) and shining (*parlak*) sound, and was learning English in order to communicate better on web forums where Anglophone engineers chatted about esoteric summing mixers and analog-digital converters that might help him realize this goal (he ended up getting a boutique summing mixer made by Dangerous Music)<sup>13</sup>. But then again, Metin was generalizing, as he himself had learned how to repair guitar/bass amplifiers and had maintained all the gear for the Karadeniz rock band Zuğışı Berepe –as well as being a proficient and knowledgeable audio engineer (Figure 4). On reflection, I do believe that there is something in the way that some people who work in technologically-oriented trades in the USA and UK (and perhaps elsewhere in Europe or Australasia) can become obsessed with the technicity of the work and the aesthetics of the technology *for their own sake*, and the presence or lack of this disposition does suggest one way in which technological engagement becomes cultural. It's when we mistakenly connect that cultural disposition to questions of provenance (e.g. America's culture is electronics, Turkey's culture is the saz), or assume that this culture of technicity (as an inheritance of Simondon's logic) is *inherently* part of American/European culture and by definition inaccessible to other cultures, that we run into problems.



Figure 4: Metin Kalaç doing editing work in Cubase. Photo by Ladi Dell'aira.

While the preceding cultural formations pertain to categories of professionals who work full-time in studios, another category of individual is, in effect, outside studio cultures *and* the recorded music industry –the soloists who appear on album covers. For productions of *etnik müzik* or regional Turkish-language folk music, these individuals are often the only participants

<sup>12</sup> Personal communication, May 21, 2007.

<sup>13</sup> Interview, April 24, 2007

in the session who are nominally “insiders” to the culture being represented on the album. In talking with Ayşenur Kolivar, a former member of Kardeş Türküler who became a choral arranger for Karadeniz albums and a soloist specializing in Hemşin-language songs and Black Sea women’s repertoires, a problematic “star culture” of album soloists emerged in the early 2000s that constituted a major social break from the way that stage musicians once interacted with audiences in the Black Sea Region<sup>14</sup>. Talking in 2006, she described this star culture as a “foreign” import from the *arabesk* popular music genre associated with Southeastern Turkey (Stokes 1992). Within studio settings, industry insiders often viewed soloists as problematic, being uninterested in their newfound star posturing (especially the conversational topics and vain body language), and annoyed with their lack of understanding of the work involved in making an album from start to finish. But when Ayşenur became an album soloist herself for the production of her debut album, *Bahçeye Hanımeli* (Kalan Müzik 2011), she became more aware of the techniques used to enforce the insider-outsider dichotomy of the studio setting, as she found it very difficult to get several of the album arrangers and engineers assigned to the project by the label to help achieve *her* vision for the album<sup>15</sup>. As a result, despite being an established industry insider in the studio musician role, the numerous misunderstandings that arose in her transition to a new, unconventional role (soloist with arranger aspirations) led to numerous delays in the production process, and a lot of the work needing to be redone.

### Resituating interculturality

Thus far I have discussed interculturality in the recording studio in terms of encounters between discrete professions –engineers (local and foreign), studio musicians (string ensembles and other instrumentalists), arrangers, soloists– as framed by the divergent ways that they engage with the materiality of the studio. In actuality, this social formation, like intercultural encounters elsewhere emerged due to “interexperience and mutual influences” (Ottosson 2010: 277). These cultures arose not in isolation from each other, but rather through a prolonged codependence or intra-action. This leads me to a site-specific definition of interculturality:

[...] the interaction and intra-action of differing *mantık* (sense, logic) towards engaging with the *maddî* (material) and *manevî* (psychological/spiritual/moral).

My research explored a wide array of technological engagement beyond the minimum activities required to “use” a technological object. This ranges from attempted infrastructural non-use (the microphone that is never moved by engineers in *Stüdyo Sound* and ideally ignored, or more commonly the cables, acoustic treatments and other less commented-upon obligatory objects that aren’t usually directly touched), to architectural/acoustical features designed to constrain or nuance the distribution of human and non-human objects in the space (e.g. diffusors, gobos), to those actively used (Serkan Çağrı’s embodied approach towards “playing” the mic with his clarinet, or the very quick mouse-keyboard editing work done by engineers guided by data visualizations). It includes theatrical use designed to thwart attempts by “non-

<sup>14</sup> Personal communication, August 24, 2006

<sup>15</sup> Interview with Ayşenur Kolivar and Metin Kalaç, June 16, 2011.



knowledgeable” participants to inflict detrimental changes (e.g. theatrics around the “producer’s knob” that is not connected to anything but that enables the producer to hallucinate their input), to indirect use (acoustic instrumentalists adapting their performances “for the computer” who become indirect users of DAWs), to directed use (the arrangers or studio musicians instructing engineers to do operations on their behalf). It encompasses complex chains of simultaneous interaction/intra-action, for example the ways particular configurations of technologies of audition in tandem with DAWs enable studio musicians to overdub a part on top of a mix in progress but also transform a different chain of audition happening in the control room and provoke reactions from the arranger of the session. The widespread codification of studio roles around normative modes of engaging with specific objects leads to situations where three or more types of studio participants are in inter/intra-action with the very same material or digital object –in three divergent ways.

Of course, many workplaces involve differential engagements with technological objects; this much is not surprising, even as historically the category of technological non-users has been rarely investigated (Wyatt 2003). Therefore, I believe this definition holds within Turkey regardless of the specific site of encounter. However, the divergent demographic backgrounds of the participants in Turkish studios (studio musicians typically having grown up in towns far away from Istanbul, engineers typically being working-class Istanbul “natives”, and arrangers being of higher social classes and having developed social networks whilst they were university students) mean that these differential engagements with technologies instantiate encounters that, moreover, demographically defined, appear intercultural. Despite working together and developing an idiosyncratic mode of studio discourse (Porcello 2004) which is alien to studio “outsiders” such as album soloists or stage/conservatory musicians, this never fully erases the cultural differences, however they are framed.

My material-semiotic approach (Law 2009) towards understanding studio work entails ethnographic and STS methods, and a ground-up theorization of culture and interculturality that privileges studio discourses/practices and secondarily Turkish writings on material/architectural culture. As such, it differs from standard Anglophone definitions of interculturality, whether in political science or music studies. Interculturalism in political science typically contrasts with another neologism, multiculturalism, and both are framed in relation to doctrines and practices of liberalism, thought of in demographic terms. For example, Kymlicka (1995) conceives of the “cultural structures” of multiculturalism within Canada as consisting of three kinds of groups: immigrant groups, First Nations indigenous peoples, and sub-state national minorities (e.g. Québécois). Expanding on this, Meer and Modood propose that European/Anglophone multiculturalism came to mean “the political accommodation by the state and/or a dominant group of all minority cultures defined first and foremost by reference to race, ethnicity or religion, and, additionally but more controversially, by reference to other group-defining characteristics such as nationality and aboriginality” (2012: 181). In their formulation, interculturalism is distinct from multiculturalism in its emphasis on communication (2012: 182), and on embracing cultural diversity rather than integration (2012: 189). The distinction is in practice quite vague (Wieviorka 2012), however, as what has become known as liberal

multiculturalism (Maciel 2014) doesn't preclude communication or an embrace of diversity, and it is unclear what demarcates a "successful" intercultural encounter, versus moments when people of allegedly different cultures have "communicated".

Within music studies, outside of music education research (Siankope and Villa 2004, Bartleet, Sunderland, and Carfoot 2016) interculturalism is not yet widely used, although two scholars have suggested fruitful approaches to the concept in relation to musical performance<sup>16</sup>. Jason Stanyek has provided an extensive account of music-focused intercultural encounters, focusing specifically on the interaction between different US-based minority groups in creating pan-African jazz, capoeira, and Asian American musical aesthetics. For Stanyek, interculturality is distinct from other hyphenated forms (multi-, cross-, trans-) in that it involves face-to-face interaction of people, and therefore has "distinct spatial orientations" (Stanyek 2004: 10) and is "activated... through a somatic aesthetic of co-presence" (3).

Åse Ottosson researched Aboriginal country music groups based in small Australian desert communities that aspired to perform in larger desert towns such as Alice Springs (Mparntwe). In her study, the inter- of interculturality referred to, beyond the experience of Aboriginal musicians performing at the white-owned venues, the reception of and participation in these performances by members of different Aboriginal communities, and the differing motivations musicians had for participating in intercultural spaces which exceeded the normative discourses of reconciliation and education. In contrast to political science formulations, here interculturalism is "a conceptual stance that questions notions of pre-existing or fixed socio-cultural boundaries and identity, and instead prioritises interexperience and mutual influences" (Ottosson 2010: 277). While verbal communication is part of what happened in Alice Springs, Ottosson, like Stanyek, emphasizes bodily co-presence within specific spaces, and occasionally notes the materiality of encounters –both encounters deemed by some participants to be "successful" or "problematic" (for example, the white club owners' negative responses to one musician throwing sound reinforcement equipment around).

While Stanyek and Ottosson are critical to an extent of the conflation of "culture" with a narrow set of demographic categories (especially race/ethnicity), either due to the lack of attention on the role of interaction itself in constituting bounded cultures (Ottosson 2010: 296) or the over-privileging of "structures that are coherent, isolatable, homogeneous and stable" (Stanyek 2004: 11), both ultimately framed their discussion primarily in terms of ethnically defined cultures and secondarily around other aspects. In contrast, my approach to interculturalism begins with the multiplicity of ways of interacting and intra-acting with *maddî/manevî*. Where we have the most common ground is through a shared concern with bodies and spaces –and the role of bodies and spaces in constituting musical practice and cultural identities. In my research, I have attempted to extend such questions outwards to encompass the constitutive role of technological objects –material and digital– in intercultural encounters.

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<sup>16</sup> The first book-length treatment that highlights the term is Hae-kyung Um's edited collection (2005) on Asian diasporic performing arts, but despite its presence in the title, interculturalism is never defined in the book, and not mentioned at all in most of the chapters.

## Acknowledgments

I thank Ladi Dell'aira, Burcu Yıldız, Aytekin Gazi Ataş, the anonymous reviewers and Antenor Ferreira for their valuable feedback on earlier drafts of this essay, Matthias Lewy for his encouragement in writing this, and Agustina María Checa for assistance with Spanish-language translations of the abstract.

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### How to cite / Cómo citar / Como citar

Bates, Eliot. 2019. "Technological Encounters in the Interculturality of Istanbul's Recording Studios". In Corrêa, Antenor Ferreira and Maria Westvall (eds.). Dossier: "Music and Interculturality". *El oído pensante* 7 (1): 145-171. <http://ppct.caicyt.gov.ar/index.php/oidopensante> [Web: DATE].