



Klisala Harrison

Value alignment in applied and community-based music research

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Value alignment in applied and community-based music research

The alignment of researchers' and researched communities' values is common in music research methodologies of applied ethnomusicology, applied musicology, community music studies, music therapy and some areas of music psychology and music for health studies. Such fields focus on use-inspired research (Stokes 1997). I define value alignment as occurring when values among different research participants seem consistent, complementary or aligned. In such areas of applied and community-based music research, researcher and researched community value alignment emerges often in the context of musical interventions made in community. What are the benefits and risks of aligning one's values as a researcher with values in a music community, within research processes? What are directions and methodologies for related future research on researcher values, researched community values and intersections between the two? I argue that a critical approach to use-inspired research on music, when it comes to values, could minimize various risks and maximize benefits of value alignment. I also call for new work on value fluidity. Value fluidity refers to the intersections of values of individual human beings and institutions (organizational or otherwise social) as well as which value systems these intersections create and how those fluctuate over time.



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Introduction

I begin with a story about one of the values that motivates me as a researcher. Most researchers have at least one. These stories affect how we engage our values with the values of people we research and with academic contexts, no matter which kind of research we conduct:

After my ninth birthday, I began violin lessons on a too-big, full-sized violin. Laying on a floral, polyester sofa, in a floral dress, Ruth Schafer had bequeathed her husband's violin and a three-quarter length bow to me. What had scared nine-year-old me was her purple-blue skin, from advanced heart disease. That same year, following my mother's nervously bundling me to doctors, I was diagnosed with epilepsy. Childhood epilepsy, a disease that took me away in small absences. Ten years later, when playing a lot of music in my Bachelor of Music studies at the University of Victoria, Canada, the epilepsy vanished as suddenly as it had come.

For me, health and well-being became values foundational to my existence and somehow melded with what I valued about music. A value is defined here as a value judgement that is epistemological or ontological in nature, and that is experienced ontologically or metaphysically (drawing on Weber 1949). By age 19, I was playing violin nine hours per day in individual practice, chamber ensembles, orchestras, a large new music group, and lessons. I became curious about how music might foster health and well-being because I suspected, at numerous points, that it

had done so for me. Indeed, music is being found to assist in the management and recovery of some kinds of epilepsy (Liao, Jiang and Wang 2015, Maguire 2012), but I was never any medical research subject. In my 30s and 40s, after completing the PhD, this personal background motivated my publishing studies on the general theme of music, health and well-being: the social potential of music for addiction recovery (Harrison 2009, 2019); place-based and sense-bound songwriting as a trauma response for refugees and asylum seekers (Harrison, Jacobsen and Sunderland 2019); relationships between music and socioeconomic status, which influences health and longevity, wellness levels and morbidity (Harrison 2018, 2019); and implementations of policy promoting the human right to health, via formal music programs organized in urban poverty (Harrison, in press).

In this special journal issue of *Musiikki* (“Music” in Finnish), focused on methodologies of music research, I take opportunity to critically reflect on the following two questions and what I have found to be a complex, but also highly personal, arena of research methodology: values in music research. First, I consider a growing trend of researchers aligning their values with those of researched communities. Especially in applied and community-based music research, researchers aim to generate knowledge and/or community change, frequently (although not invariably) through methodological processes in which they align their values with those of researched communities. After positioning value alignment in music research approaches, I ask, secondly: What are the benefits and risks of aligning one’s values as a researcher with values in a music community, within research processes? What are directions and methodologies for related future analysis of researcher values, researched community values and intersections between the two? I define value alignment as occurring when values among different research participants seem to be consistent, complementary or aligned. I interpret a community as being formed by a group of people that is socialized (Cotrell and Impy 2018) and engage “interfaces and interconnections between social cultures and musical cultures” (Veblen 2013, 6) with relevance for, as ethnomusicologist John Blacking put it, connections between “humanly organized sound” and “soundly organized humanity” (Blacking 1973).

Values are neglected in discussions of music research methodologies. Music generally tends to be considered a “good thing” about which researchers generate knowledge and practice. Yet in applied and community-based music research methods, the question of values is more complex than that. Therefore, I have written this article.

Value alignment in use-inspired music research

I have found a research model proposed by political scientist Donald E. Stokes useful for thinking about how to position within (music) research approaches, the phenomenon of value alignment between researcher and researched community. To form his model (see Figure 1), Stokes questioned if research is inspired by a quest for fundamental understanding and/or considerations of use. If it pursues fundamental understanding only, it is pure basic research; if it pursues fundamental understanding and also considers use, it is use-inspired basic research; if it is not inspired by a quest for fundamental understanding and does not consider use, it is pure applied research. Like use-inspired basic research, artistic research enhances understanding whilst being inspired by use (Borgdorff 2012, 100). I will argue that artistic research can be useful for investigating values in applied and community-based research projects conducted through art-making. Pure applied research includes the research that goes into creating music products, for one example, online digital music streaming platforms. For Stokes, work that does not pursue fundamental understanding but considers use is occupied by “research that systematically explores particular phenomena without having in view either general explanatory objectives or any applied use to which the results will be put, a conception more at home with the broader German idea of *Wissenschaft* than it is with French or Anglo-American ideas of science” (Stokes 1997: 74).

		Considerations of use?	
		No	Yes
Quest for fundamental understanding?	Yes	Pure basic research	Use-inspired basic research
	No	Pure applied research	<i>Wissenschaft</i>

Figure 1. Stokes’ model of scientific research (from Borgdorff 2012, 98 after Stokes 1997, 73)

Applied and community-based music research are types of use-inspired research. I will argue, when addressing this article’s questions,

that we need more basic research when it comes to the values engaged by use-inspired research on music.

Applied research in music, also called public or engaged music research (Harrison 2016), encompasses use-inspired disciplines like applied ethnomusicology, applied musicology and music therapy as well as some areas of music psychology and music and health studies. Methodologically, participatory action research takes prominence (see Bendrup 2015) as does action research, which aims to develop and refine practice (Stringer 2013). Qualitative, mixed-method and highly quantitative approaches can be found in the health studies. Researcher values and researched community values seem heavily aligned in these fields, even in health studies of music because they overwhelmingly emphasize positive results of music uses (Fancourt and Finn 2019).

Applied ethnomusicology refers to “the approach guided by principles of social responsibility, which extends the usual academic goal of broadening and deepening knowledge and understanding toward solving concrete problems and toward working both inside and beyond typical academic contexts” (Harrison and Pettan 2010, 1). The field draws extensively on the field of applied anthropology, to some extent on applied sociology and on qualitative research approaches from the social sciences (Harrison 2016). It emphasizes applications of music and ethnomusicology in community. I conducted use-inspired basic research for my PhD dissertation for which I asked what is the role of music in urban poverty, for people experiencing poverty in one of Canada’s poorest urban neighbourhoods, Vancouver’s Downtown Eastside (Harrison 2008). Drawing on my findings, I organized music workshops there that attempted to enhance the poor’s well-being, and which I have discussed in terms of applied ethnomusicology (Harrison 2015). Applied musicology’s modern iteration is in its developmental stages, with the first edited volume, *The Routledge Companion to Applied Musicology*, being written in 2020 (see also Ockelford 2013, Seeger 1939). Music therapy studies emerge from the premise that music has therapeutic value. They emphasize the refinement of practice not only through action research, but through different kinds of qualitative research, mixed-methods research and quantitative study (Edwards 2016).

Community-based research takes a couple of forms: community music studies and collaborative research on music. Overall, values between researched and researched community members are heavily aligned there too. Community music studies, a field led primarily by music educators, focuses on making musical interventions in community, for valued

purposes like inter-ethnic peacebuilding (Tan 2018), addressing human consequences of war and conflict (Howell 2018), or, when surveying numerous such interventions, theorizing social change mechanisms of music (Dunphy 2018). Collaborative research incorporates collaborative research methodologies, for example, collaborative ethnography, in which the researcher together with research participants co-conceptualize and co-theorize ethnographic research trajectories (see Lassiter 2005). Research outputs may include co-productions by researchers and research participants such as texts, audiovisual recordings and exhibitions. Collaborative work is especially important in Indigenous music research today (Diamond and Castello Branco, in press), and in an approach known as activist ethnomusicology. Activist ethnomusicology that extends the work of Charles Hale and Joanne Rappaport in anthropology, cultivates community leadership and emphasizes non-hierarchical working relations for political reasons (Araújo 2006, Araújo and Cambria 2013).

Benefits and risks of value alignment in research processes

Value alignment between a researcher and researched community carries various benefits and risks. The benefits centrally emerge through research methodology. Shared values between a researcher and researched community may allow them to use collective research methods to generate research results together. Shared values, for instance, can enable working together in an epistemic community (for well-defined values that guide research on music for peace-building, see Urbain 2016). In applied and community-based music work, researchers frequently join epistemic communities in which they together with community members work on a specific problem or issue-area (e.g., Sunderland, Graham and Lenette 2016). An epistemic community refers to “a collective of people—including, for instance, [music scholars], musicians, community members, or people from other disciplines—who work together toward solving and analyzing a particular problem or issue-area whose terms are epistemologically defined” (Harrison 2012, 506, developed from Haas 1992). Epistemology refers to processes of “understanding such concepts as belief, memory, certainty, doubt, justification, evidence and knowledge, and . . . enquiring into the criteria for the application of such terms and so, in particular, the criteria for identifying . . . ‘the scope and limits’ of human knowledge” (Cooper 199, 1–2) Epistemic communities give

much to researchers in terms of knowledge exchange and support for research trajectories.

In collaborative research approaches, researchers have the possibility to work together to develop a shared understanding, without taking values for granted from the beginning of a research process. Values can be pre-negotiated among research participants. In a research consortium that I lead titled *Musical Climate Art for a Sound Future*, which promotes environment-related well-being, Greenlandic Indigenous people and non-Indigenous scholars decided to work together in an effort to determine the feasibility of musical climate change art for supporting Indigenous livelihoods and meeting social needs of climate change. Coming from different backgrounds in Russia, Denmark, Finland and Canada, we did not necessarily share any stance towards climate change, or music livelihoods before the research started. Through conducting research collectively, using an activist ethnomusicology approach drawing on Hale's, we are setting our collective research trajectory, including our values, in the group. Researching within an epistemic community, which can be established through collaborative research, may lead to the efficient and comprehensive solving of a valued research problem, including one that is collaboratively determined. Researchers choosing to align their values with a researched community can lead to rich research understandings “from the inside” of their value construct(s) and system(s).

Risks of value alignment between researcher and researched community emerge in both research methodologies and outcomes. Regarding methodologies, we should take any influences of current political climates into very serious consideration. Populism, fascism and pursuing capitalism at any cost are valued politics increasingly widespread across societies in which researchers professionally locate, at the time of writing. Human rights are promoted internationally by the United Nations, but are increasingly threatened nationally and locally (Harrison, in press). A researcher aligning his or her values with researched community values, for example those that support or resist a hegemony, risks a blinkered perspective when it comes to a spectrum of values in society and their place in them. One can even argue that applied and community music studies constitute loci of research outcomes somewhat lacking in critical approach and demonstrated critical-intellectual capability when they do not fully comprehend a diversity and complexity of values in communities and societies. This is a major hindrance to quality research because it means that the research analysis is not thorough; community applications and interventions may be partial, and biased, when it comes to val-

ues. Some scholars, notably David McDonald, fervently resist this logic, reiterating the depth of knowledge made possible through political value alignment. McDonald proposes a critical activist ethnomusicology, which particularly critiques oppression. It is “a problem-centered and participatory mode of inquiry that foregrounds the affective, communicative, and performative capacities of musical behavior in the mobilization of oppositional and emancipatory knowledge in the pursuit of social justice and the common good” (McDonald, in press). I do not think, however, that there is often comprehensive value alignment between researcher and researched community, a topic questioned below.

Further regarding research outcomes, one can never control the uses of research. Depending on who uses research results on music uses, they can be instrumentalized to oppress and destroy musical people, or to strengthen and support them. Interventions in musical community may not only disturb societal trending and norms (Bartleet and Higgins 2018), but may be implicated in destruction and devastation beyond the community level. Music scholars have noted how applications of music can be used for purposes of conflict, even torture (summarized in Rice 2014, 195). Understandings of how music moves people have broad potential for any parties wanting to use music to manipulate people.

Critical thinking and knowledge on value-aligned music research

Little scholarship exists on how value alignment practically works within music research methodologies. In order to maximize benefits and minimize risks of value alignment, more basic research should be conducted on values in the research process. I am arguing here for a more critical approach to use-inspired research, which foregrounds critical thinking on researcher and researched community values. Increasing critical use-inspired research on music would generate new knowledge about how researcher values are generated about music, how values in music communities may be understood and analyzed, as well as potential complexities of relationships between researcher and researched community values. Community music scholars Brydie-Leigh Bartleet and Lee Higgins offer a good start when they insist that researchers should approach “intervention” critically. Of Indigenous Australian contexts, they ask “(1) on whose terms this musical intervention is happening, (2) whether those are appropriate to the cultural context in which they are operating, and

(3) whether the intervention is acting as another colonizing endeavor or promoting a more positive sense of self-determination for participants” (2018, 6). Here I encourage also research that systematically examines researcher and researched community values, and their interrelationships.

Another risk inherent in value alignment, which I detail elsewhere (Harrison 2015) is that if applied and community-based music researchers don’t know much about the values and value systems they deal with, this increases likelihood of the misinterpretation of values in the research context (Peterson 2015). This, in turn, can produce different or inaccurate results from those wanted in case the research makes an intervention in community. A critical perspective may increase alertness about uses of research outcomes felt to be destructive and thus play a role in effective responses to this. Greater knowledge about values and music relationships may shift researcher values and the way we approach valued research work and value alignment entirely. I will now turn to future topics for study and reflection on researcher values, researched community values as well as intersections between the two.

Researcher values

Future work on values in music research can study the possibility that a researcher (not to mention community participant) may hold multiple values, and that different values may be in conflict, inside of him or herself. Value conflict inside the self has been called intrapsychic (Weisner 2009). Particularly with music, which affects (re-)sounding bodies, such conflict has its physiological impact (suggested by Nakamura 2014). In the cases of internal value conflict, and internally ambiguous positions on values (Laird and Cadge 2010), “rhetorics of value” may influence people through persuading them to take on one value system or another. Internal value conflict also brings the possibility to openly discuss the conflict and, if possible, resolve it through non-coercive means. I used this as a research-related teaching method in a course that I taught on music in urban poverty, including well-being, in Vancouver’s Downtown Eastside. University of British Columbia students contributed different musical services to the neighbourhood, such as offering music performance workshops, lessons and mentorship. Some of these applied ethnomusicology students experienced internal value conflicts regarding their often middle-class positions in socio-economic structures that in-

form poverty. Among researchers, internal value conflict and value ambiguity could be investigated using mixed methods approaches of music psychology and the qualitative methods of ethnomusicology.

We can also study more extensively from where researcher values come. Researcher values undoubtedly locate in society and culture, but that can be unpicked when it comes to music research. The values may be influenced, in addition to our personal backgrounds, by organizations and other social institutions as well as discourses of media and social movements plus processes of learning and enculturation that are diverse in origin (Mok 2011). Values of research funders may shape the trajectories of the research they choose to fund (detailed in Harrison 2014). I have discussed elsewhere how individual disciplines of music studies involve numerous value constructs, as well. For this reason, applied ethnomusicology, for one example, can be called applied ethnomusicologies (Harrison 2012).

When someone lives within a value system, and we all do, analyzing the value system brings another research methodology process into focus: value reflexivity. This is one reason that I introduced a value that shapes my research, health, at the start of this article. Value reflexivity involves the researcher asking which value or values influence his or her research and how. It could be career advancement, or it could be something personally, socially, culturally or sonically meaningful. As anthropologist Hilary Dick writes, reflexive “acts of reckoning” involve “the ability to step outside of and critically evaluate unfolding events and one’s place(s) in them” (2017, 223).

Researcher and researched community values can also change, be shifted, and any value conflicts negotiated, through musical and artistic engagements (Nakamura 2014). In addition to social science-based methodologies, approaches and methods of artistic research contribute new knowledge on such processes. Artistic research is one way of getting at knowledges that are embedded, enacted, embodied, implicit, tacit, non-conceptual, non-discursive, pre-reflective and, thus, the not-yet-known (Borgdorff 2012, 170–173; Busch 2009; Klein 2010). An artist discovers through artistic practice, and less so through hypotheses, problems, questions and topics determined in advance of research. This, however, does not mean that values would not play a part in the artistic research process. In artistic research, the values at play are the artist’s own and, depending on the artistic project investigated, those of his or her artistic collaborators.

Researched community values

Regarding researched community values, ideas of the foremost anthropological theorist of values, Joel Robbins, may be useful to planning and making accurately the music interventions common in applied and community-based music research. Robbins (2013) proposed a continuum of value systems that draws on value tendencies identified in political philosophy (Lassman 2011) and by anthropologist Louis Dumont (1980, 1986). Philosophers have identified value monists, who believe that all values are reducible to one supervalue. For example, valuing therapeutic approaches to music might be reducible to the supervalue of health. Value pluralists believe that more than one value system exists; others do not believe in any hierarchy of values.

Robbins' (2013) continuum has four points, which is highly relevant to a researcher orienting his or her values in relation to values of his or her researched community (full discussion in Harrison 2015). The abstract points are imminently applicable to concrete contexts of "intervention." The first point on Robbins' continuum is *strong monism* in the Dumontian sense, which means "a monism that does not fail to recognize values other than its paramount one, nor to assign them levels of their own, but which appears wholly to subordinate all these other values and their levels under a single paramount one" (Robbins 2013, 106). The second point is *monism with stable levels*. This refers to "a system in which two values are hierarchically ordered in a social group, but each level is comfortably sovereign within its confines. Monism with stable levels can mean that people experience monistic commitments to different values at different times, and that these different values do not conflict in the same individuals" (Harrison 2015, 101; Robbins 2013, 107–108). The third point is *stable pluralism*. Stable value pluralism means that more than one value exists and that the values are stable (Robbins 2013, 109–110). The fourth point, *unsettled pluralism*, refers to when a person or when people experience two fields of values but these value systems conflict (*ibid.*, 110–111).

All of these value systems can exist side-by-side and simultaneously in community, as I found in my research on music, health and poverty in the Downtown Eastside of Vancouver (population: over 18,400). I learned the hard way together with my University of British Columbia students that if one does not understand the value system dynamics in community, any interventions made in community can end up supporting values that one doesn't want to (see a detailed discussion in *ibid.*). In the Downtown Eastside, strong monism regarding health thrives in In-

Indigenous music programs with the goal of addiction recovery, organized by community centers, health centers and churches. The Indigenous music initiatives use powwow and hand drumming genres, respectively of North America's Plains and the homelands of Indigenous participants. At the music programs, participants sit around a powwow drum or do hand drumming in a circle. A variety of spiritual and political elements as well as multi-sensorial experiences complement the musical activity, in ways that concretely promote addiction prevention and remission (Harrison 2019).

In these Indigenous music programs, monism with stable levels existed when one considers different time periods of my research. In the early to mid-2000s, drum group leaders only allowed people to participate who had recovered from addiction; being "healed" seemed the dominant value. In the late 2000s and beyond, "healing" became the dominant value because leaders encouraged Indigenous people at all stages of addiction recovery to participate.

In the same neighborhood, stable pluralism exists for Indigenous musicians who participate in addition to such drum groups, in local music theatre productions. The music theatre productions especially welcome Indigenous performers. Musicals and popular music operas aim at developing creative industries and, thus, emphasize the value of artistic professionalization. Participants in these two musical contexts have not entered into any value conflict—indeed, one musical sought to support addiction recovery.

Unsettled pluralism exists in the Downtown Eastside as well, if I shift my view to the marginalized people who participate in the music theatre productions, but also in popular music jams and music therapy provided to them (Harrison 2015). Over two decades of research, I found that funders and organizations increasingly shut down the popular music gatherings—which valued and attempted to promote health and well-being of the poorest and most vulnerable citizens, including through addiction recovery and suicide prevention efforts. In the 1980s and 1990s, initiatives organized by performing arts companies that valued arts professionalization (attempting to help marginalized people to find careers as musicians), had a marginal role in the community whereas popular music for health initiatives, organized by community centers, health centers and churches, thrived. Then in the 2000s and 2010s, the situation changed to the opposite. Local musicians and community members sometimes openly debated a value conflict that they perceived between

health and well-being of the most vulnerable versus arts professionalization, implied by this shift of institutional priorities (Harrison, in press).

Particularly in complex society, where different socio-cultural flows co-exist and develop sometimes rapidly, individuals like musicians, or researchers, have the possibility to move through different value systems, for example those of different institutions each harboring different values. In the Downtown Eastside, individuals move between music initiatives offered by organizations and their associated value systems, at different points in time (as in my examples of strong monism and monism with stable levels). Individuals also create their own constellations of values and thus value systems via which music groups in which they choose or have opportunity to participate in (as per my example of stable pluralism). As discussed elsewhere (Harrison 2012), researchers create their own constellations of values depending on how they affiliate socially within their disciplinary and community research processes. Musically engaged people can decide to engage in value conflict or not. (If yes, and the conflict is unresolved, this results in unsettled pluralism.) Even though institutions (be those organizational or otherwise social) require individuals in order to sustain, or in still other cases shift, their associated value systems (ibid., 105), the same individuals, for example in collectivities of musicians or researchers, can move among different institutions each involving different values and, in so doing, create different value systems amongst their persons. The specific dynamics of value changes within music research methodologies is a topic for future basic research.

Intersections between researcher and researched community values

Specific intersections between researcher and researched community values in music scholarship are not well understood, and form another topic wide open for future research. Although, as indicated, value alignment prevails in applied and community-based music research, one can only wonder if a value alignment can be absolute, how strong that alignment is, whether value alignment is superficial, and where are the value fissures, differences and unexpressed value conflicts within a group. What are the complexities of value alignment in music research, and what are their implications for research methodologies?

When it comes to practicing music research, what I call *value fluidity* can inform the analysis and understanding of the intersections between

researcher values and researched community values, as well as, if one wishes to, the practical processes of aligning values between different social parties to research. Value fluidity refers to the intersections of values of individual human beings and/or institutions (organizational or otherwise social) as well as to which value systems these intersections create and how those fluctuate over time.

Valued impact is the goal of so much applied and community-based music research. If individuals move in fluid ways through value systems and value systems fluctuate, this argues for longitudinal research and multiple evaluations of such impact over time. Again here, researchers can pay attention to how value systems shift and change, as do social constructions of value systems, which may take the above, or indeed other, directions. I think that a rareness of discourse and research on value changeability is shortsighted and therefore a major weakness not only in music research, but in much humanities and social sciences research.

General directions for future research on value fluidity also include the following: If values can be fluid, what are the implications for aligning values of researchers and researched communities? In situations of value fluidity, to which degrees and in which contexts is researcher - community value alignment only ever partially possible, tying in only certain people, into certain internal experience of those people, and at certain points in time?

Conclusion

Music researchers often align their values with those of their researched communities in applied and community-based research, which tend to produce and to focus on musical interventions. I argued here that such use-inspired research could be enhanced through critical investigations of values involved.

I suggested various directions for researching complexities of value alignment that involves researcher values, researched community values, and intersections between the two. Researchers of applied and community-based music research should pay attention to the complexities of value alignment including potential value conflicts inside one's academic self, the need for value reflexivity, and what to do when different value systems meet and mingle. Robbins' value continuum of four points (strong monism, monism with stable levels, stable pluralism and unset-

ted pluralism) offers a meaningful way of understanding different types of value systems in community as well as a researcher's relationship to those. Value fluidity can make it challenging to pin down value systems. Understanding value fluidity necessitates tracing changes in values over time.

It is always important to bear in mind that value-aligned research may not only “do good”. It also can be aligned with, or used for, purposes of destruction and devastation. Authoritarian regimes may be very interested in research that furthers their goals, for examples manipulating citizens and torturing prisoners. In closing, I would like to encourage further research and ethics theorization on what a researcher should do in terms of researcher and community value alignment when community values entangle with actions causing harm, such as those involving domination and furthering conflict. Music research engagements with frameworks of value pose a variety of challenges and openings for new research.

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