

# Sociomusicology

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**Sociomusicology** (from Latin: *socius*, "companion"; from Old French *musique*; and the suffix *-ology*, "the study of", from Old Greek λόγος, *lógos* : "discourse"), also called **music sociology** or the **sociology of music**, refers to both an academic subfield of sociology that is concerned with music (often in combination with other arts), as well as a subfield of musicology that focuses on social aspects of musical behavior and the role of music in society.

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## Sociomusicological issues

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The work of scholars in sociomusicology is often similar to ethnomusicology in terms of its exploration of the sociocultural context of music; however, sociomusicology maintains less of an emphasis on ethnic and national identity and is not limited to ethnographic methods. Rather, sociomusicologists use a wide range of research methods and take a strong interest in observable behavior and musical interactions within the constraints of social structure. Sociomusicologists are more likely than ethnomusicologists to make use of surveys and economic data, for example, and tend to focus on musical practices in contemporary industrialized societies. For instance, Ko (2011) proposed the hypothesis of "Biliterate and Trimusical" in Hong Kong sociomusicology.

Since the field of musicology has tended to emphasize historiographic and analytical/critical rather than sociological approaches to research, sociomusicology is still regarded as somewhat outside the mainstream of musicology. Yet, with the increased popularity of ethnomusicology in recent decades (with which the field shares many similarities), as well as the development and mainstreaming of "New Musicology" (coinciding with the emergence of interdisciplinary Cultural Studies in academia), sociomusicology is increasingly coming into its own as a fully established field. The values and meanings associated with music are collectively constructed by both music listeners and performers. When listening to a piece, they reflect upon their own values and use the music to make connections between their own experiences and what the piece is perceived as communicating. The sociology of music looks specifically at these connections and the musical experiences tied to the person and the music itself.<sup>[1]</sup>

In addition, the act of making music is a social production as well as a social activity. Even if the music artist is a solo performer, the production of the music itself, took a level of social effort. From the instruments that were created to make the music, to the final production of generating a way to listen to the music, also known as the product.<sup>[2]</sup> Furthermore, one can argue that even the distribution of the music is a social act. Some teachers are trying out more non traditional ways of teaching material, by using music to connect with their students on levels that the student can relate to, as well as “to draw illustrations of sociological concept”.<sup>[3]</sup>

Among the most notable classical sociologists to examine the social aspects and effects of music were Georg Simmel (1858–1918), Alfred Schutz (1899–1959), Max Weber (1864–1920) and Theodor Adorno (1903–1969). Others have included Alphons Silbermann, Charles Seeger (1886–1979), Howard Saul Becker, Norbert Elias, Maurice Halbwachs, Jacques Attali, John Mueller (1895–1965), and Christopher Small. Contemporary sociomusicologists include Tia DeNora, Georgina Born, David Hebert, Peter Martin, Timothy Dowd, William Roy, and Joseph Schloss.

## See also

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- Musicology
- Sociology
- Ethnomusicology
- Choreomusicology
- Music psychology
- Cultural studies
- Online music community
- Music education
- wellness{{dn|date=November 2019}}
- Health

## References

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2. Nikoghosyan, Nuné. "Music and Wellbeing – a sociological perspective" (<https://musicalist.hypotheses.org/428>). *Musicalist*. Retrieved 2019-10-30.
3. Albers, Benjamin D.; Bach, Rebecca (2003). "Rockin' Soc: Using Popular Music to Introduce Sociological Concepts" (<https://www.jstor.org/stable/3211313>). *Teaching Sociology*. **31** (2): 237–245. doi:10.2307/3211313 (<https://doi.org/10.2307%2F3211313>). ISSN 0092-055X (<https://www.worldcat.org/issn/0092-055X>).

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## External links

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- Popular Music and Society (<https://web.archive.org/web/20001003190147/http://www.niu.edu/popms/>)
- International Review of the Aesthetics and Sociology of Music (<https://www.jstor.org/journals/03515796.html>)
- Action, Criticism, and Theory for Music Education (<http://act.maydaygroup.org/>)
- The American Musicological Society (<http://www.ams-net.org>)
- Doctoral Dissertations in Musicology Online (<https://web.archive.org/web/20060820213516/http://www.music.indiana.edu/ddm/>)
- AMS: Web sites of interest to Musicologists ([https://web.archive.org/web/20061116021522/http://www.ams-net.org/musicology\\_www.html](https://web.archive.org/web/20061116021522/http://www.ams-net.org/musicology_www.html))

- The Society for American Music (<http://www.american-music.org>)
- Graduate Programs in Musicology (<http://www.ams-net.org/gradprog.php>)
- Conference on Interdisciplinary Musicology (<https://web.archive.org/web/20070930094331/http://www-gewi.uni-graz.at/staff/parncutt/cim.htm>)
- Society for Ethnomusicology (<http://webdb.iu.edu/sem/scripts/home.cfm>)
- American Sociological Association (ASA) (<http://www.asanet.org/>)
- British Sociological Association (BSA) (<http://www.britisoc.co.uk/>)
- European Sociological Association (ESA) (<https://web.archive.org/web/20080102040658/http://www.valt.helsinki.fi/esa/>)
- International Sociological Association (ISA) (<http://www.ucm.es/info/isa/>)
- International Hongkongers' Board and Councils of Musicology and Musics (IHBCM) (<https://web.archive.org/web/20140124080653/http://ihbcm.charlesko.info/>)

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