

A Survey on a Set of Emigreé Female Conductors in the U.S.:

Challenges and Perceptions

by

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ABSTRACT

This study summarizes survey responses on perceived challenges by conductors who a) identify as female, b) are not citizens of the United States, c) are currently living in the United States, and d) are working in professional positions in the field of orchestral conducting. The goal of the survey was to query the concept of “double minority” (female and non-native to the United States) and to gain insight into the conductors’ self-perceptions and perceived challenges they encounter during their employment and career advancement in the United States.

The survey covered four main areas: educational background, immigration status, the employing orchestra or organization’s budget, and conductors’ challenges and perceptions. Considering the sensitivity of the topic and following best practices of human subjects’ research, participant identities were coded with letters.

Participants expressed more certainty about the issues and challenges concerning how they were perceived as females than as immigrants. There was insufficient data to correlate the budget of the orchestra with the willingness of the institution to be a visa sponsor.

This study’s findings suggest that there are areas that should be further explored such as: the effect a conductor’s nationality has on their career and reception in the United States; how potential motherhood affects the conductors’ careers; organizations’ willingness and ability to hire immigrants, offer sponsorship, and assist the artist in the transition out of the student visa status; and the perceptions and experiences of being an immigrant conductor in the United States.

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love is. To my abuela and the rest of my family in Argentina, I miss you dearly and you are always in my mind.

Last, to the younger generations coming after us stronger than ever: you have the power to change the future. We are counting on you, rooting for you, and looking out for you. May you always fight for what you believe in.

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CHAPTER 1: LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

My interest in the subjects of leadership and gender in relationship to conducting began during my undergraduate degree in orchestral conducting in Buenos Aires, Argentina. During this portion of my education, I experienced various forms of gender-based bias, such as being limited to certain repertoire because of my gender, inappropriate private comments from musicians in relation to my physical appearance, and disrespectful behaviors from musicians during rehearsals. I moved to the United States in 2015, still attempting to understand and learn about the bias which generally favored male conductors over those who identified as female. Here I began to realize that I belonged to another marginalized category, that of an immigrant, which might present further difficulties in my professional development. I therefore saw the opportunity to explore the present day correlation between gender and its intersection with immigrant conductors. It was possible that I and others like me represented a third category: the “double minority.” Identifying as a female (few of whom have been principal conductors of major orchestras in the United States) and being an immigrant from South America (even fewer of whom have led orchestras in the United States), resulted in belonging to a unique category of conductors.

Because of my personal experience in these areas, I began to wonder about other double minority’s perceptions on how they are perceived as conductors by organizations and ensembles. As a third-year doctoral student from Argentina, on a student visa and applying for jobs in the United States, I started to understand how once I graduated, in

addition to my gender, my legal status as an immigrant would inhibit my ability to be considered for certain positions.

During the past three years there have been numerous changes made to non-immigrant visas requirements including increases in fees and more stringent requirements for application. Unfortunately, this has forced some organizations, especially those which are primarily privately funded, to require job applicants to already have “U.S. Eligibility.” In other words, the hiring organization will not take responsibility for a job applicant’s visa process. Being able to work legally seems now to be a barrier to the application, where once organizations might have partnered with the non-native applicant in order to obtain a work visa. One of the reasons for this development has to do with budget limitations, including the fact that for a short-term contract, a non-immigrant visa might not be worth the additional commitment (in either organizational time or budget). What is more, new limitations on immigration to the U.S. have recently been imposed. Even for organizations that are willing, hiring an immigrant represents a risk due to the fact that many work visas are subjected to a lottery-based visa system. This system requires both time and money with no guarantee of actually receiving a visa.

For all these reasons, I embarked on a study that gathered information about the challenges of being not only a female-identifying conductor in a male dominated field, but also an immigrant from a non-European country. I wanted to know if the obstacles I had encountered in both areas had been only in my personal experiences or if there existed a common denominator in the broader double minority community. Therefore, the purpose of this survey is to explore this topic more formally, gaining deeper insight into the shared challenges encountered by a relatively small number of conductors who

fall into this double minority category and who are presently working in the United States.

Minorities in Music

The following section examines the available literature on minority representation in music and is divided in two main areas. The first section covers minorities in music with a focus on immigration and the second focuses on leadership with an emphasis on gender. I have found that there are several studies and authors that focus on areas such as gender, music education in minorities, and unique musical projects that bring awareness to immigration. On the other hand, there is a scarcity of rigorous material on immigration issues or struggles faced by musicians that choose to emigrate to the U.S. as emerging professionals, except for occasional newspaper articles and webpages. Therefore, most of the literature summarizes information that can be interpreted and applied to the specific group I am focusing on in this study.

To begin, it is important to define “minority.” As Lechleitner explains, “minorities are characterized as groups of people distinguishable from the dominant group due to cultural, ethnic, social, religious, or economic reasons.”¹ For the purposes of my survey, and as explained in my introduction, I chose to focus my attention on a specific minority in the orchestral conducting field: female-identifying conductors who are also immigrants.

¹ Gerda Lecheleitner, “Fieldwork on Music and Minorities: Methodological Considerations,” in *Music and Minorities from Around the World*, ed. Ursula Hemetek, Essica Marks, and Adelaida Reyes, (Cambridge Scholars Publisher, 2014), 3.

Being a minority presents adverse conditions for career development as the individual learns to “fit in” and navigate cultural and societal spaces that are unfamiliar. In the case of a double minority, the struggle of fitting in occurs in two different areas; these individuals face a struggle between who they are and who the dominant society thinks they should be both in terms of gender and culture. It is clearly important for a new immigrant to assimilate and become a part of this new culture,² but what does that mean in practice? Should the immigrant lose their accent, change their personality, or change the way they dress in order to fit in and therefore have a higher possibility of professional success? The same can be asked in terms of gender. Should a female conductor change the way she dresses, behaves and conducts to fit in a male dominated profession?

Being an immigrant minority in the U.S.

Nwabah’s work focuses on leadership experiences of immigrant women in the United States, and although it is not centered on women who are musicians, the data provided can be informative for the music field.³ The author states that female immigrants have higher unemployment rates as a result of differences in education, length of stay in the host country, and lack of English fluency. What is more, she makes a point of explaining how some women emigrate from countries with a dominant culture “that teaches women (are) inferior to men.”⁴ Considering this, it is possible that self-

² Batia Boe Stolar, “Immigrant Nations, Postimmigrant Subjectivities: Locating the Immigrant in the Age of Globalization” (Memorial University of Newfoundland, 2003), 69 .

³ Gladys I. Nwabah, “Women of Courage: Phenomenological Study of Leadership Experiences of Immigrant Women in the United States” (DM diss., University of Phoenix, 2006).

⁴ Nwabah, “Women of Courage: Phenomenological Study of Leadership Experiences of Immigrant Women in the United States,” 52.

perception based on attitudes from their country of origin can affect the success of immigrant female conductors when in front of an ensemble.

Universities have proven to be on the front line of the organizations taking the lead in creating opportunities for minorities. Suinn and Witt conducted a survey on the “Recruitment and Retention of Ethnic Minority Faculty” in which the controversial topics of affirmative action versus equal opportunity are explored.⁵ Affirmative action requires that employers exercise flexibility in enabling minority persons to meet the qualifications of the positions, possibly through “on-the-job training,” and equal opportunity “requires only that the minority persons have equal access to the position.”⁶ Minority access to jobs, and in particular affirmative action, can create hostility in the work force. For example in 1989, Michigan state legislators withheld state aid from the Detroit Symphony Orchestra and threatened to boycott the orchestra's concerts if the orchestra did not hire more black musicians.⁷ The orchestra changed its formal audition requirements and hired its first black musician in fourteen years through an internal vote as opposed to a the standard blind audition process. James DePreist, an African American conductor who was approached by the orchestra to replace its departing music director, declined the offer observing, “People mean well, but you fight for years to make race irrelevant, and now they are making race an issue.”⁸ Wilkersons explains that “DePreist

⁵ Richard M. Suinn and Joseph C. Witt, “Survey on Ethnic Minority Faculty Recruitment and Retention,” *American Psychologist* 37, no. 11 (1982): 1239–44, <https://doi.org/10.1037/0003-066X.37.11.1239>.

⁶ Suinn and Witt, “Survey on Ethic Minority,” 1243.

⁷ Isabel Wilkersons, “Discordant Notes in Detroit: Music and Affirmative Action,” *The New York Times*, March 5, 1989, <https://doi.org/10.3102/00346543067001043>.

⁸ Isabel Wilkersons, “Discordant Notes in Detroit: Music and Affirmative Action,” *The New York Times*, March 5, 1989.

seemed to feel that being hired because he was black was as problematic as being prevented from having the job because he was black.”⁹

Although there can be backlash when affirmative action is enacted in arts organizations, there are other ways to provide equal opportunities for minorities. Such is the case with blind auditions that have helped women win positions in orchestras and which have become increasingly more common since the late 1960’s.¹⁰ The truth is, blind auditions are not possible in the cases of music director or assistant conductor positions, regardless of whether they are at a university or with a professional organization. Until more female or immigrant conductors win conducting positions with U. S. symphonies, what can be done to help the orchestral field progress to reflect the demographic makeup of the community itself?

The Sphinx Organization is an example of a group that has created new ways to give voice to underrepresented communities. Founded in 1977, Sphinx is a “social justice organization dedicated to transforming lives through the power of diversity in the arts.”¹¹ This is an alternative to affirmative action with the aim to empower and train minorities by giving them the same work force abilities, and therefore opportunities, as the majority group. It is interesting to note that they have not created any conductor training programs and that among the sixteen guest conductors they have employed in the last twenty one years, only two were female and one was an immigrant (male). While the remaining

⁹ Wilkersons, “Discordant Notes in Detroit.”

¹⁰ Amy Louise Phelps, “Beyond Auditions: Gender Discrimination in America’s Top Orchestras” (DMA diss., The University of Iowa, 2010), 8.

¹¹ “Sphinx Organization,” accessed March 26, 2020, <http://www.sphinxmusic.org/our-history/>.

thirteen conductors represented either racial or ethnic minorities, they were all males and all natives of the U.S.

Obtaining Legal Status

One of the reasons for the underrepresentation of female immigrants (as compared to that of American females) within leadership positions in American orchestras is the increasingly complex system for working legally in the U.S. For example, Bada states that between 2008 and 2009, visas granted to performers “with extraordinary ability in sciences, art, education, business or athletics” decreased by nearly ten percent. Although the author mentions the ARTS Act (Arts Require Timely Service) as a positive way to expedite visas, she states that musicians “still face many hurdles to obtain a nonimmigrant work visa, as the current regulations are too vague, restrictive, and unnecessarily complicated.”¹²

In addition, visa fees have been continuously increasing in the last decade. The American League of Orchestras, the premiere professional organization for U.S. orchestra administrators, maintains up-to-date information on their website, keeping track of the multiple changes in fees and forms. On February 12, 2020 the organization published:

Orchestras should take note that multiple changes are being made to the forms used for visa processing, new requirements are in place for artists applying for an extension of their stay or change in visa status, and the Trump Administration announced an expansion of travel restrictions, all while U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) is considering a dramatic increase in filing fees.¹³

¹² Stephanie Bada, "The Visa Process Hits a Sour Note for Musicians and Performing Arts Organizations", *The University of Memphis Law Review* 41, no. 1 (Fall 2010): 157-186.

¹³ League of American Orchestras, "Foreign Artist Visa & Tax News," accessed March 26, 2020, <https://americanorchestras.org/learning-leadership-development/visa-and-tax/visa-and-tax-news.html>.

This filing cost does not consider the additional costs of legal fees aimed towards providing the necessary proof that a given artist has the “extraordinary abilities” that would allow them to qualify for the artist visa.

Hawa Kassé Mady Diabaté’s case is an example of a denied artist visa. Diabaté, a singer and griot from Mali who has been to the U.S. many times, was scheduled to return for performances with the Kronos Quartet. Sadly, her visa application suffered such a delay that the performances had to be cancelled. An article in *San Francisco Classical Voice* published in June 18, 2019 addressed the question of hiring artists that are immigrants and asked the rhetorical question: if an artist such as this was not able to make it to the expected performance due to visa complications, would a hiring presenter be likely to run the risk of hiring an artist in a similar circumstance in the future?¹⁴

Even when the organization is willing to meet the expenses of the visa, there are no guarantees that the visa will be approved. Therefore, it seems likely that in the case of a short-term contract for a position such as Assistant Conductor, some organizations might choose to avoid the difficulty and risk of this process completely. Each organization must make difficult decisions in the use of their often limited budgets and resources, such as choosing to cover a guest artist’s visa costs over engaging an artist that does not require such extra funding.

¹⁴ Mark Macnamara, “States of Denial: How a Visa Application Derailed a Musician’s Appearance at the Kronos Festival,” *San Francisco Classical Voice*, June 18, 2019.

Female Leadership in Orchestral Conducting

Tradition

Leadership positions have been historically male dominated with traditional social and gender roles making it difficult for women to break this proverbial glass ceiling.¹⁵ In 1977, according to Henning, Jardim and Harragan women should be taught how to speak the “language” of men and imitate their behavior in order to begin succeeding in organizational leadership.¹⁶ This advice originated from the traditional association of “masculine” characteristics such as competitiveness, aggressiveness and dominance with leadership. Many women therefore felt it necessary to adapt to the male working environment by mirroring these characteristics and behaviors. Consequently, their own uniqueness and perspectives which did not neatly fit into this narrative were often lost. It is fascinating that in the same decade, Kanter conversely theorized that lack of success is not related to the gender but to the amount of opportunities and power.¹⁷ For many, avenues to power involve assuming a stereotypically masculine demeanor.

How is female leadership perceived and accepted?

In the article, “The Education of Women Conductors: Could an All-Girls Club Be the Answer?,” Chaowen Ting points to Butler’s idea of “gender performativity” stating, “gender identities are formed through performative repetition of certain traits recognized by a society.”¹⁸ Therefore, even when men and women use similar body language, the

¹⁵ Barbara B. Moran, “Gender Differences in Leadership,” *Library Trends* 40, no. 3 (1992): 478, quoting Denmark, <https://doi.org/10.7172/1733-9758.2016.20.10>.

¹⁶ Moran “Gender,” 480, quoting Henning, Jardim and Harragan.

¹⁷ Moran, “Gender,” 480, quoting Kanter.

¹⁸ Chaowen Ting, “Education of Women Conductors: Could an All-Girls Club Be the Answer?,” *IAWM* 22.2, no. 2 (2016): 7–11.

perception by society, including the orchestra and the audience might be different according to their gender.¹⁹

Bartleet in 2008 stated that women conductors are defined by comparison to male counterparts as the Other,²⁰ “a disruptive figure(s) that challenges dominant social and professional norms with their presence on the podium.”²¹ This otherness comes from angling the lesser term against the superior term, and in consequence a struggle for power and domination arises. She states: “if the devalued term – woman conductor – is measured in relation to the primary term – male conductor – she will always be labelled as the Other and continually found wanting.”²² The dualism portrayed by Bartleet (years after Battersby) clarifies the persisting fixation on gender rather than conducting ability. This pushes women to either mitigate their gender in order not to call attention to the otherness or be treated as a novelty because of being a woman conductor.²³

Bartleet continues to develop this idea in her article “Female Conductors: The Incarnation of Power?”²⁴ where she points out that for some time, women conductors have tried to escape the Other category by “desexualizing themselves and conforming to a male-oriented paradigm in their dress, gesture, behavior, leadership style and familial commitments.”²⁵ In the United States of the mid-twentieth century, female professionals,

¹⁹ Chaowen Ting, “Education of Women Conductors: Could an All-Girls Club Be the Answer?,” *IAWM* 22.2, no. 2 (2016): 7–11, quoting Judith Butler.

²⁰ Marcia J Citron, “Music as Gendered Discourse,” in *Gender and the Musical Canon* (Cambridge [England]; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1993): 159.

²¹ Brydie-Leigh Bartleet, “You’re a Woman and Our Orchestra Just Won’t Have You’: The Politics of Otherness in the Conducting Profession,” *Hecate* 34, no. No.1 (2008): 6.

²² Bartleet, “‘You’re a Woman,’” 9.

²³ Bartleet, “‘You’re a Woman,’” 11.

²⁴ Brydie-Leigh Bartleet, “Female Conductors: The Incarnation of Power?” *Hecate* 29, no. 2 (2003): 228–34.

²⁵ Bartleet, “Female Conductors,” 228.

including conductors, were often warned that they had to choose between having a career and having a family. Third-wave feminism, involving women who came of age in the late 1980s, reclaimed many entitlements that had earlier been subjects of debate.²⁶

Career Development

Still, there are a multitude of factors that can negatively affect career development of female musicians. Though there have been many advancements towards equality and inclusion of women in the work force, several factors remain impediments. One of the most important factors negatively impacting career and skill development for female conductors is simply the lack of opportunities to lead orchestras. From the 1900's through the 1970's, women experienced very restricted opportunities.²⁷ Obviously, without the actual practice in front of an orchestra it is very difficult for conductors to improve.

However, along the lines of the Sphinx Organization discussed above, there are numerous recently developed programs that are entirely devoted to the education and career development of women conductors. For instance, The Linda and Mitch Hart Institute for Women Conductors at The Dallas Opera creates opportunities for exceptional female conductors to work with The Dallas Opera Orchestra, its music director Emmanuel Villaume, and Principal Guest Conductor Nicole Paiement.²⁸

According to the website and mission of the organization, the goal of the events, masterclasses, and activities are to help female conductors advance in their career paths.

²⁶ Marcia J. Citron, "Feminist Waves and Classical Music: Pedagogy, Performance, and Research," *Women and Music* 8 (2004): 47.

²⁷ Kay Lawson, "Women Orchestral Conductors: Factors Affecting Career Development," (MM diss., University of Michigan), 119-121.

²⁸ "The Linda and Mitch Hart Institute for Women Conductor," accessed March 26, 2020, <https://dallasopera.org/community/artist-development/hart-institute/>.

Thus, the organization works to increase the representation of female conductors in the orchestral/operatic profession.²⁹

Another organization that is devoted to the career development of women conductors is the Taki Concordia Fellowship. Marin Alsop, presently the only woman music director of one of the twenty-four highest-budget orchestras in the U.S., created this fellowship to help mitigate the underrepresentation of women on the podium. It was founded in 2002 and consists of a two-year award with a \$15,000 honorarium for female conductors with the mission to “mentor, support, and promote women conductors as they advance in their professional careers.”³⁰

Female Conductors’ Experiences

In 2003, Bartleet interviewed female conductors who had become known for breaking the glass ceiling including Kate Tamarkin, Paula Holcomb, Marin Alsop, and Victoria Bond. A brief summary of their experiences is helpful in understanding the development of female leadership in the conducting profession.

Kate Tamarkin, Music Director of the Monterey Symphony, mentioned in 2002 that “she had to disconnect herself from her femininity in order to pursue [a] no-nonsense professional approach,”³¹ suggesting that she desexualized herself and was forced to adopt a more masculine leadership style.

In 2001, Paula Holcomb, currently Director of Bands at the State University of New York, Fredonia College, described the struggle of whether or not to embrace a

²⁹ Ting, “Education of Women Conductors: Could an All-Girls Club Be the Answer?”: 7-11.

³⁰ “Taki Concordia Fellowship,” accessed April 20, 2020, <https://takiconcordia.org>.

³¹ Quoted in Bartleet, “Female Conductors,” 229.

masculine leadership style, and how critics always had a comment ready about her femininity, which was often considered to be either too butch or too bland.³²

In 2002, Victoria Bond expressed how being compared to a male conductor highlights the Otherness of female conductors: “there is that conservative mindset that says this is what a conductor is and this is what a conductor isn’t, and most women just don’t fit into the category of what people picture as the maestro.”³³

Marin Alsop, founder of Taki Concordia Fellowship and music director of the Baltimore Symphony since 2005, has always had a positive outlook on how the future will look like for women conductors. In 2003, before winning her current position with the Baltimore Symphony, she stated:

It is a very good time to be a woman conductor because the structure is changing, rapidly. Orchestras no longer want to be dictated to, they want to create a team of people, most orchestras anyway. [...] So, I think it’s a very good time because, even though people still have an old tradition in their minds of what a conductor should be, I think it’s changing a lot. And ...you don’t have to fit into that mould. It is what you create.³⁴

Notwithstanding Marin Alsop’s quote, issues of inequity remain in play: the identification as the Other, societal expectations of a leadership style that may be restrictive, the desexualizing and restriction of stereotypical or traditional femininity, and the perpetuation of male dominance by the continued focus on the gender (as opposed to the artistic merits) of the conductors in question. Still, it is empowering to see how far women have come in winning positions within these organizations and how many more opportunities are presently available for women to develop their careers.

³² Quoted in Bartleet, “Female Conductors,” 230.

³³ Quoted in Bartleet, “You’re a Woman,” 9.

³⁴ Quoted in Bartleet, “Female Conductors,” 232.

Motherhood

Motherhood could be a negative factor in the career of a female conductor, especially if the structure and environment of their organization is not flexible and accommodating.³⁵ As an example, Simone Young conducted a concert in Hamburg at eight months pregnant because, she felt, not doing so would be interpreted as a “lack of stamina.”³⁶ Females are often expected to continue with their professional careers without any intrusion from their personal lives and many orchestras lack support in this area lagging behind most other sectors.

³⁵ Amy Phelps, “Beyond Auditions,” 52.

³⁶ Christina Elkins, “Conducting Her Destiny: The Making of a Maestra,” (DMA diss., The University of North Carolina at Greensboro, 2008), 47.

Survey Study

Weelhouse's dissertation "A Survey of Minority Student Participation in Music Programs of the Minority Student Achievement,"³⁷ Meyer's dissertation "Women's experiences as Doctoral Students in Music Education,"³⁸ and Davidson's "Leadership styles of successful male and female college directors"³⁹ were useful examples for general formatting, sectional layout, and questioning the quantitative verses qualitative nature of my research.

Hetzel's and Norton's article "Women Choral Conductors at the Collegiate Level: Status and Perspectives,"⁴⁰ Sullivan's article "A History of the Marine Corps Women's Reserve Bands,"⁴¹ and Suinn and Witt's article "Survey on Ethnic Minority Faculty Recruitment and Retention"⁴² guided me in the organization of my methodology, survey procedures, topic areas to be queried, and data analysis.

³⁷ Wheelhouse, "A Survey on Minority Student Participation in Music Program of the Minority Student Archivement Network" (PhD diss., University of Rochester, 2009).

³⁸ Liza Meyers, "Women's Experiences as Doctoral Students in Music Education" (PhD diss., Arizona State University, 2017).

³⁹ Brenda Joyce Davidson, "Leadership Styles of Successful Male and Female College Choral Directors" (PhD diss., Arizona State University, 1995).

⁴⁰ Lori R Hetzel and Kay Norton, "Women Choral Conductors at the Collegiate Level: Status and Perspectives," *College Music Symposium* 33/34 (1993): 23-4.

⁴¹ Jill M. Sullivan, "A History of the Marine Corps Women's Reserve Band," *Journal of Band Research* 42, no. 1 (2006): 1-36.

⁴² Suinn and Witt, "Survey on Ethnic Minority Faculty Recruitment and Retention," *American Psychologist* 37, no. 11 (1982): 1239-1244.

CHAPTER 2: METHODS AND PROCEDURES

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to examine the perceived challenges for conductors who identify as female, who have emigrated to the United States, and who are currently working in the professional field. A qualitative survey suited this topic most fully because perceptions cannot be adequately examined quantitatively.

Qualitative research can help provide a more “realistic” feel for analysis, provide flexible ways of collecting data, and allow the researcher to use the data in a less structured but more descriptive manner.⁴³ Ultimately, this study proceeded with the qualitative survey because of the focus on the stated opinion of the participants.

In this study I aim to gain insight into the experiences and perceptions of the subjects during their journey from the academy into the workforce. Questions include: Do you believe it has been harder for you (an immigrant female conductor) to integrate into the field and find a job because of your position as a double minority? How do you believe you are perceived by ensembles? Has your employer helped you obtain a legal status in the U.S.? Through exploring their answers, I hope to determine whether or not additional challenges associated with the double minority concept help account for the struggles these women face. This chapter will describe the research conducted, adaptations, participant selection process, confidentiality protocol, and data collection.

⁴³ Boodhoo and Purmessur, “Justifications for Qualitative Research,” 6.

Methodological orientation

In this study, I chose to use qualitative research as a means of obtaining data, combined with quantitative research in how this data was then evaluated. This method was identified by Creswell as an explanatory mixed method.⁴⁴ Meyers⁴⁵ clearly explains how difficult qualitative research can be due to the “complex interactions (that) exist between the research context, the phenomenon being studied, the participants’ realities and meanings, and the researcher’s realities and interpretations.” Perceptions are vital sources of information and that is why the researcher’s role and use of reflexivity when analyzing the data is important in creating reliable results and valid research.⁴⁶ Therefore, the interpretation of the findings is subject to bias, and this study is merely a starting point that hopefully points to further research in order to more deeply explore this multifaceted and complex topic.

Study Participants

The initial phase of this study included attempting to recruit female immigrant professional conductors who are currently employed by either universities or professional orchestras. I contacted 17 professional conductors through personal email addresses, websites, and various social media sites. In creating my list of possible survey subjects, I was assisted by Professor Jeffery Meyer, Maestro Tito Muñoz, Music Director of the Phoenix Symphony, and composer Daniel Bernard Roumain. Additionally, I searched through several online lists and articles, collected suggestions from other colleagues, and

⁴⁴ Wheelhouse, “A Survey on Minority Student Participation,” 44, quoting Creswell.

⁴⁵ Meyers, “Women’s Experiences,” 122.

⁴⁶ Boodhoo and Purmessur, “Justifications for Qualitative Research,” 6.

employed my own prior knowledge of these conductors. Creating a list of conductors who met my survey criteria was challenging, giving me an early insight into the scope of underrepresentation of double minorities in the U.S.

Procedure

While creating the structure of the survey I took special care in the wording I used and the questions asked in the questionnaire. The topics of the survey are professionally and personally sensitive, and could therefore deter the participants from participating in my study. Because of the sensitivity in inquiring about a subject's legal immigration status in the U.S. (e.g.: type of visa), I instead created questions that would allow me to gain information on the kinds of support conductors receive from their organizations. In an effort to encourage honesty and protect sensitive information, participants had the option to remain anonymous during this survey, leave any question unanswered, and add additional comments to each answer.

The survey, which included ten questions in total, examined each participant's experiences according to these areas:

1. Educational Background: highest level of education and name of the school
2. Immigration Status: years working in the U.S. past University training, sponsorship of their status by employers and legal responsibility
3. Budget of the organization that employed them
4. Perceptions and Challenges: how do they believe identifying as a female and being an immigrant affected the way orchestras respond to them and the self-perception of belonging to the category of double minority

I sent the conductors a survey recruitment email (Appendix A), which included a link to my questionnaire in the form of a Google Form survey (Appendix B), explanation of the option to speak on the phone with me, and a Consent Form (Appendix C) that invited them to consent to be a participant in my survey. Surveys were emailed during the first week of February 2020.

A few days after I sent the emails, I received an answer from one subject who expressed concerns over participating due to the sensitivity of information about her legal status in the U.S. and the organization's budget. Therefore, I revised several of the multiple choice questions in order to address those concerns. For example, when asking about how many years they had been working in the country, I broadened the options from which they could choose. This change made it less likely that the subjects could be identified through their answers (Figure 1).

Initial survey format:	Final survey format:
<input type="checkbox"/> 0 years	<input type="radio"/> 0-5 years
<input type="checkbox"/> 2 years	<input type="radio"/> 5-10 years
<input type="checkbox"/> 4 years	<input type="radio"/> More than 10 years
<input type="checkbox"/> 6 years	
<input type="checkbox"/> 8 years	
<input type="checkbox"/> 10 years	
<input type="checkbox"/> More than 10 years	

Figure 1. Modification on Multiple Choice for Question 1

For similar reasons, I modified the question regarding the budget of the organization for similar reasons as follows:

Initial survey format:	Final survey format:
<input type="checkbox"/> Less than \$10,000	<input type="radio"/> Less than \$10,000
<input type="checkbox"/> \$10,000 – \$20,000	<input type="radio"/> \$10,000 – \$50,000
<input type="checkbox"/> \$20,000 – \$50,000	<input type="radio"/> \$50,000 – \$100,000
<input type="checkbox"/> \$50,000 – \$100,000	<input type="radio"/> \$100,000 – \$500,000
<input type="checkbox"/> \$100,000 – \$500,000	<input type="radio"/> \$500,000 – 1 Million
<input type="checkbox"/> \$500,000 – 1 Million	<input type="radio"/> 1 – 10 Million
<input type="checkbox"/> 1 -5 Million	<input type="radio"/> + 10 Million
<input type="checkbox"/> 5 – 10 Million	
<input type="checkbox"/> + 20 Million	

Figure 2. Modification on Multiple Choice for Question 5

I also added the option of “undecided” to the “yes” and “no” answers. Having the option not to state an opinion regarding how they are received and perceived by orchestras in reference to gender and being a non-native created more flexibility for the subjects. This change allowed for the possibility that the topic could be something they did not feel comfortable talking about, or they felt was not an absolute. Further, it could also be something they have yet to make a decision about. In addition to having the option of answering “undecided,” the participants were also given the opportunity to add comments to each question.

Due to the small size of the number of participants who fit the demographic of double minority, maintaining anonymity of the participants was a challenge. It might be possible for readers to make connections between answers and organizations and speculate on the identity of the respondent. Since one of my primary goals was to support, rather than jeopardize the participants, I willingly neutralized questions one and five. The subject who had concerns eventually agreed to participate after the changes

were made, and I believe that these changes encouraged other conductors to participate as well.

After a week of no responses, I resent the original email with the modified survey, which did not elicit further completed surveys. I did get an email from a conductor inquiring about how many conductors had agreed to participate in the survey and indicating she would only participate if she received a sample of the questions before accessing the online survey. Although I gave her this information, she chose not to participate.

March 2020 was an exceptional month due to the developing COVID-19 pandemic, which forced many of the world's orchestras to cancel the remainder of their seasons. In turn, all staff members, including conductors, have generally been required to stay home. This seemed the right moment to reach out to the conductors again, with a modified emailed script (Appendix D). In order to limit the amount of effort and time required of potential participants when reading my emails, I decided to put in bold the conditions of the survey and also asked for their reasons for not participating in the survey if they chose not to do so. I believe this was a crucial step in creating momentum that resulted in several responses.

CHAPTER 3: DISCUSSION

Introduction

Out of the seventeen conductors contacted, one declined participation and six participated in the survey.

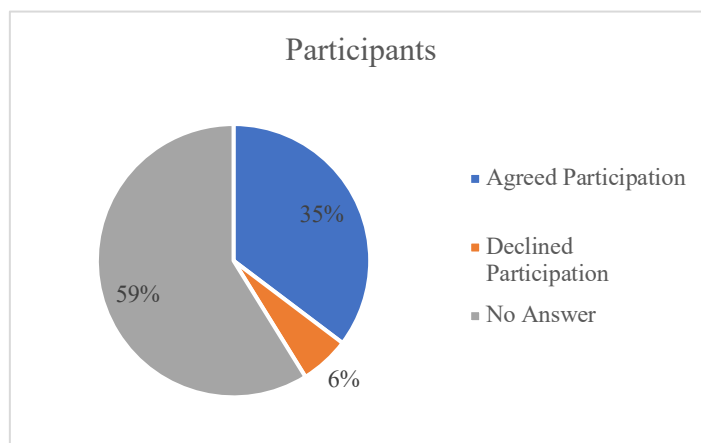


Figure 3. Participation in the Study

When I began this project, I aimed to gather the names and contact information of thirty conductors, hoping ideally that I would receive survey answers from approximately half of them. Identifying double minority conductors turned out to be a difficult task due in part to the fact that the immigration and citizenship status is not normally public information. Due to the sensitive nature of the topic, finding double minorities who were also willing to share information publicly proved to be a further challenge.

While wanting to openly share the findings of my study, I am committed to protecting the identity of the study's participants. Although some conductors granted me permission to use their names with their responses (included in the next section), I have chosen not to disclose them. I believe that this decision will further protect the identity of

those who have chosen to remain anonymous. When needed, all identities will be coded with letters.

Lastly, as a double minority, and because I have a personal connection to this topic, I have endeavored to provide accurate information without letting my biases obstruct the results.

Results

This section will present the results of the questions in the order they appeared in the survey. When useful and appropriate, letters will be used to represent the participants.

Before completing the survey, the participants were required to indicate if they granted permission to include their names in the study or if they preferred to remain anonymous. As shown in Figure 4, out of the six participants, three gave permission to include their names and three did not grant permission.

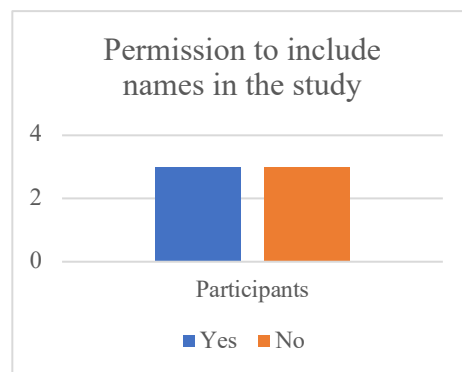


Figure 4. Permission Granted to Include Identity in the Study

1. Educational Background. The data was sorted by the highest degree obtained (Figure 5). The results were either Master of Music in Orchestral Conducting or Doctor of Musical Arts in Orchestral Conducting. There were four conductors that provided the name of the schools they attended for their last degree, and two that did not.

Schools attended were: Johns Hopkins University Peabody Conservatory of Music, University of Cincinnati-College Conservatory of Music, and Eastman School of Music.

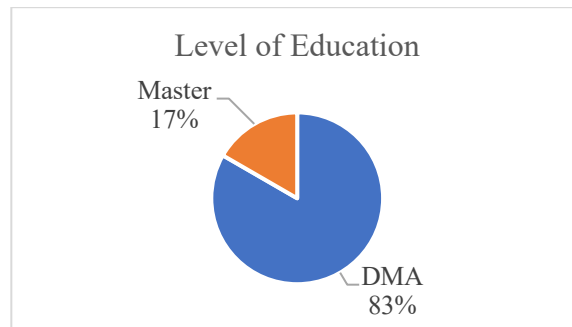


Figure 5. Level of Education

2. Years of Experience. Inquiring about the total working years in the U.S. past university training is a way to implicitly determine immigration status. A student visa may only be extended by only one year beyond graduation. Therefore, if the subject is working for longer than that period, their status is in transition to or already in a more permanent visa. This question did not include any information about the organization for which they work. The results show that four participants were in the zero to five years category and two were in the five to ten years category (Figure 6), meaning that two of the participants are already in a more permanent legal status and four are in transition from the student visa or in a more permanent legal status.

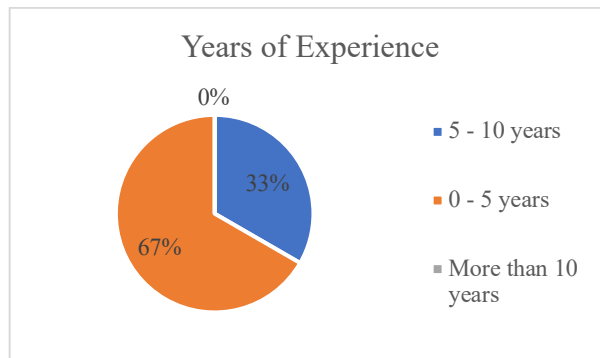


Figure 6. Years of Experience Working in the U.S.

3. Sponsorship from the Institution. This question focused on understanding the involvement of their employment organizations in the immigration process. There were four participants that indicated that their status was not sponsored by their organization and two indicated that it was. Some of the participants provided further information which has been compiled with their coded identity in Table 1.

4. Responsibility of the Organizations with the Legal Process. This could include hiring legal advisors, covering expenses for visa applications, and additional involvement in the process of obtaining a legal status in the U.S. Out of the six participants, one did not reply to the question. The answers for question four have been included in Table 1 along with answers from question three because of their correlation. However, the questions are presented separately because there are organizations that sponsor their employees, but are not necessarily responsible for the legal process, meaning that they will help the employee gather paperwork to prove their connection with the organization (required for the visa process) but will not pay for possible fees and lawyers.

Table 1. Question 3 and 4

Participant	Sponsored by Institution	Institution took responsibility of the legal process	Further Comments
A	No	No	"I am married to an American citizen, so therefore have a permanent resident card that allows me to work in the US."
B	Yes	Yes	"The University I work for sponsored me. Professional orchestra I work for never offered."
C	No	No	-
D	Yes	Yes	-
E	No	No	"I obtained green card status during my DMA years through my husband's work support and was naturalized after I started working."
F	No	-	-

5. Budget of the Orchestra or Organization.⁴⁷ Figure 7 shows the results for question five. I compiled the results for question three along with question five in Table 2 in order to investigate any possible correlation between the budget of the institutions and the decision to sponsor their employees. Participant F did not reply to questions four and five.

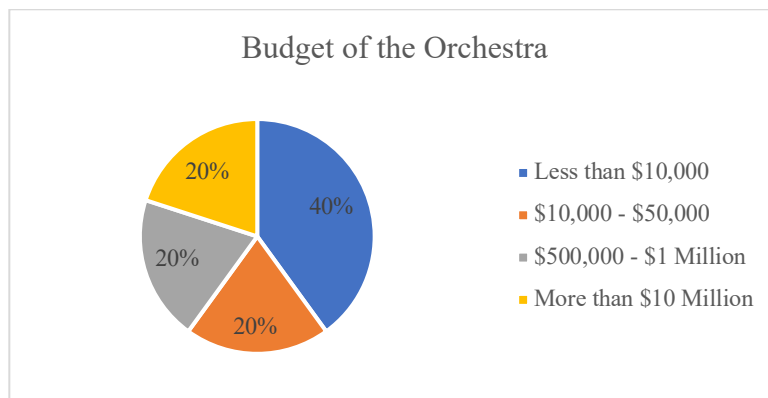


Figure 7. Budget of the Organization that Employed them

⁴⁷ There is certain ambiguity in the answers to this question as it could have been misunderstood for the budget of the organization instead of the orchestra.

Table 2. Question 5

Participant	Sponsored by Institution	Budget of the Orchestra (in dollars)
A	No	Less than 10.000
B	Yes	500.000 – 1 Million
C	No	+ 10 Million
D	Yes	Less than 10.000
E	No	10.000 – 50.000
F	-	-

The next four questions aimed to illuminate the challenges and perceptions that female identifying and non-U.S. native conductors face.

6. Question six was: Have you ever felt that your status as a non-U.S. native was an impediment to developing professionally or winning your “dream job”? Table 3 shows the answers and the comments that were added by each participant. Three out of the six agreed that they have felt that being an immigrant was a disadvantage in their professional development.

Table 3. Question 6

Participant	Question 6	Further Comments
A	Undecided	“It is hard to tell since there are many more factors than just the citizenship status that are intertwined in whether or not conductors get their "dream job"”
B	Yes	“Even after 10 years some people tell me my accent is an issue, whereas big guys names have accent and no one tells them, and they get the big jobs. They find it charming.”
C	No	-
D	Yes	-
E	Yes	-
F	No	-

7. This question addresses how conductors perceive their own condition of immigrant as either an advantage or disadvantage: Do you consider being a non-native an advantage or disadvantage in winning conducting positions in the U.S.? Table 4 shows the results and comments from the participants. There were three participants that did not consider it an advantage or disadvantage, one participant answered it was an advantage, one participant answered it was a disadvantage, and one participant chose not to answer and added a comment.

Table 4. Question 7

Participant	Question 7	Further Comments
A	Advantage	“Bringing a different background, viewpoints and culture to a group, when done properly and respectfully, can be refreshing for the group. It opens the minds into different possibilities, sounds and concepts, that it may not have had before.”
B	Disadvantage	“As a female non-native they find any excuse to get you out. Accent, non-native English speaker therefore you cannot do a good job with assistant positions. Also, in many places (South) they do not like to see an immigrant, they are very xenophobic and racists.”

C	None of the above	“An orchestra is looking for the right fit, in particular the candidate’s desired skillset and communication skills, which predominantly comes from the candidate’s experience and personality.”
D	None of the Above	-
E	-	“It’s illegal to discriminate against any position candidate based on their nationality, but it’s the employer’s right not to support legal status. Very often you are not asked to present your nationality document in job applications, as oppose to you are often required with competitions.”
F	None of the Above	-

8. Perceptions and Challenges in Front of an Ensemble. This question investigates the perceived response of the orchestral musicians to conductors that are not born in the U.S.: Do you believe that orchestra musicians respond differently to you as a conductor in the U.S. than they would if you were a U.S. native? Table 5 shows that two participants answered no, three participants were undecided, and one participant chose to add a comment and not choose from the options (yes, no, undecided).

Table 5. Question 8

Participant	Question 8	Further Comments
A	Undecided	“Hard to tell since I never experienced the responses that a US native would have. I don’t have a lived-through element of comparison. The only way I can tell they respond differently to me is because of my use of their own language (which could be perceived as more colorful: unusual metaphors, etc.), or my accent.”
B	Undecided	“Never had issues with musicians but you never know how they feel.”
C	No	-
D	No	-
E	-	“I’ve been asked many times similar questions, mostly like “do you think musicians respond to you differently based on your gender”. The answer is you don’t know. Because we never appear in front of

		the orchestra as a different gender. Even if we feel some different treatment, it's only our assumption that it was because of our gender or non-native status, but you are never sure.”
F	Undecided	-

9. Perceptions and Challenges in front of an Ensemble. Similar to question eight, this question asks about the perceived response of the musicians to conductors that are identified as female: Do you believe that orchestra musicians respond differently to you as a conductor in the U.S. than they would if you identified as male? As shown in Table 6, two participants answered no, three participants answered yes, and one participant answered undecided.

Table 6. Question 9

Participant	Question 9	Further Comments
A	Yes	“I would like to answer yes and no. Depending which orchestra, which program, and which context.”
B	Yes	“Definitely. For some of them, they cannot take you seriously, nor consider you. It is not even conscious bias; they do not realize that they do not have the same respect. You need to be 10 times better than a man to get small jobs.”
C	No	-
D	No	-
E	Undecided	-
F	Yes	-

10. Perspectives – Further Comments. There were two participants that offered to further the discussion if it was of interest to me or if I had more questions.

Summary of the Findings

This section will provide a summary of the findings that were made through the collection of the data and will explore the existing connections across the different questions and answers. The six conductors that agreed to participate in the survey provided varied answers and a diversity of viewpoints. Figure 8 shows a summary of the data that was collected in the survey.

The first two questions focused on the participants' educational background and years of employment and provided context and validation for the findings of this study. The information gathered about the years they have been working in the U.S. beyond university training validates their participation as professionals in our field and sets them in either permanent residency status, transitioning to a more permanent legal status, or still in the student visa category. As the focus changed to immigration status, the comments provided crucial information to understanding their personal situations. The data shows that while two participants obtained their legal status through sponsorship by the institutions they work for, two shared that their legal status was obtained through marriage. The absence of information on other ways to obtain a legal status leads to the inference that other options are scarce and not as common. While I had presumed that I might find a correlation between the budget of the orchestra and their ability to sponsor their employees, the results were not consistent enough to prove that connection.

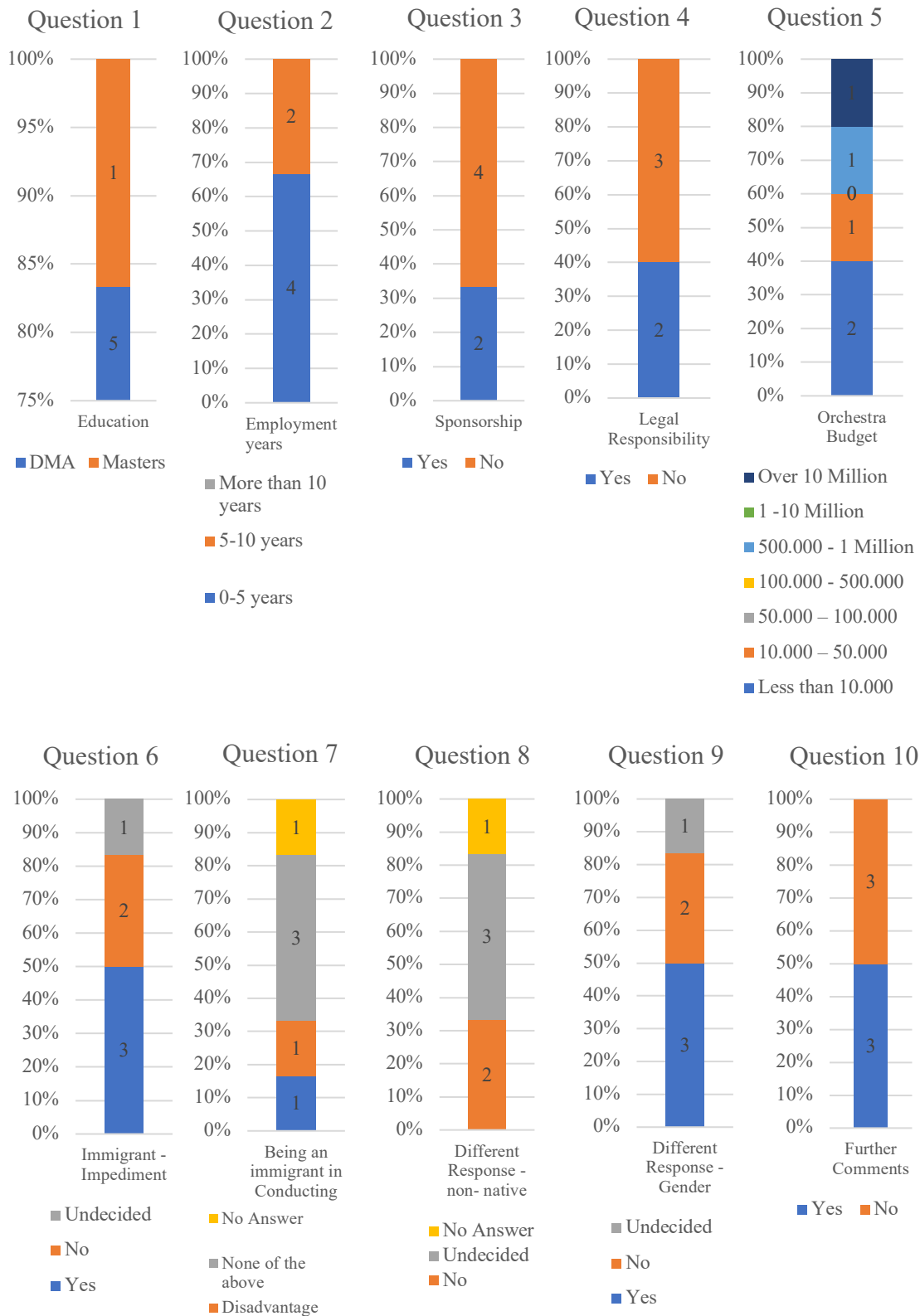
The remaining questions focused on the perceptions and challenges faced by the conductors in their careers. Questions six and seven aimed to explore how belonging to the immigrant category impacted their professional opportunities in the U.S. In other words, is it an impediment or an advantage to winning jobs and career advancement?

Fifty percent replied that they felt their status was an impediment to developing professionally. This perception could be a result of the fact that, as shown in questions three and four, not all employers are willing to sponsor their employees effectively removing opportunities for certain positions. Proving that the participants' legal status is the primary reason for not winning jobs is difficult, due to a great variety of additional factors that affect the final decision of employment (as mentioned by participant B). It was thought-provoking to observe that when asked directly if being a non-native is an advantage or disadvantage as a conductor, the answers were very different. Fifty percent of the participants considered being an immigrant was neither an advantage nor disadvantage to their professional development. One participant considered being an immigrant a disadvantage and impediment to winning a conducting position in the U.S. That participant also pointed to the condition of belonging to the category of the double minority as a disadvantage. The rest used their comments to explain their points of view. One disclosed how being an immigrant could be considered an advantage noting that being a minority might bring a different point of view to the host organization, and another pointed out that organizations prioritize being a good fit for the orchestra over the conductor being a minority.

The results for the next two questions were also thought-provoking: thirty three point three percent of the participants believed that musicians did not respond differently to them because they were not a U.S. native and fifty percent were undecided. They pointed to the subjectivity of being certain about how musicians feel and the personal nature of the perception of certain treatment. In contrast, when asked if musicians respond differently to them because of identifying as female, fifty percent replied yes,

thirty three point three percent replied no, and sixteen point seven percent replied undecided. Although the answers to both questions were expected to be subjective, my attention was directed to the fact that the participants were more ready to acknowledge a difference in treatment based on gender rather than immigration status. This could be due to a combination of (1) an increased awareness and research about female identifying conductors in orchestral conducting, and (2) the different nationalities of the participants. During the beginning stages of developing questions for my survey I included one question that asked the nationality of the conductors. Due to a potentially negative effect of such a direct question that might result in easier identification of my survey respondents, I then considered asking in which continent they were born. That framing of the issue might have helped to broaden the results, but I concluded that with a small pool, it would still have been relatively simple to identify the respondents. Accordingly, I removed the query entirely. I still wonder how their particular nationality might have affected the response they receive from orchestral musicians.

Figure 8. Summary of the Responses to the Survey



CHAPTER 4: CONCLUSION

The purpose of the survey was to gain insight into the challenges and perceptions of double minority conductors that identify as both female and immigrants. As shown in the literature review, although there is a growing amount of research on female conductors and leadership, there is very little written specifically on adult musicians that have emigrated to the U.S. and none on those also identifying as female.

The survey focused on four main areas: educational background, immigration status, organizational budget, and challenges and perceptions. These were queried in the format of an online questionnaire with ten questions. The potential pool of prospective participants in this double minority was small and the number that were willing to participate even smaller. The fear of a negative impact on their careers and the need of reassurance of identity protection from some of the conductors was notable. This is likely a reflection of the uncertain political times, the fragility of the freelance career, and the potential repercussions of speaking on the record about perceived discrimination on future employment prospects.

The results provided information about the participants and valuable information regarding the responsibility (or lack thereof) that some institutions take in sponsoring their employees. There was no correlation nor enough data to connect the budget of the orchestra with the willingness of the institution to be a visa sponsor. With regard to the challenges faced by the conductors who are both immigrants and identified females, the participants were more certain about how they are perceived as females than as immigrants. Questions remain: Do immigrants from certain countries enjoy more positive benefits due to their country of origin than others? Are there countries whose artists are

perceived more negatively in the U.S. than others? The results might also suggest that the participants have not fully considered the ways their immigrant status could affect their professional lives. Nonetheless, according to their answers, fifty percent of the participants indicated that being a non-native is a disadvantage in the development of their professional careers. I believe this is connected to how complex the immigration system is and how difficult it is to find an organization, especially a professional orchestra, willing to sponsor foreign artists wishing to work and reside in the U.S.

Further Research & Researcher's Perspective

I hope that this study will motivate a variety of further research on this topic. Areas for further exploration include: the effect of specific nationalities on the conductors' career and reception, how potential motherhood affects the conductors' careers, the role of organizations when transitioning out of the student visa, the organizations' willingness to offer sponsorship and hire immigrants, the perceptions and experiences of being an immigrant conductor in the U.S., and deepening the pool of participants in order to gain a fuller picture of the spectrum of these experiences. It would be intriguing to explore other techniques of data collection with the aim of gaining more accurate information. It might be productive to conduct personal interviews for instance, in which the participants might feel more comfortable discussing more fully the experiences they have had as females and immigrants. Although the perceptions of each conductor are subjective and specific to their personal experiences only, the outlook they each have on how their career has progressed is further validated by the fact that many perspectives are shared by more than one conductor.

I am certain that there are segments of the global society that are moving in the direction of providing visibility and opportunities for minorities. I hope this trend will help create more opportunities for individuals who belong to the unique category explored in the study. A greater and sustained commitment to diversity will help open more potential paths for younger generations. I am also hopeful that this study will help teachers be more attentive to the needs of the students that fall into this category and encourage them to provide the necessary means and resources to help their students succeed. Finally, I hope that this research will offer strength and solidarity for conductors who might feel isolated as they attempt to break through this double glass ceiling.

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APPENDIX A

EMAIL SCRIPT

Hello _____,

My name is Michelle Di Russo and I am a doctoral student studying with Jeffery Meyer in the School of Music at Arizona State University. I am conducting a research study on the unique challenges faced by female conductors that have emigrated to the U.S. and are actively working in the orchestral conducting field.

I am inviting your participation which will involve a short set of questions. Depending on your preference, you may answer these over the phone or by filling out an online form (hyperlink). Your responses will be confidential, meaning that your identity will be coded with letters (e.g.: A, B, C, etc.). The results of this study will be used in my doctoral dissertation project and may be used in reports, presentations, or publications, but your name will not be used unless you provide explicit permission to do otherwise.

If you choose to speak on the phone with me, I would like to record the interview, but it will not be recorded without your permission. At that time you may let me know if you do not want the interview to be recorded and you can also change your mind any time during the interview.

If you have any questions or would like to know more about the study, please don't hesitate to contact me or my major professor, [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

Thank you for considering participating - I hope this research study will be useful and thought-provoking for many conductors and musicians.

Sincerely,

Michelle Di Russo

APPENDIX B

GOOGLE FORM SURVEY

Survey on a Set of Emigrée Female Conductors in the U.S.:

Challenges and Perceptions

All the questions that follow are optional and if you choose to remain anonymous, your identity will be coded with letters.

Thank you for participating!

* Required

1. Email address *

2. I give Michelle Di Russo permission to include my name with my responses in this study:

Mark only one oval.

- Yes
 - No
-

Please answer the survey as thoroughly as possible. You may add further comments or information for each question should you wish to elaborate in the spaces provided.

Reminder: you have the right not to answer any question, and to stop participation at any time.

Your responses will be confidential, meaning that your identity will be coded with letters (e.g.: A, B, C, etc.). The results of this study will be used in my doctoral dissertation project and may be used in reports, presentations, or publications but your name will not be used unless you provide explicit permission to do otherwise.

Thank you!

1) What is your highest level of education? (list degree and name of the school)

2) For how many years have you been employed as a conductor in the U.S. past

University Training?

Mark only one oval.

- 0 - 5 years
- 5 - 10 years
- more than 10 years

3) Is your ability to work in the U. S. sponsored by your institution?

Mark only one oval.

- Yes
- No

Further Comments:

4) Did your employer take responsibility for your legal process regarding residency in the U.S.? (e.g., hired legal advisors, covered expenses for visa applications, etc.)

Mark only one oval.

- Yes
- No

5) What is the budget of the orchestra of your organization? (in dollars)

Mark only one oval.

- Less than 10.000
- 10.000 – 50.000
- 50.000 – 100.000
- 100.000 - 500.000
- 500.000 - 1 Million
- 1 -10 Million
- + 10 Million

6) Have you ever felt that your status as a non-U. S. native was an impediment to developing professionally or winning your “dream job”?

Mark only one oval.

- Yes
- No
- Undecided

Further Comments:

7) Do you consider being a non-native an advantage or disadvantage in winning conducting positions in the U.S.?

Mark only one oval.

- Advantage
- Disadvantage
- None of the above

Reason:

8) Do you believe that orchestra musicians respond differently to you as a conductor in the U.S. than they would if you were a U.S. native?

Mark only one oval.

- Yes
- No
- Undecided

Further Comments

9) Do you believe that orchestra musicians respond differently to you as a conductor in the U.S. than they would if you identified as male?

Mark only one oval.

- Yes
- No
- Undecided

Further Comments:

10) If you have any other thoughts, please share them here:

APPENDIX C

CONSENT FORM

School of Music



Survey on a Set of Emigrée Female Conductors in the U.S.: Challenges and Perceptions

Dear Reader,

I am conducting a research study on the unique challenges faced by female conductors that have emigrated to the U.S. and are actively working in the orchestral conducting field.

I am inviting your participation, which will involve a short set of questions. You and I can discuss these over the phone, or you can complete them online. You have the right not to answer any question, and to stop participation at any time.

Your participation in this study is completely voluntary. If you choose not to participate or to withdraw from the study at any time, there will be no negative repercussions. Your responses will be confidential, meaning that your identity will be coded with letters (e.g.: A, B, C, etc.). The results of this study will be used in my doctoral dissertation project and may be used in reports, presentations, or publications, but your name will not be used unless you provide explicit permission to do so.

The information will be stored on my personal, password-protected computer and backed up on an external drive devoted to that purpose. The information will be stored until May 2021 and the recordings/completed forms will be destroyed in may 2022.

If you choose to speak with me on the phone, I would like to audio record this interview. The interview will not be recorded without your permission. Please let me know if you do not want the interview to be recorded; you may also change your mind after the interview starts at any time.

If you have any questions or would like to know more about the study, please don't hesitate to contact me or my major professor, [REDACTED]

By signing below, you are agreeing to be part of the study and that you have read this form.

Name:

Signature:

Date:

APPENDIX D

MODIFIED EMAIL SCRIPT

Hello _____,

I hope this email finds you well. My name is Michelle Di Russo and I am a doctoral student in orchestral conducting under Jeffery Meyer's guidance at Arizona State University. I know we are living very uncertain times (especially in the arts) and I was wondering if you would consider being a part of my survey now that we all might have some more time to reflect on our fields and careers.

I am looking into gathering information for my research study on female conductors that have emigrated to the U.S. and are actively working in the orchestral conducting field. The link to the survey is: <https://forms.gle/Z8SE6PXQMoWFcgC79>

Reminder: you have the option to remain anonymous and only answer the questions you feel comfortable with.

If you choose not to complete the survey, would you please share with me why? I could use that information anonymously to include it in my paper. If you would rather have a conversation on the phone about it, I would love to discuss the challenges and possible fears we face in our careers as a “double minority.”

Attached is more information on the survey.

Thank you for considering participating and I hope this research study will be useful and thought-provoking for many conductors and musicians.

Stay safe!

Michelle Di Russo

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Michelle Di Russo, conductor, is currently the Assistant Conductor of the Phoenix Youth Symphony. She earned her Doctor of Musical Arts degree in Orchestral Conducting at Arizona State University in 2020. While there, she was Assistant Conductor for the ASU Symphony Orchestra, Chamber Orchestra, Philharmonia, and Music Theatre and Opera. She studied with Jeffery Meyer.

Michelle was the assistant for Prague Summer Nights Festival in productions of *Le Nozze di Figaro* and *Die Zauberflöte* in the Czech Republic in 2015 and 2018 and was cover conductor with The Phoenix Symphony, Symphony Silicon Valley and Arizona Music Fest. Dedicated to the music of our time, she has participated twice in the Cabrillo Festival of Contemporary Music working with Cristian Măcelaru and Marin Alsop (most recently as the recipient of the Bruno Walter Memorial Foundation Conducting Scholarship), participated in workshops with the United States Army Band “Pershing’s Own” conducting *Anahita* by Roshanne Etezady, and was a conducting fellow at the Cortona Sessions for New Music in Italy. Last spring, she was invited as a guest conductor to celebrate the 100th anniversary of the University of Kentucky and returned in September 2019 for their “On Parade” Concert, conducting works by Clara Schumann. Michelle Di Russo was born in Buenos Aires, Argentina and holds a Master of Music in Orchestral Conducting from the University of Kentucky and a degree in Orchestral Conducting and Music Production of Audiovisual Media from the Pontifical Catholic University of Argentina.