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The Complexities of Intercultural Music Exchange

Ethno World as Cultural Change Agent

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ETHNO RESEARCH

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What is Ethno?

Ethno is JM International's program for folk, world and traditional music. Founded in 1990, it is aimed at young musicians (up to the age of 30) with a mission to revive and keep alive global cultural heritage. Present today in over 30 countries, Ethno engages young people through a series of annual international music gatherings as well as workshops, concerts and tours, working together with schools, conservatories and other groups of youth to promote peace, tolerance and understanding. (https://ethno.world/about/)

What is Ethno Research?

Ethno Research has sought to study the value and impact of the Ethno pedagogy and the related social process on the lives of the participating musicians, and its impact on the society at large, over the last 30 years. Following the initial pilot studies and framing document released in early 2020, and the impact COVID-19 had on the data collection sites, Ethno Research began working within 8 focused areas: (1) Arts and Culture, (2) History, (3) Pedagogy and Professional Development, (4) Trauma-Informed Practice, (5) Ethno Organizers, (6) Sustainability/Covid-19, (7) Ethno USA, (8) Majority World.

Ethno Research exists to develop our knowledge and understanding of the Ethno programme. It provides a critical tool to help navigate the complexity of human engagement in 'non-formal' peer-to-peer learning, 'intercultural exchange' and 'traditional' music-making. Our purpose is to illuminate new understandings of what Ethno does to support future growth and development.

What Next?

As a collection, the reports from this phase of the research are multifaceted and rich in data reflecting the complexity and diversity of the Ethno programme. Paramount for the next phase is to ensure that the research touches those that are invested in its programmes, from participants to organizers. Following the publication of these reports we will be working on a range of dynamic dissemination points resulting in focused outputs that respond to this collection of reports.

The 3-year Ethno Research project, led by the International Centre for Community Music (ICCM) at York St John University in collaboration with JM International (JMI), is made possible through a grant from Margaret A. Cargill Philanthropies.

JM International
Official Program

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Executive Summary

The Complexities of Intercultural Music Exchange: Ethno World as Cultural Change Agent addresses five key research questions raised by the Ethno Research white paper, *Framing Ethno-World: Intercultural Music Exchange, Tradition, and Globalization* (Mantie & Risk, 2020):

1. How do Organizers and Artistic Mentors describe their participation in the shaping of culture through music at local, regional, and global levels?

2. How do Organizers and Artistic Mentors introduce and/or facilitate discussions of cultural issues? To what extent do they feel obligated / responsible to do so? To what extent do they report doing so (and how)?

3. How do Ethno participants and Ethno World documents describe the impacts Ethno World has on surrounding communities?

4. In what ways and to what extent are Ethno participants actively engaged in traditional music?

5. What additional insights can be gleaned about Ethno participants through large-scale data mining and fine-grained discourse analyses of Ethnopia and other social media related to Ethno?

Question 1: As an 'actor' in the field of cultural production, Ethno World participates in the shaping of culture through a series of intercultural music exchange camps (or 'gatherings') focussed on nation-based traditional/folk music. Organizers and Artistic Mentors report an approach to learning that sees tradition as malleable and 'in progress'. Ethnos are viewed as 'gateways' that are primarily about exposure to, rather than immersion in, multiple musical traditions.

Question 2: Ethno World promotes Ethno gatherings as a way of building intercultural dialogue and understanding, an idealism shared by virtually all Ethno participants. For many Organizers and Artistic Mentors, intercultural learning at Ethno gatherings is thought to occur organically through musical interaction, rather than through facilitated discussions.

Question 3: 'Local impact' was determined to be more nuanced than the existence of culminating concert attendance common to Ethno gatherings. Notably, the examination revealed how material realities and the legacies of colonialism and coloniality varied tremendously along Global North and Global South axes, exposing the complexity of global and 'glocal' issues within Ethno World.

Question 4: The degree to which Ethno participants engage in their nation's traditional music varies widely. In addition, Ethno participants may define traditional music in ways specific to the Ethno context of using traditional music to represent national self-identity. Some Ethno attendees use a framework of 'personal authenticity' to rationalize repertoire selection, where music that feels authentic to a person is by extension authentic to their nation.

Question 5: An analysis of multiple Ethno-related social media platforms, including 855 postings on three Facebook groups and one Facebook page devoted to Ethno, revealed three primary forms of engagement: information-seeking, relational maintenance, and professional network development ('professional Facebooking')—the latter constituting the majority of activity. Overall engagement was considered low. Significantly, however, there were rare moments of discussion around intercultural issues that piqued interest, pointing to the potential of social networking to achieve levels of intercultural engagement that transcend individual Ethnos.

Introduction

This report builds on the Ethno Research white paper, *Framing Ethno-World: Intercultural Music Exchange, Tradition, and Globalization* (Mantie & Risk, 2020). *Framing Ethno-World* developed a conceptual framework for Ethno Research based on a literature review and critical analysis along two axes: 'Globalization and Culture' and 'Intercultural Music Exchange Encounters'. The present report addresses five key research questions raised by the white paper:

1. How do Organizers and Artistic Mentors describe their participation in the shaping of culture through music at local, regional, and global levels?

2. How do Organizers and Artistic Mentors introduce and/or facilitate discussions of cultural issues? To what extent do they feel obligated / responsible to do so? To what extent do they report doing so (and how)?

3. How do Ethno participants and Ethno World documents describe the impacts Ethno World has on surrounding communities?

4. In what ways and to what extent are Ethno participants actively engaged in traditional music?

5. What additional insights can be gleaned about Ethno participants through large-scale data mining and fine-grained discourse analyses of Ethnopia and other social media related to Ethno?

The conclusions presented herein have been generated on the basis of:

- Attendance by research team leads at Ethno France 2020;

- A post-hoc analysis of interviews ($N = 114$) conducted by members of Ethno Research, 2019–2021, related to Arts and Culture themes;

- Additional interviews ($N = 14$) of Ethno Organizers and Artistic Mentors conducted by the Arts and Culture Team;

- The Ethno 'Artists, Bands and Projects' database, the 'Ethno World' Spotify playlist, and Facebook pages and websites of Ethno-affiliated artists;

- A quantitative and qualitative analysis of 855 social media postings (plus replies/reactions) from three Facebook groups (Ethnopia, Ethno Forever, and EthnoFest) and one Facebook page (Ethno World) and other Ethno-related social media.

The limitations of the primary sources should be noted. Ethno Research interviews and social media activity skew in favour of people active in the Ethno community. Sources also reflect recency. Research participants are from 2019−2021. Although several research participants have long-standing involvement with Ethno, data do not sufficiently account for activity and experiences from 1990−2010. Social media examinations, by their nature, reflect activity and experiences of the past 10, and especially the past 5 years. While the diversity of sources allowed for a comprehensive examination, they did not support substantive research or analysis over longer temporal periods.

Taken together, the research questions above explore the mechanisms by which Ethno gatherings work to meet their stated goal of intercultural exchange and increased intercultural understanding. Research Question #1 draws primarily on testimony from Organizers and Artistic Mentors to examine how Ethno may shape the musical-cultural beliefs, values, and practices of its participants. Research Question #2 extends this line of inquiry by interrogating the degree to which Organizers and Artistic Mentors actively acknowledge cultural difference at Ethno gatherings and facilitate discussion of cultural issues. The 'reverberation' impact of Ethno gatherings and events on local communities is explored in Research Question #3. Research Question #4 addresses the degree to which Ethno participants, as agents of cultural production, engage in music-making that might be considered 'traditional' or 'folk', and the ways in which Ethno constructs understandings of traditional music. Finally, Research Question #5 examines the use of online platforms to maintain and build the Ethno community outside of gatherings.

THEORETICAL CONSIDERATIONS

> You have people from different, very different countries. I remember my first year there were some girls from Cyprus and from Turkey. And somehow they came with [their] countries' conflicts. Yes. So on the first days, they were in conflict […] And of course, throughout the camp that disappeared. That faded away […] The girls who came from Cyprus, when they go home, they don't have the same idea about the Turkish people […] They know faces [… After Ethno] I'm getting along with people from countries I know nothing about. But somehow the country gets some faces [for me], and I get more curious about their culture and the other way around. (Interview #19032)

This report focuses primarily on data analysis and presentation. Most of the conceptual/theoretical ideas informing the analysis are found in the *Framing Ethno-World* white paper and are not reproduced in this report. One important exception to this, and salient as illustrated in the interview passage above, is Allport's (1954) 'contact hypothesis', also known as *intergroup contact theory*. According to intergroup contact theory

'interpersonal contact is an effective method to reduce prejudice: if majority group members have the opportunity to communicate with minority group members, they are able to understand and appreciate them, and prejudice will diminish' (Bertrand & Duflo, 2017, p. 365). This is particularly the case — as it is with Ethno gatherings — when the groups 'share similar status, interests, and tasks and when the situation fosters personal, intimate intergroup contact' (Pettigrew & Tropp, 2006, p. 752).

Importantly, the effects of intergroup contact 'typically generalize beyond participants in the immediate contact situation', favourably impacting the attitudes of participants not only towards other participants, but also towards 'the entire outgroup, outgroup members in other situations, and even outgroups not involved in the contact' (Pettigrew & Tropp, 2006, p. 766). Some research on contact theory, for example, investigates outcomes of imagined contact, i.e., an imagined interaction with someone from an outside group, and describes 'significant reductions in bias [… even] in studies which gave participants little or no detail [about the imagined interaction]' (Miles & Crisp, 2014, p. 18). In the case of Ethno, musical repertoires may function as potential catalysts of imagined contact. In addition, the value of the global network of friendships generated by Ethno should not be overlooked, as 'long-term close relationships' optimize the positive benefits of intergroup contact more than do 'initial acquaintanceship' (Pettigrew, 1998, p. 76). Research Questions #2 and #3 discuss, implicitly and explicitly, intergroup contact at Ethno in greater detail.

STYLE, TERMINOLOGY, AND ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

In recognition of their contextual and situated meanings, the terms *traditional* and *folk* are used interchangeably in this report, except where noted. As musical practices defined by discrete ethnic, geographic, class, and national identities, *traditional* and *folk* are relatively recent genre terms, with meanings varying from one locale to another, particularly outside Europe and North America. Filene (2000), Miller (2010), and others have discussed how folk music is the product of (a) the commercial recording industry of the early 20th century and the financial success found in categorizing records according to ethnic or racial identities, and (b) the rise, in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, of folklore as an academic discipline that could provide easily digestible units of discrete cultural practices to the growing middle class.

During the period of data collection, the people hired to facilitate and rehearse the musical activities at Ethno gatherings were known as 'Artistic Leaders'. Ethno World has recently changed the terminology, likely in response to the semantic tension between the word 'leader' and the celebration of peer-to-peer learning, to 'Artistic Mentor'. This report adopts the current term, Artistic Mentor, but it should be noted that there are quoted passages in the report where interviewees refer to the 'leaders' (i.e., Artistic Leaders).

Many individuals have participated in Ethno Research over the past two years. There have been multiple surveys and almost 300 interviews (with some participants having been interviewed more than once by separate research teams). In order to maintain anonymity and confidentiality consistent with research ethics norms and requirements, most research participants in this report—all of whom have signed 'informed consent' forms—are cited only according to an interview research code (e.g., Interview #20021). By their nature, pseudonyms carry ethnicity connotations that could inadvertently identify interviewees, and were thus avoided. Specific dates of interviews have not been provided in order to avoid inadvertent attribution (i.e., dates that align with specific Ethno gatherings). The master codebook linking interviewees and their interview number is under the management of the research leads of Ethno Research. Research in the social media field reveals that the ethical aspects of 'human subjects' research involving the analysis of online content is complicated (see Appendix A: Social Media Research Ethics). Erring on the side of caution and respect, all individuals whose words were used in Question #5 were contacted for their consent.

Finally, it should be noted that the Arts and Culture Team is based at the University of Toronto. This report has been approached with self-reflexivity as a guiding principle, but the analysis herein reflects positionality as researchers based in the Global North and, more specifically, in Canada (though one member of the team was born and raised in Chile, thus bringing additional language and cultural perspectives to the team). The diversity of the team's personal, musical and scholarly backgrounds informs the responses to all five research questions, although individual biases and subjectivities necessarily influenced the analysis.

Question #1.

How do Organizers and Artistic Mentors describe their participation in the shaping of culture through music at local, regional, and global levels?

As time-bounded events with the expressed purpose of intercultural learning through music, Ethno gatherings participate in the ecology of cultural production. Put differently, Ethno World, through its programme of intercultural musical exchange, shapes the musical-cultural beliefs, values, and practices of its participants. The purpose of Research Question #1 was to examine how Organizers and Artistic Mentors *describe* their shaping of culture, not to 'measure' the impact of Ethno World on culture per se. Research Question #2 extends this line of inquiry by examining the perceived obligation on the part of Organizers and Artistic Mentors to explicitly facilitate and discuss cultural issues. Although the original intent of Question #1 was to try to distinguish the shaping of culture at local, regional, and global levels, Ethno Research interviews did not reveal differences aimed at different levels.

A recurring theme amongst many Organizers and Artistic Mentors was that the pedagogical approach used in Ethno represents something novel that pushes back against the institutionalized, hierarchical master-apprentice model of music instruction. One long-time Organizer, for example, remarked that the solution to new ways of thinking about intercultural music making 'can't be the school classrooms' (Interview #19006). Another echoed this theme, stating, 'With the music schools— it's passé. We need something new. And that is one thing that for me is very powerful about Ethno' (Interview #20148). Although Ethno World celebrates 'peer-to-peer' learning as a central pillar to the Ethno learning experience, Organizers and Artistic Mentors also drew attention to the importance of 'learning from somebody without scores' and the value of the in-person intercultural learning experience: 'You have a face and a body that actually plays an instrument, that plays this music. So it's not like googling on YouTube and seeing. You can ask people, or you can play with them, you can jam with them. It's in real life' (Interview #20153).

The non-hierarchical, peer-to-peer intercultural learning experience goes against the grain of many institutional approaches in several ways. Per contact theory (see Introduction), Ethno gatherings heighten senses of sociocultural interactions and create a habit of openness and familiarity with one another by shifting perspectives of culture that are often implicit and hidden. One Organizer, for example, recounted a story to illustrate how musicians bond through music at Ethno:

> There were two friends and they had a big fight years ago and they didn't speak for like a long time, but now they just played together. They were still not friends but they were so connected through music that they couldn't help themselves to not jam together. (Interview #20090)

Another Organizer pointed out that the key to the bonding at Ethno is attributable to the vulnerability that occurs in the peer-to-peer encounter.

> It's bonding, yes. But you can bond in any group. I think there is a connection [at Ethno] that comes from being vulnerable. I think that is the key. When you teach each other, and you see somebody teaching—sometimes trembling with tears in their eyes, because he or she isn't super confident […] Everybody is vulnerable in this thing. (Interview #20148)

The vulnerability at Ethno is made possible by the underlying acceptance of the inherent legitimacy of the 'other'. As one Artistic Mentor explained, 'There is kind of a trust. The contract here [i.e., the agreement amongst participants] is: we will not ask too many questions about your tradition' (Interview #20022). This sense of trust is further supported by an understood sense of reciprocity amongst participants, as another Artistic Mentor explained:

> Everybody's bringing some little piece from their context or a culture or place where they feel connected, and then they will share it with others and others will take it and then they will, on their turn, give something and take something. (Interview #20041)

In all of these ways, Ethno can be viewed as a catalyst for the normalization of cultural exchange.

RESPECT FOR CULTURE

Question #2 further examines the ways in which music is viewed as a conduit for intercultural exchange. Of salience to Question #1 are the ways that Organizers and Artistic Mentors draw attention to how the Ethno structure shapes cultural perceptions and opinions by having people 'become so curious about each other' (Interview #20139). On a basic level, Ethno is credited by many interviewees for fostering a desire to do 'traditional music' (Interview #20141) and influencing listening preferences (e.g., 'it changed the way I listen to music—my enthusiasm for discovering new music; for two years I wrote a blog with music from a specific country, about their music' (Interview #20076)).

On a deeper level, the musical exchange aspect of Ethno was described by some Organizers and Artistic Mentors as functioning as a form of place-based learning: 'I think the tunes are a gateway into the culture […] If you're interested in the culture, you have the people to ask, because usually you go to the Internet to look up something. But the Internet is not like a real person from that country. And I think Ethno is the best Google, in a way' (Interview #19083). An Artistic Mentor explained it this way:

> **It's really about broadening the perspective [...] The music tells something about the environment or the language tells how people think, and when you can open the door for that then it feels like it's easier to understand different kinds of thinking. (Interview #20041)**

The metaphor of Ethno learning as a gateway or window onto culture was invoked often by Artistic Mentors, who recognized the challenge of the depth versus breadth problem in music learning—e.g., 'You won't learn a lot about Indian tradition, about Mongolian tradition, about Swedish tradition. But you will get an insight, like a window is opened' (Interview #20021). This particular Artistic Mentor went on to explain the delicate balance that must be negotiated when dealing with the problem of *introduction* (gateway/window) and *immersion* (deep learning) because of the risk of appropriation. This Artistic Mentor explains:

> **As long as I approach a tradition with respect, I have the right to do with it whatever I want. As long as I try to learn about how it should be played [...] I play a lot of West African instruments in Balkan music and it can fit very well [...] As long as it is respected, I can play with it. (Interview #20021)**

Perceptions of cultural respect and authority varied amongst participants, but generally reflected views of culture as dynamic, variegated, hybrid, and open. One Organizer pointed out, for example, that attendees do not arrive under false pretenses of musical authenticity: 'People don't come here to learn to play folk music. They know that' (Interview #19009). Ethno Research interviews reveal a general consensus that participants arrive with the understanding that folk/traditional musics function as the premise of Ethno gatherings, but that the repertoire shared by individual attendees is authentic by virtue of their nationality and is not mistakenly viewed as musical offerings by traditional culture bearers.

Ethno Organizers and Artistic Mentors can be understood as shaping culture to the extent the structure of Ethno resists notions of culture as unchanging tradition. One Artistic Mentor, in justifying the Ethno approach to contemporary arranging, was emphatic in stressing that 'tradition is always in progress' (Interview #20021). Another Artistic Mentor thoughtfully elaborated on the idea of tradition-in-progress, pointing out both its value and its potential pitfalls.

> **There are some people that feel responsible to take something [...] that's from the past and to bring it exactly as it was to the present. I think it's a very important function. And then I think it's important as well that there are other people trying to transform it so that it still represents the present. That allows a link between how it was done, and how it's done nowadays, and how it will be done [... But] In that process, trying out fusions and randomness, sometimes you lose very important information for those traditions. (Interview #20020)**

The idea of 'loss' is directly linked to the preservationist imperative associated with revivalism (see *Framing Ethno-World*, pp. 17–21). The words of the Artistic Mentor quoted above serve as a reminder that, while tradition may be in progress, this does not mean that anything goes. Another Artistic Mentor observed that the homogenizing effect of the 'Ethno sound' can blur differences some participants view as central to their identities: 'People can have a problem with being put together with other cultures for an arrangement, because they feel that that makes them the same culture' (Interview #21005). Notably, she explained that these concerns may occur less with large scale culture differences than with granular differences, such as between Scots, Welsh, or Irish, or even differences between the musical traditions of Edinburgh and Glasgow.

AMBIGUITY AND COMPLEXITY

As mentioned above, the purpose of Research Question #1 was not to 'measure' the impact of Ethno World on shaping culture, but rather, to examine how Organizers and Artistic Mentors describe their shaping of culture. For some participants it is difficult to determine the extent to which Ethno attendance impacts on their lived experiences when they return to 'everyday life' but, as one Organizer shared, there is a belief among many that attendees continue to embody Ethno values when they return home.

> **The experience at Ethno creates a sense of relationship within their surrounding local communities at home. They wish to seek connections to those who are around them, which they have never done previously, and may feel proactive in their engagements. (Interview #20148)**

Overall, Ethno Research interviews reveal a complicated picture with respect to the shaping of culture through music. Unsurprisingly, Organizers and Artistic Mentors are unequivocal in expressing the value of the Ethno experience. Some are idealistic about the value of intercultural music-making for promoting good in the world (e.g., 'Because of Ethno, I was able to say goodbye to the [extremist] environment that I grew up in' (Interview #19089)). As one interviewee remarked, 'Any peaceful interaction between cultures and improving communication between cultures […] is crucial to improving humanity's understanding' (Interview #19033). She added, however, that interactions need to be more encompassing to truly fulfill intercultural aims: 'I would want to see more people from marginalized communities so it doesn't turn into something that only people who have studied folk music or music at university go to'. Herein lies but one example of the many tensions inherent in the Ethno structure.

By its very nature, Ethno gatherings comprise individuals predisposed to the values Ethno World and JMI espouse—both musically and socially. As one interviewee explained about the kind of people who attend Ethno: 'I think it's more that folk musicians in general are a specific kind of person and those people who go to Ethno are folk musicians' (Interview #19095). The kind of person who seeks out an Ethno gathering is defined not only by their musical interests, but by their desire for intercultural experiences.

By creating the conditions for like-minded individuals to come together in an environment suspended from everyday life (i.e., 'the Ethno bubble'), Ethno Organizers and Artistic Mentors can be understood as shaping culture by catalyzing opportunities that allow attendees to confront the ambiguity and complexity of intercultural learning experiences (even if those who attend are already so inclined).

Like many similar intercultural exchange programs, Ethnos are organized gatherings. As one Organizer and Artistic Mentor observed: 'Does it make you bond? Yes, very deeply. Yes, very fast, also. But it's also a little bit artificial, I think' (Interview #20148). Through their regular references to 'the Ethno bubble', it is clear that at least some attendees are conscious of the artificial nature of Ethnos. This does not diminish or disqualify the value of Ethnos as sites of intercultural learning, however. Quite the contrary. Despite the utopian imaginary of peace and harmony expressed by most Ethno attendees, and the underlying belief that because *tradition is always in progress* it is therefore fair game for adaptation as long as the adaptation is done respectfully, the reciprocal give and take during an Ethno camp gives rise to moments where the inevitability of limits become apparent.

> **For example, someone wanted to go out on stage dressed in a Palestinian flag. And we're like, 'Well, that's not really okay'. But at the same time, we talk about countries and like, where do you draw the line? You just have to keep on discussing it, I think (Interview #20141).**

As evident in this Organizer's comment (and as expanded upon in other research questions in this report), culture is always already political. This is exposed, to varying degrees, at various Ethno gatherings, where attendees must grapple with the many antinomies of interculturalism.

Many Organizers and Artistic Mentors interviewed as part of Ethno Research exhibited a self-reflexive and dialogic stance on the nuances of intercultural dialogue and understanding. The words of one Organizer, in response to the question, *Is there anything about Ethno that you would change or do differently?* are worth quoting at length:

> **The name. I'm sure I'm not the only one [who feels this way]. The concept has evolved from what it was thirty years ago, even though the core value is probably the same. But the name just doesn't make sense anymore. It's way too restrictive. And is way too loaded politically […] It is sometimes very subtly reinforcing national stereotypes. Even though we're all talking about culture and cultural diversity and celebrating that, when it comes to a camp and it's like: this is the German tune, this is the Ugandan tune— it's kind of like you put it into a box again, even though the whole idea was breaking out of those boxes [… For example], this is a Catalan tune. Why is it Catalan? Why is it not a Spanish tune? You already have a political decision […] Even within a region you have class divisions. It's like: this is a tune from Bavaria. But is this a high society [tune]? Is it a folk tune? Again: old folk music, traditional music, the whole concept thing, you know—it is a bit wobbly. I don't think we'll get to a point where we can actively define it, but this is where work needs to be done. (Interview #20089)**

Problematizing the name 'Ethno' is beyond the scope or purpose of this report. (For a discussion of the word 'ethno', see *Framing Ethno-World*, pp. 8−10). Insofar as the name is implicated in the idea of 'shaping culture', however, the views of the Organizer quoted above are worth considering. The JMI's Ethno program has operated for over 30 years, a period that has witnessed massive change in the 'ethnoscape' (see *Framing Ethno-World*). In the considered opinion of the Arts and Culture Team, there is an interesting juxtaposition between the aspirations of the Ethno World community and the practices that occur at many Ethno gatherings. Musical experiences are often presented and celebrated as unproblematically good at all times. The real value of Ethno gatherings, however, arguably lies in the ambiguities and complexities that are navigated in the intercultural encounter.

Question #2.

How do Organizers and Artistic Mentors introduce and/or facilitate discussions of cultural issues? To what extent do they feel obligated / responsible to do so? To what extent do they report doing so (and how)?

Ethno World describes its signature approach to teaching and learning traditional musics—typically described as 'democratic, peer to peer learning'—as promoting 'intercultural dialogue and understanding' (https://ethno.world/about). Promotional materials position the latter as a natural consequence of the former:

> **This unique process of learning and reaching common goals creates lasting connections based on respect for each other's music, culture and values. It is a microcosm of an ideal society, where everyone feels supported and heard. (https://ethno.world/about/)**

Research Question #2 examines this claim, asking how the format of Ethno gatherings, including opportunities for formal and informal learning, and for musical and non-musical exchange, may both encourage and dissuade focussed discussions of cultural issues. Ethno Research interviews reveal that very few Artistic Mentors or Organizers stated that they facilitate organized discussions of cultural issues at Ethno gatherings. Rather, the presumption is that such discussions take place informally as participants learn each other's music, share living quarters and meals, socialize, and so on—a presumption borne out by observations of two members of the Arts and Culture Team who attended Ethno France 2020. Mealtime conversations, for example, often revolved around cultural difference, both superficial (English-language accents) and charged (the Balkan Wars).

INTERGROUP CONTACT AT ETHNO GATHERINGS

Many interviewees referenced the importance of intergroup contact (e.g., 'the more Estonians I get to know the more I want to go there because it's such an intense, interesting culture' (Interview #20057)). One attendee, for example, was emphatic about the life-changing nature of her Ethno experiences:

> **Ethnos really opened my view—my brain—and I now have another vision of the world […] more tolerant, respectful, knowledge of new cultures […] I think it has changed my life in that way—in having curiosity of knowing why people do the things the way they do, in the different languages or ways to express things. It was really wonderful. (Interview #20076)**

Understandings of the intergroup encounter varied, however. One interviewee, for example, explained that 'the power of Ethno' derives from being placed in a forced situation: 'It can make people learn other cultures, which is for some people also extremely important because they're so drowned in their own stuff […] It's necessary that some people open their mind' (Interview #20148). In contrast, another interviewee suggested that Ethno attendance was more about arousing 'a curiosity to find out more […] It is not the case that Ethno is a course in other cultures; it is more the case that it evokes a feeling of sympathy and a desire to find out more' (Interview #20139).

One of the issues raised by Ethno gatherings is the degree to which attendees function as cultural representatives. At many Ethnos, for example, a single individual (rather than a group) may 'represent', explicitly or implicitly, an entire nation (regardless of a given nation's cultural heterogeneity). Ethno Research interviews suggest that many participants, Artistic Mentors, and Organizers are well aware of this problem, and do not naively believe that individuals they encounter at Ethno gatherings are accurate representatives of a country's music or culture. This is hardly surprising, as attendees recognize the impossibility of their own functioning in this role. As one Artistic Mentor pointed out, self-reflexivity about one's own relation to culture is one of the benefits of Ethno attendance: 'I like the awareness of it. Because you are going to have to think about it at some point, right? And I think that's the positive that comes out of it' (Interview #20044).

Nevertheless, the interviews show there is a sense among many attendees that Ethno gatherings provide an opportunity for genuine intergroup contact and intercultural learning.

> I truly believe that Ethno can work in that way. Because through music […] you learn it through people who […] consist of different things, and especially with different cultural awarenesses that they have, or they don't have. […] Through Ethno, you can actually learn so much more—not just the music. Also the culture, and all the traditions that are there. (Interview #20153)

The interviewee went on to explain that Ethno gatherings often represent a challenge for many first-time Ethno attendees unaccustomed to intercultural contact.

> I think it's probably the first time that many of these young people get to know new music, and music from all over the world—which is quite strange sometimes. Because we all come from a background in one way. Either we come from jazz, or pop, or rock, or maybe even folk— Swedish folk, or Americana, or whatever. But to face another style, to face another culture […] It's really, really hard. (Interview #20153)

MUSIC AS/AND CULTURE

Responses to questions about cultural issues were often ambiguous with respect to the functioning of music in relation to cultural difference. Several interviewees described music as a conduit or universal language:

- The language barrier could be a challenge, but the music eliminates that barrier. (Interview #20103)

- Ethno is a window on the world with the same language: music. They have the music to communicate. (Interview #19082)

- We're using music to take down barriers between cultures. Because we're here focused on the music, we can communicate, we can relate to each other much better, even though we're from completely different cultures. (Interview #20025)

- You don't need to do much more than actually just playing a tune together, like playing music together. And that's such an amazing connector. (Interview #20141)

Music, in other words, functions as a medium through which people can create instant bonds and relationships despite differences. As one Artistic Mentor remarked, 'With the music, it is so easy to connect with people who are from another continent or countries or really different kinds of cultures—it's so easy with the music to connect that it just feels good' (Interview #20041).

The idea of music as a benign conduit between cultures is open to question, because the cultural specificity of many musical practices involves a level of immersion and acculturation that cannot be achieved within the relatively short time frame of an Ethno gathering. In other words, when *music* moves from the abstract to the concrete there will come a point at which specific performance practices become important. As one participant explained, 'Some countries' tunes might be misrepresented—a wrong interpretation from the Ethno group's part—superficial. Some tunes were overlooked in this way, since everything was really rushed' (Interview #19085). The challenge of immersion and acculturation was especially acute for those with backgrounds in Western musics, as one Artistic Mentor recalled:

> A couple guys in Palestine were teaching a tune [… and] they said you have to play these quarter tones. […] Most of us in our cultures are not playing quarter tones, and some instruments can't […] And the guys were like, 'Well, you're not playing the tune'. (Interview #20044)

Because of the short timeframe, she explained, there was simply no way for her to learn a Middle Eastern tune and understand it as a cultural native: 'I can only understand it through the view of Western music'.

ARTISTIC MENTORS AS MUSICAL MEDIATORS

Very few people in the world are experts in more than 2−3 music performance practices. This places Artistic Mentors (AMs), who inevitably cannot possibly possess sufficient expertise in the musical-cultural practice of every attendee, in the challenging position of mediating the learning and rehearsal process as participants share tunes through 'peer-to-peer' learning and develop arrangements over the course of a gathering. Many of the AMs interviewed for Ethno Research expressed similar views on how they approach the musical challenge of mediating gatherings with people from disparate cultures. These similarities may be due in part to attendance at Ethnofonik, an annual training event for AMs, and to the developmental system whereby AMs are typically 'apprenticed' into their roles. An important starting place for many AMs is the shared understanding that gatherings provide connections with other musicians interested in traditional musics. One AM emphasized, 'Ethno is not about learning traditional music. It's about traditional musicians that meet each other' (Interview #20022). This 'meeting' often entails a hands-off approach (on the part of AMs) during the first days of an Ethno, when attendees share their repertoire with one another.

> [We] try and give as much space as possible to the participants for teaching first […] If we feel that they're struggling we help them direct things, but we are trying as much as possible to let them teach themselves. (Interview #19042)

Despite the prevailing view among participants that music serves as a universal medium for intercultural dialogue and exchange, experienced AMs recognize that intervention is often required to avoid conflict.

> It happens. [There are times when] you need some guidance, especially when the music is totally different from the one that you have learned. But still, you can guide it without any translation or words needed. You just need somebody who knows the tips of teaching or, you know, a policeman. (Interview #21015)

The AMs interviewed by Ethno Research often described their role as functioning as a kind of mediator or arbitrator:

> I play the role of translator […] The most important task of the leader is to translate—not always like spoken language, but the music traditions. Because we are talking about musicians that don't belong to the west European traditions. So you have to translate their traditions to the way of learning that the rest of you are used to. (Interview #19085)

> Every Ethno I've been to, people have had to go through the same compromises, calculations. Like, the people here, they don't feel this rhythm, they don't feel this. Well, then you have to go back and think like, how can I convey this sense of feeling? (Interview #20054)

The AM approach to intervention can be viewed as central to the success of the Ethno concept. Rather than anticipating musical or cultural fidelity or authenticity, Ethno attendees almost always arrive with the expectation that the repertoire they share will serve as the raw material for creative arrangements intended to celebrate the intercultural spirit of Ethno. This necessitates a kind of detached playfulness that invites alternative perspectives.

> **I know this music should be played a certain way but what happens if it is played in a different way? […] [It is about] being able to see from both sides […] to have that experience with yourself as the cultural representative and yourself as a voyeuristic outsider. (Interview #20079)**

Curiously, the playful approach to treating disparate repertoire as raw material can result in a distinctive group sound. As one AM described it, 'It's making all these tunes and traditions blend into this one thing […] Anything that goes through Ethno and comes out of Ethno—there's this Ethno sound' (Interview #20044).

ARTISTIC MENTORS AS SOCIO-CULTURAL MEDIATORS

As experienced musicians know well, effective music-making is difficult in the face of social disharmony. One of the issues revealed in the research interviews was the ambiguity of matters considered 'musical' and those considered 'social' or 'cultural'. Although the ostensible goal of Ethno gatherings is to work towards a culminating concert, the tacit criterion of a successful Ethno is not the quality of the musical performance, but whether or not participants are having a good time: 'It's a camp for young adults […] It has to be fun', observed one AM (Interview #20044). The AM role often blurs the line between musical facilitator and social convener/camp counsellor. AMs, for example, often lead evening social activities and other warm-ups and ice-breakers. AMs are thus responsible for ensuring both musical and social enjoyment. As one AM explained, 'Artistic leaders are paid to have a good group dynamic [… The role of the leader is] 50 percent group dynamic and 50 percent musical skills' (Interview #20044).

Based on the ongoing expansion of the Ethno World program, it would appear that creating and sustaining a good group dynamic occurs more often than not—something directly attributable to the effectiveness of Ethno AMs in mediating socio-cultural matters. The challenge of negotiating differences, however, varies according to the intercultural makeup of each gathering. Socio-cultural differences are sometimes quotidien, such as a report of Chinese participants who were unaccustomed to communal showers in dormitories in Sweden (Interview #20153), but are sometimes deep-seated and potentially volatile: 'If there are people both from Israel and from Arab countries, for example, it needs to be considered in some way' (Interview #20139). The potential for socio-cultural conflict is arguably embedded in Ethno's *raison d'être*; intercultural gatherings invariably entail a risk-reward condition, something evident in the words of one experienced Organizer and AM:

> **We have been really lucky about this, so no big issues between different countries or participants. So I don't have a good story to tell or I don't have experience about that, and this is something that I'm afraid of every year. (Interview #21015)**

In the opinion of another AM, however, conflict often represents an opportunity, not a problem. Any time you 'encounter a rub [i.e., when there's conflict], that's when you learn things' (Interview #20044).

AVOIDING/EMBRACING THE POLITICAL

> **We actually had, spontaneously, really big, big group conversations about gender issues and sexism in traditional music. (Interview #20041)**

Explicit discussions of intercultural issues within planned activity time are rare at Ethno gatherings. The example above represents one of the only reports of a group discussion, albeit a spontaneous one, related to intercultural dialogue and understanding. AMs shared two prevailing feelings about the lack of explicit attention to non-music cultural issues: (a) the time pressure to prepare a high-quality culminating performance militates against spending time on anything other than the music:

- Ethno is just a scramble to learn the tunes (Interview #20044);

- We had planned [to have conversations], but it didn't actually eventuate because we didn't have enough time (Interview #21013);

and (b) the belief that such discussions are largely unnecessary because intercultural harmony occurs in and through the music:

- We do not have Ethno just for people to learn about other cultures and create peace on earth […] Of course we want that to be the case, [but] we have really focused on the music (Interview #20139);

- [T]his is a good environment for [intercultural conversations] to happen, but it's not about them, actually. It should be about the music, you know. (Interview #20025)

Arguably, there is merit in letting the music-making organically guide the intercultural process. Attendees arrive with the understanding that an Ethno gathering is primarily a music event that will be intercultural by virtue of the participants; it is not an intercultural learning gathering with some add-on music activities. At the same time, many participants (including AMs and Organizers) seemed to believe that music-making could be divorced from issues of power. They went out of their way to dissociate Ethno from what they perceived as 'politics':

- Ethno is totally non-political, non-religious, non-nothing, except music. And it's totally open (Interview #20153).

- Is there a political aspect? NO. Politics always ruin things. I don't want to have a sticker on Ethno. It doesn't need to be people from right or left, poor or rich; diversity is important. Everyone should be here. In other countries where political freedom is not as easy to acquire, it might create difficulties with the inclusion if there is a political stamp on the Ethno concept (Interview #19082).
- Ethno should stay out of politics (Interview #19089).

Invoking the word *politics* (as synonymous with political parties) rather than *political* can be viewed as a rhetorical strategy used by some interviewees in order to maintain the perceived 'purity' of the Ethno environment. Other participants (including AMs and Organizers), however, recognized that issues of culture are necessarily political insofar as they involve perpetuating values, mores, and practices (e.g., 'For me, I think Ethno is political' (Interview #20141); 'I've always been very vocal about how I think Ethno is an incredibly political project. And a very important one at that' (Interview #20089)). One AM shared an example from Ethnofonik where someone from Sweden objected to a tune being taught that had a dance with traditional gendered male/female roles, suggesting that Ethno should not support gendered hierarchies. The person teaching the tune countered, 'This is my culture; this is the tradition' (Interview #20044). Another interviewee provided a realistic assessment:

> **Is Ethno political? Yes! Ethno is a ritual. The component of diversity also implies a component of hierarchy. It becomes political when you mix people with different cultural histories and different economic backgrounds. (Interview #19091)**

IDEALISM OR NAIVETÉ?

Part of Ethno World's appeal can be attributed to the shared belief among many participants that Ethno is a world apart—a kind of utopia suspended from everyday life.

> **[Ethno] is a special place where everything can happen. I think it's because of the music usually; people who are so passionate about music, they will forget [about problems]. The issues don't matter in this situation. (Interview #21015)**

Another interviewee echoed this refrain, emphasizing peace and harmony and a world without borders.

> **Everyone's entitled to their views and our peaceful way of expressing an alternative way […] Everyone is a big family or it's a borderless world and I think this is very important at this time […] When people from the public see—and some people, they might never have heard about Ethno, they might go, 'What's going on?' […] It's a very important thing at this time, I think. An important message. (Interview #20106)**

The view of an idealized common humanity was a sentiment that permeated the interviews:

- [I enjoy the] beauty of having so many cultures here in the form of humans. (Interview #20068)

- You could maybe describe [Ethno] like solidarity or human. (Interview #20041)

- [Ethno is about] understanding that we are all humans. I feel that. (Interview #20013)

- Even though we're from different cultures and we may have different traditions, [still,] more or less, people are very similar all over the world. The core of human beings is the same everywhere. [Ethno] really helped me understand that. (Interview #20160)

- [Ethno made] me reflect on society and what it means to be human— to connect to each other on a whole new level. It taught me about feeling liberated and empowered. (Interview #19091)

- [Ethno is about] the whole unity thing; we're all human beings and we are worth the same. (Interview #20141)

- We belong together as human beings. All people need to work together. It is very clear that Ethno has shown that it is possible. (Interview #20139)

- [Great things can happen at Ethno] because we're all human beings. (Interview #20025)

Utopian sentiments at times bordered on the naive to the extent that some interviewees voiced views that fail to recognize the ways in which structural inequality operates. One participant, for example, stated, 'I can now be a protector, or someone who removes or can fight prejudice, or show how similar everything is when it comes to music and culture. I think that every Ethno participant becomes this voice of cross culture. They can speak up when faced with prejudice' (Interview # 19085). One Organizer went even further, claiming that attendance at an Ethno gathering was an antidote to racism: 'What we are doing is connecting people. It is really easy to be racist, especially with guys like Trump. But Ethno is one of the best contra-poisons to racism. You can never be racist when you have been to an Ethno' (Interview #19089). Another Organizer concurred, saying:

> I will never say to participants, like 'Hey, come to Ethno, because you know, you will work on your cultural diversity […] You will work on your prejudices and on making peace, and destroying fascism'. I will never say something like that. But at the same time—secretly, it's what we do. (Interview #20148)

The findings of Ethno Research suggest that self-selection explains much of the idealism of the Ethno community. First-time attendees tend to hear about Ethno through word-of-mouth. Unsurprisingly, individuals who seek out intercultural music experiences are predisposed towards Ethno's ethic of intercultural dialogue and understanding. It is thus very rare to find anyone with dissenting views on the aims and ideals of the Ethno experience.

ACKNOWLEDGING DIFFERENCE, ACKNOWLEDGING INEQUALITY

> **It was really amazing that I came up with a simple song and then the leaders made up a special arrangement, which was wonderful. And it was really, really fun to see guys from Africa playing the drums along with my songs […] It was nice. I really liked it. (Interview #20133)**

Most of the romanticized expressions about Ethno were found in interviews with those from the Global North. Indeed, when viewed from the outside, the geographical roots of Ethno that flow from the Nordic countries and Europe, are noticeable. Only a few interviewees displayed self-reflexivity about this and shared views that deviated from the mainstream stance of Ethno-as-Utopia. One experienced Ethno attendee and AM expressed how Ethno may be 'starting to realise and see the hierarchies that we still have'. She added: 'We are really a Western-centred world [at Ethno], but how do you win? Because it started in Europe' (Interview #20041).

One Organizer was particularly thoughtful about how gatherings in places like New Zealand and Brazil were explicitly dealing with issues such as postcolonialism, immigration, and migration. In response to a question about cultural differences, he questioned some of the underlying assumptions of Ethno:

> **What does it mean for someone Indigenous, perhaps growing up on a reservation in New Mexico, to give away this song for 'free' to 30 people? And what does that mean? As someone who has been pillaged culturally for hundreds of years? Maybe they don't want to give their song to me, you know? Maybe that's not fun. (Interview #20045)**

In his opinion, the challenge for Ethno was not to create a level playing field, 'but an equitable playing field, where people are coming into that experience and everyone is feeling safe, and everyone is feeling supported, and everyone is feeling heard and understood' (Interview #20045).

Ethno New Zealand is arguably the gathering with the most explicit focus on confronting the complexities of intercultural difference with respect to the colonial aspects of folk and traditional musics. As one interviewee explained:

> **In New Zealand the folk scene is very white. It is folk but it's really Anglo-American. Folk is here and Maori music is here and there is not much of a connection. Ethno is really working to have diverse folk and include Maori music as a New Zealand folk tradition. (Interview #20086)**

Ethno New Zealand takes place on Piritahi Marae (Waiheke Island). One of the Organizers observed that this location implicitly challenged participants to confront New Zealand's colonial legacy:

> **I think for people who have come from an Indigenous background, they feel very comfortable in a setting like this […] But I think for many people who aren't coming from that kind of a background—at first they aren't necessarily aware of it, and then as they get told about things—I don't think that they realise the impact on them […] For some people that actually can be quite a vulnerable place, and for others it can help them feel connected with their own ancestry, or another part of themselves. I think that's been one of the things that, as a team, we've become quite aware of—that we need to be aware of that. (Interview #20006)**

This sentiment was echoed by another Organizer and AM: 'When you're dealing with historical injustices, and then you're coming together, and all cultures have probably engaged or have been the recipient of some of this […] It can be a difficult time for some participants' (Interview #21013). While Ethno New Zealand has actively worked to include Maori participants in the gathering, one Organizer noted that the numbers have remained small to date (Interview #20006).

SUMMARY

Ethno gatherings are claimed by Ethno World/JMI as promoting intercultural dialogue and understanding. The purpose of Research Question #2 was to explore the relationship of Organizers and AMs to intercultural issues. There are no simple conclusions to be drawn. It seems clear that there is, at least on the surface, a shared feeling among attendees, Organizers, and AMs that the intergroup contact of Ethno gatherings succeeds in promoting intercultural dialogue and understanding. With the exception of Ethno New Zealand and perhaps one or two other Ethnos, however, overt, explicit, or planned group discussion of cultural differences rarely takes place—though such discussions likely occur informally between individuals or small groups. Instead, music-making serves as a vehicle through which attendees and AMs are able, in almost all cases, to successfully negotiate cultural differences. Despite the ever-present potential for tension and conflict, AMs seem to be well-prepared to navigate musical and cultural expectations, albeit in a way that, tends to lean towards Western norms at most gatherings.

Based on Ethno Research interviews, it is clear that AMs regard their primary responsibility as preparing a good culminating performance while maintaining social harmony (i.e., a good 'group dynamic'). The pressure to create arrangements considered both culturally respectful and creative (the ubiquitous 'Ethno sound') leaves AMs feeling, perhaps rightly, that explicit discussions of cultural difference are unnecessary if not counterproductive to the aims of the gathering. Many in the Ethno community hold Pollyanna attitudes regarding the intercultural potential of Ethno gatherings (e.g., to eliminate prejudice and racism in the world). This may be attributable more to the self-selection of attendees and the promotional efforts of Ethno World and Ethno Organizers, however, than to the actions of AMs, which are, by most accounts, exemplary in ensuring positive experiences for most attendees.

Question #3.

How do Ethno participants and Ethno World documents describe the impacts Ethno World has on surrounding communities?

Impact can be conceptualized in multiple ways. At the first Ethno Research planning meeting in May 2019, the term *reverberations* was established to capture the sense that Ethno gatherings have a residual impact that continues beyond their one- to two-week temporal period. The purpose of Research Question #3 was to examine the ways in which Ethno gatherings may impact surrounding communities and locales. 'Local impact' turned out to be a more complex concept than anticipated, with understandings of *impact* varying tremendously across the Ethno World landscape.

According to the JMI and Ethno World websites, impact on surrounding communities is not an espoused value of Ethno gatherings. From an arts and culture perspective, 'local' impact is most obvious in terms of culminating performances, such as concerts or events open to the public.[1] The Ethno World website claims that 20,000+ people are served annually by public concerts, calculated by annual organizers reports. Some gatherings, in the tradition of the first Ethno in Sweden (1990), are held in conjunction with a local music festival. Streaming and digital archiving of performances are also becoming common and increase accessibility to Ethno concerts ('Not everybody saw our concerts last year [… but] nowadays with technology, we can also get to people through other ways of communication' (Interview #19033)).

Despite local impact not being an outward-facing espoused value of JMI and Ethno World, interviews with Organizers and Artistic Mentors revealed varying levels of sensitivity to the impact of gatherings on their immediate contexts. As one Organizer explained, the emphasis on local engagement 'really depends where it happens' (Interview #21015). An Artistic Mentor, for example, recalled an Ethno where the Artistic Mentors conducted workshops in local area cities, met local musicians, and engaged in reciprocal tune learning (Interview #20042). Similarly, an Organizer emphasized the importance of playing local traditional music at the final concert as a way of showing

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1 Described on the Ethno World website as 'a series of community and festival concerts, recordings and live streams' (https://ethno.world).

respect to the local community (Interview #19033). A third interviewee highlighted the importance of exposing their local area ('where there is not a whole lot of cultural diversity') to the Ethno gathering's ethnic diversity in order to bring to light the 'wealth and richness of fantastic diverse cultures out there' (Interview #20089). In a fourth example, an Organizer emphasized the altruistic motive of entertaining inmates at a local prison, who were apparently otherwise devoid of cultural opportunities (Interview #21017).

SITE-SPECIFICITY

Overall, the level of concern with impacting local arts and culture communities would seem to be site-specific, with some gatherings placing a higher priority on local interactions than others.[2] In some cases, motivations for local engagement were reportedly driven by pragmatic considerations of wanting to ensure an Ethno's viability. As one interviewee put it, local touring 'is a promotion for the Ethno camp itself—to keep [it] going—to have new applicants every year' (Interview #19061). Another interviewee noted their unsuccessful attempts to contact local music schools and conservatories. Despite ongoing efforts 'to be more open and visible to the outside world', their Ethno struggled to attract participants from their own country, who, understandably perhaps, were more interested in Ethno experiences in other countries (Interview #19082).

That many gatherings do not prioritize interactions with local communities (beyond culminating performances) is not surprising, as Ethnos are for 'young musicians from different cultures to teach and share their music with each other' (Ethno World website) and, through these interactions, to 'deepen their musical interests and build a global network to support their future careers' (JMI website). In other words, Ethnos exist primarily to serve the needs and interests of attendees. Gatherings focus on intercultural learning through music and the building of professional networks. They are ephemeral events that in some cases appear to have limited local community impact.

THE IMPACT OF PLACE

A conclusion of the Arts and Culture research team's examination of local impact is the relative importance of locality and a sense of *place* on individual Ethno experiences, especially with respect to possible Global North-South divides. These conclusions should not be over-generalized, but there appear to be clear differences in perspective between interviewees from the Global North, who, despite an appreciation of local culture, tended to emphasize the universality of gatherings (i.e., an Ethno is an Ethno, regardless of location), and those, generally from the Global South, who tended to emphasize the individuality and local specificity of an Ethno.

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2 It should be noted that there are some ad hoc efforts to organize additional local interactions, such as an Ethno Kids event in 2018 (Interview #19061).

On the one hand, Ethno Research interviews reveal a dominant view of Ethno gatherings as removed—physically and psychologically—from everyday life. References to the 'Ethno bubble' were commonplace (e.g., 'Ethno is a bubble. And it doesn't matter where you are' (Interview #20068)), a perception implying that locality and local interactions are irrelevant. Of primary importance to many participants is the gathering experience itself. As one interviewee explained, 'We're together in a remote place. We can't go anywhere. We have to be together always and play music the first thing when we wake up and when [we] go to bed' (Interview #20151). There was a sense among some interviewees that gatherings should be, at least to some degree, predictable: 'I really like this security feeling that if I'm going to whatever Ethno, I know exactly what will happen, so the structure or the frame is the same and I know that people are really caring and nothing bad will happen there' (Interview #21015). This is consistent with recent efforts by Ethno World to establish core principles among Organizers (e.g., by holding events for Ethno gathering Organizers).

On the other hand, several interviews highlighted the *distinctiveness* of each gathering (e.g., 'The reason that you go to different Ethnos is because you want a different experience' (Interview #19082)). As one Organizer explained:

> **Each country that organizes, or each city that organizes its Ethno […] can have its own proposal, its distinctiveness. In the end, what makes Ethno interesting is that one goes to a country to learn something unique about that culture. What do I take away from different Ethnos if all Ethnos are the same? The objective is not to replicate the same activity in different parts of the world. However, something that remains the same in each Ethno and is replicated is to ensure the participants' safety and that there is respect. (Interview #21012)**

Pride of place on the part of many Organizers is understandable (e.g., 'It is important to feel connected to the place and not be [in the bubble]. It's the way we live' (Interview #19033)). Various versions of *distinctiveness* were evident, however. One interviewee, for example, noted the difference between two Ethnos she had attended:

> **I think the special thing about Ethno Estonia is that somehow we still keep our Estonian culture, [our] Estonian way in this camp. If someone comes here, they really learn something about Estonia and Estonian music and Estonian ways of living […] In Ethno Catalonia […] we had no one from Catalonia […] We didn't have that cultural experience, because it was so worldwide and so national. It just felt like a national camp in Catalonia. (Interview #19066)**

Interviews with Organizers and attendees of Ethnos in Brazil, Chile, Solomon Islands, and New Zealand revealed a marked sensibility regarding place and locality. Going beyond the Ethno World definition of 'a gathering of young musicians from different cultures [… who] teach and share their music with each other', these gatherings capitalized on the Ethno paradigm to raise awareness of local matters of concern,

such as reviving interest in local folk music traditions in ways reminiscent of early Ethnos in the 1990s (see *Framing Ethno-World*: 'revivalism'), and, especially in the case of Ethno New Zealand, *indigeneity*.

As one Global South Organizer explained, an explicit goal of their gathering was to help support, if not revive, local traditional musics:

> **There are quite a few cultures [here] where their music and their whole traditional performing arts has been really suppressed badly [… such as] some traditional songs and traditional dances [which] a lot of Christian denominations do not allow […] for me to be able to just get people together and play their own traditional music means a lot given the resources we have. I can proudly say our music has developed, and I hope to develop it further and refine it. (Interview #21017)**

A similar sentiment was expressed about the two Ethno gatherings in Chile. As one interviewee observed, the gatherings were as much for Chilean attendees to learn about their own national cultural heritages as they were to teach musics from other countries and cultures: '[It] is great that people have the opportunity to have an experience like that because we don't know so much about our own folk music or Latin American music' (Interview #20076).

LOCALITY AND ACCESSIBILITY

Intercultural learning and intercultural harmony are long-standing claims of Ethno World and JMI. Access to such opportunities, however, has been identified as a problem by Ethno World, which has, thanks to the support of Margaret A. Cargill Philanthropies, implemented the Ethno Mobility program as a means of subsidizing attendance for those with limited financial means.

Economic disparities emerged in several interviews with participants from Global South countries, for whom international travel may be out of reach. Gatherings within one's own country are thus the only option for attendance and provide a kind of 'window' onto the world: 'The participants have the opportunity to meet people from countries that they had only imagined' (Interview #20076). In other words, 'local impact' for some gatherings, especially those in less economically-advantaged countries, is defined not so much by the Ethno's impact on non-participants (i.e., surrounding communities), but by its impact on local participants.

The impact of Ethno gatherings on participants from their own countries (rather than on surrounding communities) also exists in terms of professional development for those with career ambitions in music. The Arts and Culture research team learned of one example from the global South, where the gathering connected a local artist with a manager and booking agent, who successfully 'pushed [the artist] into the Australian markets' (Interview #21017). Although Ethno World rightfully lays claim to many professional

ensembles and collaborations that have resulted from Ethno gatherings interviews revealed that the experience of career development (as a form of local impact) may differ for those from the Global South. As an Organizer from Chile explained,

> For someone from Chile, he/she has to apply and win a music fund project, wait months, have the opportunity of a lifetime, build a team, travel, and make a huge effort. Once back in Chile, you have to show some results. That is how publicly-funded musical projects work: you have to demonstrate results and sound arguments to win it again the following year. That is why I took the camps very seriously. That is why for someone from a country like Chile, travelling to the Global North, or any musical camp, it is an extremely important event in your career. (Interview #21002)

'IMPACT' AND INDIGENEITY

Arguably the most distinctive Ethno examined by the Arts and Culture Team was Ethno New Zealand, which, as noted in Question 2, was held on Piritahi Marae on Waiheke Island. As several interviews made clear, *indigeneity* figured not only as a feature of the Ethno but was in fact the central orienting principle. This served not only to create an experience unlike any other Ethno gathering (e.g., 'giving totally another dimension [to Ethno]' (Interview #20141)) but also to problematize modernist nation-state conceptions of interculturality on which Ethno is premised.

A Swedish attendee at Ethno New Zealand observed the overt colonial aspects highlighted by the gathering:

> It's quite different in New Zealand, because the Indigenous people, Maori—[… It's] far away from perfect in society. And it's not equal, but at least […] Compared to Sweden, it's a huge difference. It's totally incorporated in life here. Like in schools, and you use the custom of Maori […] But in saying that, there is a folk scene here […] It is the same in Australia and probably other colonized countries […] The folk scene in New Zealand is very Celtic. No, it's very white. (Interview #20141)

'Local impact' at Ethno New Zealand can thus be understood through a postcolonial lens (see *Framing Ethno-World*: 'Interculturalidad'). A New Zealander participant, for example, noted how the gathering served to raise awareness of their co-existence with the Maori:

> [It] is really important for New Zealanders because not all of us had that experience. Now lucky local New Zealanders are discovering a heritage, totally discovering a heritage and yet just getting to be in touch with a culture that they may not have been in touch with since they were at primary school, which is pretty huge. (Interview #20055)

The interviewee went on to explain they 'learned about how Maori tradition works – what all the carvings mean and the significance of them and how the information is transmitted and what it means and all of that' (Interview #20055). Just as interviews

with Ethno Organizers in Chile reflected a view that *hospitality* served to develop a deeper awareness and appreciation of one's own culture, a comment from a Maori participant made clear that 'local impact' can be understood in a variety of ways: 'Being an Indigenous Maori and having all these people coming here with so much cultural pride just fills you with so much—seeing how open people are to learn about your culture just made me also be more open to learn about my culture' (Ethno New Zealand, 2019, 04:37). As noted in Question #2, however, Ethno New Zealand currently attracts few Maori participants. The gathering is actively working to 'make space' for Maori and Pacific Islander participants, stated one Organizer, while noting that 'we have a lot more reflection to do […] When we say we create diverse environments, do we? And is that diversity cultural? Does it go across class?' (Interview #21013). This Organizer also noted that the cost of attending Ethno could be prohibitively expensive for some.

By highlighting the centrality of spirituality to many Indigenous ways of life, Ethno New Zealand challenges Western-based notions of intercultural exchange as interactions that celebrate nation-state-based language, food, dress, folk music, and so on. Comments from the Organizer of Ethno New Zealand help to illuminate this point:

> Ethno is sort of Swedish. I don't want to say it's totally Swedish, but they're sort of the northern European thing where it's quite secular. [Piritahi Marae] is not a secular space at all. It is a meeting house that acknowledges the ancestors of the people who are from that space. And so it's somewhere between a meeting house, but also, I'm going to say church – not in a Christian sense – but in terms of a sort of spiritual space. It is about acknowledging the spiritual aspect of Maori culture […] And I think that some of the participants found it a little bit weird. Because [at Piritahi Marae] it is very common for people to talk about any kind of spirituality, and acknowledge whatever that component is, and that when they are coming onto the Marae they're not coming on as themselves, they're also coming along with their ancestors, and that your ancestors are meeting the ancestors of the Marae, which from an Ethno perspective is actually quite an amazing thing, and for a lot of participants that's maybe the first time they've thought about that relationship between them and their own ancestors. (Interview #21013)

These comments were echoed by another interviewee, who emphasized the spiritual and mental health aspects of Ethno New Zealand:

> I think something that might set us apart from some other Ethnos is the emphasis we have on mental wellness: mental health, mental wellness, well-being in the broader sense. In Maori, there's a word that is 'hora', which is your spiritual, your physical, your mental, emotional well-being – and then your 'fano' well-being as well. So it's like your ancestral connection and your connection to people. All of those elements make up well-being […] I feel like that's really underpinning a lot of what we were doing. (Interview #20006)

Offering an Ethno that engages deeply with local traditions requires financial and human resources that may be difficult to access in certain locales. The emphasis on indigeneity (at least as it is understood by settlers) and opportunities for intercultural dialogue at Ethno New Zealand contrast with the interview responses given by the Organizer of an Ethno in the Global South, who spoke with enthusiasm of his vision for hosting an Ethno gathering in such a way that international participants could participate in a 'day-to-day village lifestyle' well beyond what would typically be available to tourists. With a touch of regret, he shared that he 'just [didn't] have any money to implement [this vision]'. He noted the near-impossibility of securing volunteer labour in his country, contrasting this with Ethnos in the Global North, and remarked that even when his Ministry of Culture did provide funding, it was a minimal amount (enough to fund free lunches for participants) and was confirmed only days prior to the start of the gathering. He also spoke of his desire to build structured time for intercultural discussions into the schedule, saying 'this is the kind of conversation you do after music. You have your tea in the evening and after six o'clock, seven o'clock, then you have an hour of someone who can talk about respect for each other and about racism'. Funding issues precluded such events, however.

> I just don't have that opportunity. And [funding is] a huge part of it, because I just can't afford a proper camp […] I'm unable yet to fully implement those things: creating small concerts in the evening for a certain purpose, having small workshops at the end of each evening— apart from teaching your music, to talk about your culture. That kind of sharing—unfortunately—I haven't got that opportunity yet. To have a proper camp? [There's] just basically no funding for it. (Interview #21017)

This Organizer also requested support for grant writing: 'someone […] who knows how to put together a proper application […] to international agencies', and, in an ideal world, funding for an Artistic Mentor with ample experience at other Ethno gatherings. He went on to calculate that he could run the gathering as a 'proper camp' for seven days, with 25 musicians, for $7000 USD, including facility rental and meals (and taking into account that he cannot charge locals to attend the gathering, as most have no disposable income).

As this one example demonstrates, there are striking differences between individual Ethno gatherings. Global North gatherings such as Ethno New Zealand or the nascent Ethno USA appear to have sufficient funding and volunteer support to allow them to engage with questions of indigeneity and decolonization. By contrast, an Ethno gathering in a Global South country that is itself facing the after-effects of colonization is unable to secure even a relatively small amount of funding (by Global North standards) in order to provide a significantly improved experience for attendees, most of whom are 'local'. The question of local impact or 'reverberations' is thus not necessarily one of intent or desire, but of material realities and inequities.

SUMMARY

The Arts and Culture Team examination revealed that 'local impact' is more nuanced than a simple measure of culminating concert attendance. Ethno gatherings expose the complexity of global and 'glocal' issues. In particular, the examination suggests that aims of fostering intercultural understanding need to better account for how geographic boundaries and *imaginaries* of place (see *Framing Ethno-World*, pp. 8–12) serve to constitute 'local impact' within Global North and Global South material realities and the legacies of colonialism and coloniality.

Doing a culminating concert in a Global North country is not the same as doing a culminating concert in a Global South country. Generally speaking, Global North participants tend to operate as cosmopolitans: they are free to travel the world and soak up what they imagine to be "culture" from around the world based on nation-state geopolitics. Global South participants, on the other hand, tend to regard Ethnos as an opportunity for professional/career advancement. Global South Ethno organizers similarly see hosting Ethnos as an opportunity for access and global promotion. Put differently, "intercultural understanding" tends to be treated as if global peace and harmony are achieved by performing Ethno arrangements of tunes from various places around the world – as if everyone on stage and in the audience is on the same plane The material realities and the legacies of colonialism and coloniality can colour the experiences of the performers and audience members.

Question #4.
In what ways and to what extent are Ethno participants actively engaged in traditional music?

As explained in the introduction to this report, 'traditional music' is defined in various ways depending on context. The purpose of Research Question #4 was to examine the degree to which Ethno participants regularly engage in music-making that might be considered 'traditional'. However, an analysis of Ethno Research interviews indicates that multiple definitions and connotations of 'folk' and 'traditional' music hold in the Ethno context. At Ethno gatherings, participants' choices regarding traditional music not only shape their presentation of national self-identity but also define traditional music in ways specific to the Ethno context. As a result, it is insufficient to simply document the degree to which Ethno participants engage in traditional music as defined in other contexts, such as by local traditional/folk music scenes (though see below). This section considers not only the extent to which Ethno attendees are involved in traditional music but also the ways in which Ethno constructs understandings of traditional music.

Using folk musics as a way to promote intercultural dialogue and understanding may be motivated by Western understandings of the fundamental nature of folk music. These beliefs hold that modern industrial life has caused Westerners to become alienated from other people and from 'culture' more broadly, especially their traditional musics. A deeper understanding of one's own place in traditional culture is considered to be an antidote from this alienation and disconnectedness. In the words of one Artistic Mentor, 'it's really a Western way of thinking to be not connected deeply with traditional music' (Interview #20022).

Ethno Organizers ask each attendee to share a piece of music from their own tradition, according to home country/ethnicity/region. This model is based on the following assumptions: (a) that each individual will claim affiliation with one nation according to birthplace and/or nationality, and will represent that nation at the gathering; (b) that each nation has a distinct traditional music that may serve as its cultural representation; (c) that an individual, by virtue of national affiliation, is qualified to teach the traditional music associated with that nation to others. Interviews indicate that Ethno Organizers, Artistic Mentors, and attendees are well aware of the difficulty of these assumptions and many actively challenge them in conversation.

The strength of the Ethno model as a locus for intercultural exchange seems to derive in part from the problematic nature of its underlying premise, i.e., that intercultural exchange occurs through a nation-based system of musical encounters within which participants

represent their home countries. This premise may create an assumption that Ethno attendees arrive with a clear national identity that they feel comfortable representing and, more generally, that musical repertoires and individual constructions of identity align with political borders.

What allows Ethno's three assumptions to retain their hold appears to be the recognition that, although this vision of traditional music does not withstand scrutiny, it does provide a reference point for conversations on sameness and difference that thread through an Ethno—a *point de repère*, as one Artistic Mentor put it (Interview #20022). At Ethno gatherings, participants may play with their own sense of identity and belonging by (a) choosing how to represent themselves through nationally-identified music, and (b) temporarily adopting, through musical performance, the Otherness of others. One interviewee described 'feel[ing] like an actor when playing the music from these other countries', as if they were 'this other character that moves with the music and culture. But I am still [me]' (Interview #19093). Another described the act of learning and playing music from other nations as follows: 'I imagine that I am one of them, that I can dance and sing their musics. I feel that I am in their countries, and I can imagine the landscapes and the places of their countries' (Interview #19088).

Participants similarly 'play' with their own nationally-identified traditions, essentially creating a unified personal-national-musical identity for the temporal period of an Ethno gathering: 'It is like you go with the music and you feel it, and you have to put something about your memory and history into it' (Interview #19084). The following subsections provide an examination of how the notion of traditional music at Ethno gatherings extends well beyond that of a style and repertoire associated with a given locale and comes to function as a sonic synecdoche for nationally-associated lived experience.

PERSONAL AUTHENTICITY

When asked questions such as *What happens if someone brings a piece of music that isn't folk enough or traditional enough?*, a number of Ethno Research interviewees rationalized repertoire selection at the gatherings as follows: given that each person represents a nation, then what is authentic to that person—including musical style— is authentic to that nation. For the purposes of this report, this framework is termed 'personal authenticity'.

To some extent, the personal authenticity framework functions as a practical solution to categorizing the range of musical material taught at an Ethno. Every participant is associated with a national place of origin upon arrival, meaning that any repertoire they share is de facto associated with both them and their place of origin: 'People from India are representing India, [which is] quite big!' (Interview #20153). Put another way, the conflation of individual and nation—a core principle of Ethno—blurs the line between individual style and repertoire and nationally-associated musical traditions.

Participants describe searching for repertoire that will represent some aspect of their national culture while also sharing something of themselves at a profound level. An interviewee from China described her process:

> I speak Cantonese […] I just asked myself, 'What is the thing that first jumps to my mind, that really speaks my own heart, my own roots?' […] A lot of Mandarin tunes are taught at schools, but that is not something that I really [relate to] so finally I choose that [Cantonese] song. (Interview #19087)

A Turkish participant who shared a song written by a composer who died in the 1993 Sivas massacre connected it to his own lived experience:

> In Turkey I feel outside of society, and these people who died there were also like me […] I am not Muslim [but] I grew up with a Muslim culture there, and I tried to understand different cultures […] That's why I feel connected to [the song]. (Interview #19071)

This same participant noted that 'when I'm in Istanbul in Turkey, I don't feel Turkish, but when I go abroad, after some time I start to feel Turkish, and I feel Turkish here in Ethno' (Interview #19071). Ethno seems to allow participants to claim a strong sense of national identity on their own terms and outside of right-wing nationalist or xenophobic movements—to both represent a nation or region singlehandedly (or as part of a small group) and to feel, as this interviewee put it, 'absolutely [at home]' (Interview #19071).

Ethno Research interviews suggest that when national authenticity comes into conflict with personal authenticity, the latter wins out. As one long-time Artistic Mentor said, 'Of course, you represent a country, but you represent mostly yourself in the way you are. You should be able to be yourself' (Interview #20153). In the following exchange, an Organizer and Artistic Mentor explores these questions of national and personal authenticity:

> *How important do you feel learning music from other parts of the world is to the experience?*
>
> I think it is important […] but it needs to be authentic. I think that's number one.
>
> *Authentic personally, for the people—the individuals—or authentic culturally? Or both?*
>
> Probably for the people. I guess you could be […] born in a culture but identify more with something else. […] One year in Sweden, we had this Japanese guy [… but Japanese music] is not his thing. He was playing Irish music […] He didn't want to have this connection to a country. He had another musical [identity…] So mostly authentic in terms of people, and what they feel like they are. (Interview #20141)

One interviewee suggested that national authenticity may in fact be a construct and that personal authenticity is the only true measure of identity: 'If [a person sees] themselves as being from a certain place and it's important to them, then that's completely valid and there doesn't need to be any other qualification' (Interview #20042).

Similarly, an Organizer gave the example of an Australian who lived in the Czech Republic and played Balkan songs, arguing that 'people have a musical identity that they built, which is not necessarily their background'. Curiously, however, she said that when this participant finally taught an Australian song at an Ethno, there was 'a little spark'. Ultimately, she noted, it has to be 'something from the heart' (Interview #20148).

Key to the focus on personal authenticity seems to be an understanding that all musical traditions are already hybrid. 'You're not gonna find authenticity', stated one interviewee (Interview #20042). Any additional hybridization that takes place at Ethno is therefore acceptable. Other interviewees emphasized that traditions are always evolving: 'When I present some song, it's my interpretation of the song, and somebody who lived 100 years ago, 200 years ago, probably presented a totally different way' (Interview #20041). One Portuguese interviewee emphasized that his national music was by nature an amalgam of other traditions:

> There are some purists who do tradition the way that they were taught and they are not going to move it. But this is, in my opinion, completely wrong, because tradition is not about perpetuating or conserving a thing. Tradition exists for the well-being of the community. When a new culture appears, it mixes with that [and] that's going to affect the future […] In some areas of Portugal, you have a lot of Arabic influence, for example, or a lot of Spanish, because we're close countries […] Tradition is an evolving thing. (Interview #20025)

FREEDOM OF INTERPRETATION

The framework of personal authenticity appears to be based in part on an assumption that 'traditional music' is an umbrella term that may encompass everything from 20th-century popular songs (e.g., 'it's music that we like and that we identify with' (Interview #20025)) to songs unique to one's family, such as a lullaby sung by a participant's grandmother (Interview #20037). Many Ethno interviewees expressed discomfort with rigid boundaries between traditions and cultures, seeing the gatherings as sites to break down those boundaries. A number of interviewees felt that traditional music was open to interpretation in a way that other musical repertoires were not, and used this as a justification for the interpretive liberties common to Ethno gatherings. Said one participant, 'I loved that you could play tunes from a country without […] being told it's wrong and you should play it like that because it's a tune from there […] We just played it without […] thinking about the styles' (Interview #20131). One Artistic Mentor explained that he works from the assumption that 'traditional music should be always free. If it's not what you want to hear with traditional music, just don't listen to it' (Interview #20022).

Some interviewees whose primary musical focus is on a folk or traditional genre did describe the surface-level engagement with traditional music at Ethno gatherings as discomforting, however. One participant who described herself as 'play[ing] trad music quite seriously' found the Ethno approach to traditional music problematic.

I feel like it's a bit wrong playing this trad music without having listened to it lots and researched it and knowing how to correctly play it. When people are suggesting, 'With this Chinese piece, let's do this', I'm going: But what if that's just how you think Chinese music should sound? I don't want to do it wrong […] If I was going to properly play Chinese music, I'd spend three or four months solidly listening to the tradition […] It feels a little bit dodgy, really sort of [like] cultural appropriation to me […] It's fine to just play it for fun but to perform it that way feels bad. (Interview #20017)

Another interviewee, whose musical background included two years in Sweden studying traditional fiddle music, described a tension 'between cultural meeting and engaging with cultural difference [at Ethno…] where appreciation borders on appropriation'. He pointed out that participants cannot return home after an Ethno and play the music learned 'in all its idiosyncrasies' (Interview #20079). Other interviewees suggested, however, that Ethno gatherings may encourage dedicated players of traditional musics to expand their musical vision. Said one interviewee, 'I don't think we all need to be on the search for authenticity. I think there's room for experimentation. There's room for crossover' (Interview #20042).

ETHNO WORLD AND LOCAL TRADITIONAL/FOLK MUSIC SCENES

Ethno gatherings are rooted in the folk revivals of the later twentieth century, and specifically the Swedish revival of the 1970s and 80s (on revivals, see *Framing Ethno-World*, pp. 17–21; on Ethno and the Swedish folk music revival, see pp. 20–21). Many present-day Ethno gatherings are linked to local folk festivals: Ethno New Zealand, for instance, performs at the Auckland Folk Festival; Ethno England and The Tandem Festival are projects of the Tandem Collective.[3] At the same time, a number of Ethno Research interviewees (all from the Global North) intentionally set themselves apart from folk revivalists, noting a lack of ethnic and racial diversity among the latter. One Organizer remarked that when Ethno performed at his local folk festival, the group 'stood out very strongly' because the festival was 'just generally older and whiter' (Interview #21013).

This same Organizer noted that his local folk festival had changed in recent years, hiring a more diverse line-up of artists and adding 'cultural advisors' to its team. While this Organizer was reluctant to name Ethno as an outright 'agent of change' for the festival, he noted that a 'dialogue' had taken place wherein there was 'an acknowledgment [on the part of the festival] that changes [needed] to happen. [The annual presence of Ethno] participated in being part of that change' (Interview #21013). Statements such as this suggest that Ethno may encourage local traditional/folk music scenes and events to reflect on their own whiteness and to work towards increased ethnic and racial diversity.[4]

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3 https://ethno.tandemcollective.org/about
4 The members of the Arts and Culture Team who work in ethnomusicology and/or musicology note that Ethno World similarly challenges us to reflect on our disciplines' historic complicity in constructing "folk" and "traditional" musics along racial and ethnic lines.

Some interviewees described a symbiotic relationship between Ethno gatherings and local traditional/folk music scenes, wherein the former might pique a young musician's interest in a given repertoire and style and the latter might then provide additional opportunities, such as folk music workshops, to further that newfound interest. One Organizer pointed out that most attendees at his Ethno were not, in fact, traditional musicians and that the goal of the gathering was not to transmit traditional styles: 'A rock musician will not come to Ethno because they want to learn from a musician from a village in Croatia how to play that traditional music. But maybe they will come to Ethno and of those 20 tunes, they will really like that song from Croatia and then they will get in touch with that person that they met at Ethno, and then maybe they will go to that village and learn more about that traditional music' (Interview #20023).

In this symbiotic framing, Ethno sees itself as apart from local traditional/folk music scenes but finds them a useful resource. A participant from Sweden described how attending both Ethno and local folk music workshops eventually inspired her to research and learn her own regional tradition in Halland (in southern Sweden):

> **Friends had this tradition [from another region in Sweden […]**
> **I went to those workshops […] But I lived in the northern part of**
> **Halland actually, just by the border to Västergötland, give or take**
> **[…] I wanted something of my own. (Interview #20135)**

Meanwhile, some interviewees (all from the Global North) described Ethno events as fundamentally different from folk events. One contrasted a Nyckelharpa course in Uppland, Sweden with an Ethno gathering:

> **[At the course,] everyone stayed more or less to themselves […]**
> **But at Ethno, it's like everyone has to face something else, something**
> **new—which means that you have to take a step out of yourself or**
> **towards someone else […] Everyone has to do it and that meeting**
> **becomes much more powerful, much more potent [… whereas] if**
> **I meet people from the Nyckelharpa course in Österbybruk, then**
> **it is just: 'Hello, nice to see you'. (Interview #20140)**

As this passage suggests, Ethno gatherings foreground self-discovery via the discomfort of intercultural interaction. This approach to music learning differs noticeably from folk/traditional music camps that encourage participants to study one or, at most, a few traditions. (See 'Camps and Workshops' in *Framing Ethno-World*, pp. 39–41). Whereas many folk/traditional camps emphasize faithfulness to practices that are considered to be similar to, if not exactly the same as, practices from centuries past, Ethno promotes a cursory knowledge of many different practices in order to better understand oneself and one's relationship to others in the world. At an Ethno, one correspondingly finds a comparative lack of concern about following often rigidly-defined contemporary folk or traditional music practices.

In sum, the Ethno community appears to see itself as complementary to local traditional/folk music scenes rather than competing with them. Both musical communities share an interest in the teaching and learning of traditional musics but Ethno ultimately stands apart due to its simplified, surface-level interactions with multiple traditions rather than a deep and concentrated focus on a single tradition. 'It's about awake[ning] curiosity', stated one Organizer, recalling his own first Ethno: 'The only thing I learned was that there's other things that exist […] I didn't know anything about Arabic music when I left Ethno. But I knew it existed […] I knew these people so if I want[ed] to learn I ha[d] somewhere to start' (Interview #21016).

SHARING ONE'S NATIONAL HERITAGE

Although Ethno World prides itself on fostering sites of intercultural musical exchange where attendees learn about other cultures, numerous interviewees pointed to Ethno as a catalyst in encouraging them to learn about their own national or regional traditional music (e.g., 'Ethno is one more motivation to learn music from my country' (Interview #20096)). A participant from Italy, for instance, stated, '[I decided to dive] a little bit more inside some tunes I know but [that] I'm not used to practic[ing]'. She ultimately chose to teach a tarantella from southern Italy even though she wasn't from that region and hadn't grown up with that music (Interview #19076). Other interviewees echoed this sentiment:

- It makes you look into your own code, your own culture, your own musical tradition a bit more deeply and find something that maybe you hadn't found before […] I was the only Irish participant [at an Ethno…] It's a bit of responsibility, you know—how am I going to portray my vast musical tradition? (Interview #20042)

- I started to really research what [I] have in [my] country. What do we sing in the south and in the north? So now when I want to bring a tune or song, I search for songs that are really traditional, not 20th century. (Interview #19070)

Ethno not only encourages participants to explore their nationally-associated traditions, but inspires them to take responsibility for carrying those traditions. Some attendees go as far as launching new initiatives along the same model— such as a new Ethno, or other community music events. A few interviewees noted the importance of partnering with others from one's country, even though the ensuing intra-cultural negotiations could be potentially challenging: 'If you teach together, you need to find […] how you see the place where you come from, and how the other one sees. It can be different […] even if they come from the same place but they learned it differently' (Interview #20041).

The emotional relationship that interviewees reported having with their nationally-associated traditional music varied widely. Some spoke with pride and underscored the beauty of their national repertoire: 'Our patrimony […] has survived centuries […] It's a culture that belongs to us and it's super beautiful' (Interview #19085). For others, however, the traditional music of their country was a fraught topic. An Artistic Mentor and Organizer offered a list of countries from which attendees often struggled to find

repertoire: 'I'm thinking about Germany, about Belgium, about the [United] States, about Australia […] In Belgium, you [want to] play Flemish traditional music? It's very connected to hardcore nationalistic movements' (Interview #20148). The 'problematic' nations mentioned were typically settler-colonial countries, those with strong right-wing nationalist movements, and/or those with a history of associating traditional music with racist or xenophobic politics. One Artistic Mentor put it bluntly, '[The Germans] don't know what to play as a traditional music because they don't want to let people think they are Nazis, basically' (Interview #20022).

Some Ethno attendees described a lack of connection with their own traditional music and their subsequent turn to minority or subcultural musical traditions as a solution. One German interviewee said she felt 'not German' and described an 'inner confusion about origins, or inner longing for something […] Identity probably' (Interview #20024). Another German interviewee at the same Ethno said of traditional German music, 'It's very kitschy and it's way too sweet […] We hate it' (Interview #20027). Together, these two participants chose to share a Sinti (Roma) song. Conversely, Ethno can also be a way of coming to terms with a difficult national heritage. One interviewee said she had 'started to be a little bit proud to be Flemish, Belgian' after discovering 'a lot of nice songs in Flemish and in Belgium' at Ethno (Interview #20148).

One interviewee argued that, while participants are called upon to represent their countries of origin at Ethno, it is not 'in a nationalistic way. You will not see flags of all the countries represented at the end of the last concert' (Interview #21002). Rather, Ethno participants represent their nation simply by being themselves, including, for some, sharing the complexity of their transnational lives:

> At Ethno, it is more like, I come from Chile. I wear jeans. I wear a T-shirt that says Ireland because I went to Ireland once. And that's me. This is how I dress at home, and this is how I dress here in Chile. I might wear a more fancy or typical shirt for the last concert. If I don't want to, it is okay. Nobody is going to tell you anything. (Interview #21002)

SUMMARY

Interviewees described Ethno gatherings as separate from local folk/traditional music scenes although some reported attending folk/traditional workshops. By asking participants to represent their nationally-associated musical traditions, Ethno World provokes a questioning of the nature of traditional music and how repertoires labeled 'folk' or 'traditional' relate to the people from a given locale. Some Ethno attendees use a framework of 'personal authenticity' to rationalize repertoire selection, where music that feels authentic to a person is by extension authentic to their nation. Determining the extent to which Ethno participants are engaged in the traditional music thus depends very much on how the notion of traditional music is understood. For many participants, this varies widely, with some interviewees reporting a deep attachment to their national music and others little or no connection.

Question #5.

What additional insights can be gleaned about Ethno participants through large-scale data mining and fine-grained discourse analyses of Ethnopia and other social media related to Ethno?

Research Question #5 could potentially constitute a report in and of itself. It should be noted that, while the Arts and Culture Team has conducted a literature review as part of the report's preparation, the disciplinary study of social media (e.g., social network analysis) or language (e.g., speech acts, semantics, pragmatics, or sociolinguistics) are considered beyond the scope of this research question. In short, the various Ethno-related social media and social networking sites have been examined in order to draw broad-based, general conclusions rather than apply *a priori* discipline-specific theoretical frameworks. It should also be noted that, with the exception of posts on the longer-standing Ethno World Facebook page, most of the analyzed Ethno-related social media activity coincided with the COVID-19 pandemic. It is impossible to determine the extent to which social media behaviours were affected, and how behaviours might change in the post-pandemic world.

CONDUCTING SOCIAL MEDIA RESEARCH

There are a variety of approaches to social media research beyond the scope or interests of this study, including social network analysis, interviews and focus groups, experimental designs, server and data-level scraping, and diary studies. For the purposes of this report, the Arts and Culture research team restricted its approach to introspective examinations of Ethno-related social media and corpus-based tools to generate 'big picture' understandings based on member posts. Unlike many other forms of human subjects research, this kind of examination involves complex issues of research ethics (see Appendix A: Social Media Research Ethics).

The #ethno hashtag appears 4,000 times on Facebook[5] — but it should be noted that the word 'ethno' has meanings that exceed its usage within the Ethno community (which can be considered problematic in and of itself, but is an issue outside the scope of this question). Put differently, the #ethno hashtag contains many false positives, with only

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5 https://www.facebook.com/hashtag/ethno

some of them referencing what is considered here as the affinity group—i.e., the 'Ethno community'. The research team concentrated its efforts on three Facebook groups and one Facebook page, but it also examined YouTube and Instagram. In total, 855 Facebook posts and their replies/reactions, from inception through June 30, 2021, were examined. Posts were drawn from Ethnopia ($n = 258$), Ethno Forever ($n = 90$), EthnoFest ($n = 30$), Ethno World ($n = 477$). The research team focussed its efforts on answering the research question. At times this involved exploring contextual issues, such as the explicit and implicit purposes of social networking and how Ethno participants perceive online interactions and virtual community building.

Participants on social networking sites are typically thought to comprise *creators*, *sharers*, and *observers*. It is understandably easier to monitor and analyze the social networking behaviours of creators, and to a lesser extent sharers, than that of observers. It is thus very difficult to ascertain the 'impact' of Ethno-related social networking. Without additional research in the form of directed surveys or interviews, it is impossible to determine (without access to proprietary server/algorithm information) the extent to which the Ethno community pays attention to Ethno social media, for example. For the purpose of answering Research Question #5, the Arts and Culture research team focussed only on observable behaviours.

One notable analytic distinction is between *informational* and *phatic* communication. As is self-evident, *informational* expressions (i.e., postings) include content intended to inform others or to seek information (e.g., Does anyone have experience with Ethno mobility funding?). While there are subtle variations among those who study *phatic* communication, it is understood in its most general sense as 'small talk' aimed at fostering connections between speakers (e.g., I'm looking forward to the next time I meet you!). Some phatic expressions on social media, which Danica Radovanovic has labeled 'phatic posts' (see Radovanovic & Ragnedda, 2012), include such things as Facebook shares, 'likes', and emojis.

ENGLISH AS THE LINGUA FRANCA

Despite technological advances that facilitate real-time translation, communicative interaction in intercultural settings continues to necessitate a lingua franca. As discussed in other questions in this report, music functions, in part, as a form of a lingua franca for Ethno gatherings. However, Ethno gatherings still involve written and spoken communication. It is impractical to try to incorporate translations for all participant languages. As it has in many other international settings, English has become the lingua franca for Ethno World. Unsurprisingly, English is also the go-to language for Ethno-related social media postings. When the point is to communicate with as many people as possible, posting in English rather than one's native language represents a pragmatic decision.

Critiques of English as the lingua franca for international activities go beyond the scope of this report. What is of interest here is a consideration of the possible effects of language on JMI's/Ethno World's intercultural goals and aspirations. For example, while the examination did not empirically determine the percentage of posters from the Global North versus the Global South (which would have required ascertaining each poster's national origin), it does appear that language comfort plays a part in social media interactions.

SOCIAL MEDIA POSTING BEHAVIOURS

Among the questions guiding the inquiry were: *Who are the dominant voices in social networking communities? What is the nature and purpose of postings?* and *How much engagement do posts receive and how often are they shared or liked?* The Arts and Culture Team was conscious of Vitak's (2017, p. 633) caution to researchers about how Facebook's algorithm shapes user experience, 'with small changes to the algorithm yielding large shifts in behavior', and how the opaqueness of the algorithm results in a condition where 'researchers can only make educated guesses about individual users' experiences'. The analysis here should be interpreted in this light.

Of the 114 research participants who completed an Ethno Research questionnaire soliciting extensive participant background information, 23 listed performing musician/artist as their primary source of income, and 19 others listed performing musician/artist as work that they had done in the past. This context is important for understanding the possible motivations for social networking engagement. There are clear differences between those who engage social networking platforms for the purposes of information-seeking, relational maintenance, and professional network development (i.e.,'Professional Facebooking').

Information seeking (or sharing) takes many forms on the social networking sites analyzed for this report. These kinds of posts sometimes blur the boundaries between information seeking/sharing and what is sometimes described as a 'professional learning community'. Some members post resources or promotions, but others attempt to leverage 'collective intelligence' (known in some social networking circles as the 'hive mind'): 'Dear fellow Ethnopians, who can give me advice on universities that offer ethnomusicology courses for international (research) master students? Which ones are necessary to check out?'

Another major genre of posts can be considered part of relational maintenance. One member, for example, posted simply, 'I haven't met you all […] but I love you all'. One of the replies read, 'This is a very Ethno post 😄'. A more extensive example—one that solicited 10 comments and 52 'likes'—was posted approximately a year into the pandemic (which had shut down all 2020 summer and fall in-person Ethno gatherings):

How is everyone doing?

I just felt like telling you that I am so grateful to have found you and this community 5 years ago.

The way Ethno participants gift each other total acceptance and make each other feel welcome and included means more to me than you could know.

Sometimes even more so than some of my real family…

I can't wait for another chance to meet some of you again, or for the first time!

I was having a bad day and thought I'd use this post for some digital soul healing!

If anyone else has something that's heavy on their heart, feel free to share it here!

I know it's not the same as a bunch of people crying together in a dark room during a sound bath but it will have to do for now 😄

❤ u guys an' gals.

Ethno gatherings have generated a considerable amount of professional music activity, something attributable, at least in part, to attendees leveraging social media for promotional purposes. Ethno social networking represents, for the population of aspiring 'indie artists', an invaluable resource for exposure and sharing of information. Predictably, many of the participants making music-promotion posts are Ethno Artistic Mentors, who tend to be at a more advanced musical level and have, in many cases, committed to pursuing careers in musical performance. Given the passion and dedication expressed about Ethno in the research interviews, it is somewhat perplexing that posts intended to solicit support of artistic activities receive relatively little reaction. One post advertising a recently-completed album generated only nine 'likes', for example. Another participant who attempted to solicit crowd-funding support for a video project received ten 'likes', one comment, and two shares.

There are also those who attempt to leverage the power of the affinity group for other professional or paraprofessional music-related purposes, such as this example:

I am looking for someone who would like to start an Ethno tune learning program and take it to schools! The idea is to be an ambassador of traditional music and oral transmission.

deadline is March 30/ 2020

anyone out there who would like to join and fits the criteria?

let's spread the Ethno Virus[6]

[reply post:]

Author

Dear all, I made a new group to collect songs and collaborate more!

Notably, in this example the poster created a separate group to continue the conversation. While this can be viewed as a respectful and pragmatic choice in not wanting to bloat the group page with a personal interest project, it can also be viewed as an important mechanism for control over narration and involvement.

One of the clear findings from the analysis is how social networking sites function as part of relational maintenance; the Facebook sites examined for this report exhibited behaviours that both supported and undermined the grassroots, decentralized ethic that appears, from the research interviews, to be at the heart of Ethno's appeal. In other words, social networking has the appearance of democratized participation where all voices are equal. The pursuit of a hierarchy-free, borderless world possible in the offline 'Ethno bubble' would appear consistent with the egalitarian spirit of 'user-generated content' and interaction online. At the same time, there is a 'panopticon' quality to Facebook participation that functions as a disciplinary mechanism.[7] The problem is twofold. First, Facebook's algorithms (and other social media algorithms) serve to dictate content and information flows. And while the presence of these algorithms is by now well-known to many users, the exact operations of these algorithms remain hidden. Users thus post, share, and surf with the knowledge that they are being watched and manipulated. Second, Facebook community pages/sites, both public and private, are monitored and facilitated by an administrator. This functions as a form of surveillance and regulation that imposes a hierarchical, authoritarian structure on social networking that is out of keeping with the core Ethno ethic.

There were notable differences in content and posting behaviour between the private Facebook group, Ethnopia, formed and administered by an Ethno attendee (Max Christensen) and the public Facebook group, Ethno Forever, formed and administered by the Global Coordinator for Ethno World. Discussions on Ethnopia typically involve greater interaction and sharing than those on Ethno Forever.

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6 The 'Ethno virus' is an overt play on the pandemic during its early stages (before its full impact was to be known). Presciently (and ominously), there was a short feature in iRoots magazine circa 2012 called 'The Ethno Virus'.

7 In his book, *Discipline and Punish*, the French philosopher, Michel Foucault, uses the metaphor of the panopticon, a prison design where inmates self-discipline because they never know when or if they are being watched.

This was especially evident in posts soliciting help (i.e., information-seeking). Overall, less than a quarter of the 90 posts examined from Ethno Forever received a reply compared to about half of the 258 posts examined from Ethnopia. In part, this is attributable to differences in the nature of postings. Ethno Forever contains more advertising and sharing of musicians and events, with many posts by the Ethno Global Coordinator on behalf of Ethno World, whereas most Ethnopia posts are made by users and tend towards engagement-seeking and relational maintenance.

DESCRIPTIONS OF SPECIFIC SOCIAL MEDIA SITES

Summary data for individual Ethno-related social media sites/pages are detailed below. All tallies are of August 15, 2021.

Ethno World

Link: https://www.facebook.com/Ethno

Created on February 24, 2010. The Facebook page 'Ethno World' has 8,922 likes and 9,521 followers. Administered by Ethno World, this Facebook page serves as a platform to promote and disseminate the different activities Ethno World supports and coordinates. The 'About' page extends the following description:
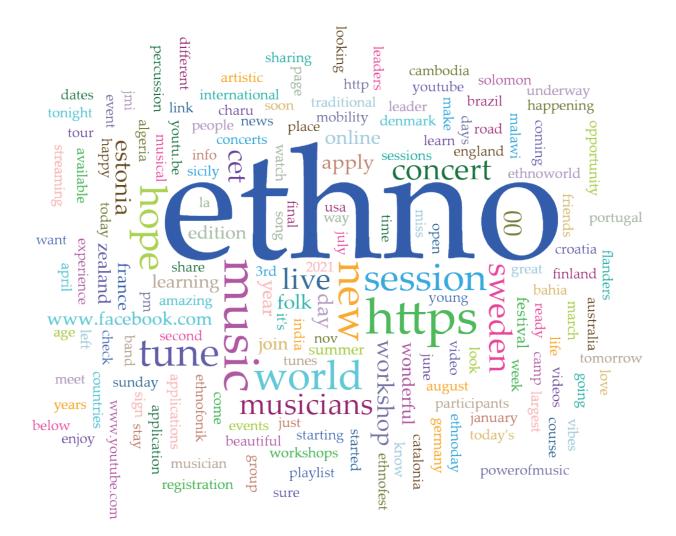
> **Ethno is JM International's program for folk, world and traditional music with a thirty-year history that began in Sweden in 1990. Present today in 30+ countries, it engages young artists up to age 30, through a series of international music activities.**

The About section adds the following additional Information:

> **Ethno is JM International's program for folk, world and traditional music. Founded in 1990, it is aimed at young musicians (up to 30 years old) with a mission to revive and keep alive global cultural heritage.**

> **Present in over 30 countries, Ethno engages young people through series [sic] of annual international music camps, as well as workshops and concerts, working together with schools, conservatories and other groups of youth to promote peace, tolerance and understanding.**

> **Ethno is a program of JM International (jmi.net) supported by Creative Europe Programme, BELSPO and Margaret A Cargill Philanthropies.**

Figure 5.1: Word Cloud for EthnoWorld

Note: Generation based on 1% frequency cut-point (of 16,807 total words).

Ethnopia

Link: https://www.facebook.com/groups/370126850555035

This 'Private group' Facebook group, created August 18, 2019 and administered by Max Christensen, has 709 members. The portmanteau title presumably alludes to underlying utopian feelings about Ethno experiences and members becoming honorary citizens of the 'nation' of Ethnopia, i.e., 'Ethnopians'. The 'About' page offers the following description:

This is not the official Facebook group of Ethno

> **Dear Ethno people:**
>
> **This group is a shared space for all people who have participated in an Ethno or other folk music and dance events. Let's use this space to stay in touch, share tunes, share our original music, collaborate, make travel plans for Ethno, ask around for hosting and to grow a loving community.**

Figure 5.2: Word Cloud for Ethnopia

Note: Generation based on 1% frequency cut-point (of 13,585 total words).

Ethno Forever

Link: https://www.facebook.com/groups/560195334930519

The Ethno World-administered Facebook group 'Ethno Forever' has 594 members. The group started on May 6, 2020 amid the COVID-19 pandemic to serve as a place for encounters and connections between musicians from Ethno worldwide. The 'About' page extends the following description:

Hello everyone! And a warm welcome to this group created by Ethno World. This group is to connect Ethno musicians past and present from around the world.

Ethno's announce Ethno-related opportunities for musicians to apply to, and as an Ethiopian [sic], you can also share links to your music here.

Ethno love!!

Figure 5.3: Word Cloud for Ethno Forever

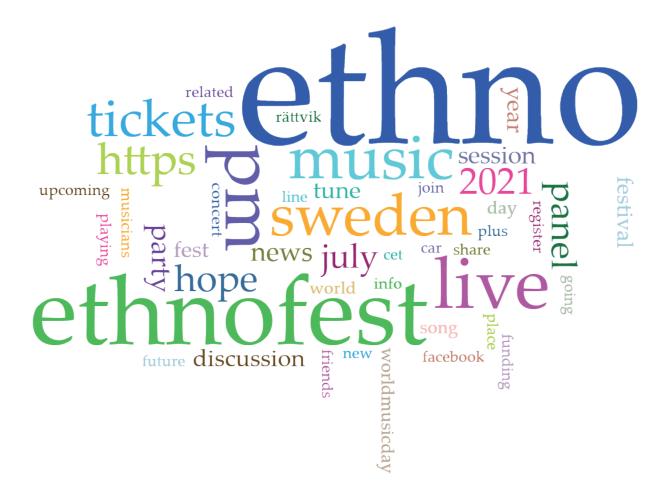Note: Generation based on 3% frequency cut-point (of 5012 total words).

EthnoFest

Link: https://www.facebook.com/groups/ethnofest

The public Facebook group EthnoFest, administered and moderated by Suchet Malhotra (Global Coordinator at Ethno World), Erik Rask (Ethno Sweden Project Coordinator), and Peter Ahlbom (Ethno Sweden Project Leader) has 388 members.

Started in Oct 16, 2019, it aims to be a space for posting information related to EthnoFest, an event organized in collaboration between Folkmusikens Hus and JM International to celebrate the 30th anniversary of Ethno. The 'About' page offers the following description:

The party place on Facebook for the upcoming EthnoFest in Rättvik, Sweden on July 9 & 10, 2021. All EthnoFest-related info, plus news, who's going, car share tips, the latest line-up and more will all be posted here. Tickets available on www.ethnofest.se!!

Note: the in-person event was postponed twice due to the ongoing pandemic. It was first advertised in Rättvik, Sweden July 3 and 4, 2020. Then anticipated to be in Rättvik, Sweden on July 9 and 10, 2021. The EthnoFest website (https://www.ethnofest.se/) indicates it was moved to a digital event.

Figure 5.4: Word Cloud for EthnoFest

Note: Generation based on 3% frequency cut-point (of 1999 total words)

Ethno World YouTube channel

Link: https://www.youtube.com/c/EthnoWorld

Created on July 8, 2011 and administered by EthnoWorld. The channel has approximately 150 videos, 66,109 views, and 663 subscribers. The videos that the channel displays cover a variety of activities and initiatives, both online and in-person, supported and coordinated by Ethno World. The 'About' page gives the following description:

> Ethno is JM International's program for folk, world and traditional music. Founded in 1990, it is aimed at young musicians (16–30) with a mission to revive and keep alive global cultural heritage. Present today in over 30 countries, Ethno engages young people through a series of annual international music camps as well as workshops, concerts and tours, working together with schools, conservatories and other groups of youth to promote peace, tolerance and understanding.
>
> At the core of Ethno is a democratic, peer-to-peer learning approach whereby young people teach each other the music from their countries and cultures. It is a nonformal pedagogy that embraces intercultural dialogue, understanding and appreciation. Ethno provides a unique opportunity for young people from across the globe to come together and engage through music with respect, generosity and openness.
>
> Supported by BELSPO, MACP & Creative Europe Program of the European Union.

The ten most popular videos on the Ethno World YouTube channel have between one thousand and eleven thousand views. The forty or so least popular videos have less than 50 views.

Ethnoworldofficial Instagram site

Link: https://www.instagram.com/ethnoworldofficial

With 90 posts, 1,021 followers, 42 following, the Instagram account ethnoworldofficial is an Ethno World-administered account. Its description section offers the following delineation:

> ETHNO is JM International's program for folk, world and traditional music that connects young people ages 16 to 30 in 80+ countries.
>
> #Ethno
>
> www.ethno.world

Postings receive sparse comments, with an average of 30–50 'likes'.

With 240 posts, 931 followers, and 324 following, the JMI Network Instagram account offers the following description:

> **JMI is a global nonprofit that provides opportunities for young people and children to develop through music across all boundaries.**
>
> **linktr.ee/jminternational**

WHAT DOES THE ANALYSIS REVEAL ABOUT ETHNO ATTENDEES?

There are three major takeaways to be had from the analysis of Ethno-related social media/social networking. The first is that social networking platforms function as particular participatory ecosystems. Online and offline interactions differ in form and function; each platform's architecture dictates the nature of engagement. Facebook's tagging algorithm controls who sees what and when, for example. Additionally, online interactions take place between people who may or may not know each other, adding a level of uncertainty about audience and reception. Lastly, participants know they are being surveilled, either by algorithms or by others, and typically post with the knowledge that they have little control over what happens after they post.

The second takeaway is that the purposes and motives of social media participants are often ambiguous, despite 'About' statements on social media pages. Unlike motivations for Ethno attendance, which exhibit many similarities amongst participants, the motivations for social media participation vary widely. Ethnopia, for example, appears to have started as a grassroots space for Ethno attendees to sustain relationships and interactions beyond the temporal period of an Ethno gathering, bringing together a community of like-minded people. Based on the analysis of various social media sites, however, it appears that, with a few exceptions, Ethno-related social media have become more of a marketing and communications vehicle to advertise opportunities and solicit support for individuals, bands, and Ethno World itself. That the general level of engagement appears low on social media, or at least on Ethno Facebook pages, suggests that the Ethno community may not be as enthusiastic about online participation as they are about attending Ethno gatherings.

Thirdly, and as discussed below, there is potential for social network platforms like Facebook to provide a much-needed space for discussions of complex intercultural issues that rarely occur during Ethno gatherings. Based on Ethno Research interviews, it is clear that the intercultural aspects of Ethno function mostly on an implicit, informal level. With rare exceptions, formal discussions of cultural difference do not occur, despite the centrality of intercultural learning, dialogue, and understanding to the Ethno *raison d'être*. As discussed

in Question #2, the lack of explicit intercultural discussions is a pragmatic reality for a music camp ultimately oriented towards a culminating performance with high expectations and a limited time frame. The asynchronous, global aspect of a widely-used platform like Facebook introduces the possibility for text-based (and occasionally media-based) discussions that are not time-delimited. Such discussions are not without risks, however, given the lack of control that participants have over their posts.

One example of a vibrant intercultural discussion occurred in response to a February 26, 2021 post that questioned perceptions of 'exotic' and 'ethnic'. The initial post drew 66 comments. An extended examination follows.

Discussions of Ethnicity and Exoticism

> **Is there anyone studying ethnology/Ethno-musicology here? In one of my film music composer forums there's a debate about the term 'ethnic' and 'exotic' being bad because it's supposedly being used to differentiate anything that's different from white, western musical culture.**
>
> **I argue that that's not the case. I don't know anyone that is offended by the word 'ethnic' and I've never seen it used in a derogatory way. It just describes a group of people with a unique heritage and traditions. In the world of classical music this doesn't really exist because the instruments and the way of playing are the same around the world. I think most people arguing in that debate don't actually have a lot of contact to foreign cultures and they just assume that others would be offended by that word, so they make it out to be a no-no word to be avoided. What do you think about this?**

On February 26, 2021, Ethnopia administrator Max Christensen made the post above, soliciting input on perceptions and uses of the words 'ethnic' and 'exotic'. Despite his request for specialized opinions on the two terms, his post functions as an invitation to all members of the Ethno community to weigh in. Unlike most of the 855 posts examined, this one had considerable participation (66 comments); many posts received phatic reactions of support and affirmation.

The post above is significant for at least three reasons. The first is that, unlike relational maintenance and promotion-related information posts that receive minimal interaction, this post generated considerable engagement, indicating a high level of interest in the topic. The second significant aspect of the post and its conversation thread is what it reveals about how various members of the Ethno community understand concepts like *ethnicity* and *exoticism*—concepts central to the core values of the Ethno World program. The third, and arguably most significant, is that it introduces the kind of intercultural discussion that apparently happens very rarely during in-person Ethno gatherings during collective, planned sessions. In this sense, the Facebook discussion fulfills an important function in realizing the espoused values of the Ethno World program.

Alterity (otherness) is a core concept in intercultural understanding and intergroup contact theory (see Introduction to this report). In the context of Ethno gatherings, alterity is complicated by the interaction of musical and non-musical cultural norms and practices. Notions of *us* and *them* within the Ethno community are further complicated by assumptions of in-group and out-group—i.e., those who subscribe to, and wish to be perceived as upholding, the Ethno ideals of a borderless, universal humanity that simultaneously affirms and erases difference, and those who are viewed as outside the Ethno community. As some of the discussion posts demonstrate, however, not all members of the Ethno community hold identical views. Some illustrative examples include:

- I think it depends on context. Both *could* be used in a kind of racist way (eg. portraying western culture as 'normal' and non-western culture as something 'other'), but they can also be used in totally non-racist contexts like the way you've defined ethnic. But I'm totally not studying either of those subjects, so maybe there is a whole lot of background info I'm missing.

- Please don't make a semantic discussion à la 'everything is exotic so someone'. everything is new to someone. the history of the word 'exotic' includes a romantizing and fetishizing of people, of a constructed 'other'

- It's really delicate to just assume that 'ethnic' is not used with a negative or racist connotation. This might be an indication that perhaps you are in a position of privilege. I learnt that my privilege is usually invisible to myself. And that's a big thing!

- Every country is exotic for a other country. I don t see nothing racist about this. In japon , european music is exotic, in europa, japon music is exotic same for food. It s not a bad word, so i don t see the problem.for me the problem is more to create this kind of problem. It s like i m white, when i lived in senegal, all the child called me 'toubab' who mean 'the white guy', i didn't feel offense, because it's one of the things that I am.

- I'm fine of people calling me exotic, but it's easy for me to say – I am white, hetero, European, privileged person. I know many people who feel offended, when these terms are used, and I think we should always give space and listen to the marginalised groups and people with lower power position and their opinion first.

By voicing their own experiences and self-reflexivity, the discussion eventually moved towards musical issues. Members reflected on how the music they play is conceptualized/defined within the music industry and how this relates to the terms 'ethnic' and 'exotic'. One member, for example, posted: 'I'm often wondering which word to use to describe my duo, which plays folk and traditional music from different countries/continents'. Two members pointed out the Western framing of the words 'ethnic' and 'exotic'.

- When I started producing music from my home sounds in genres like blues,Jazz,hip hop,funk etc I was told my music is 'WORLD MUSIC' […] With due respect YES the terms Ethno, Exotic and World, are used to differentiate anything different from the western musical culture.

- For Latin Americans, lots of folk music from Europe, sounds 'exotic' to us, and we even use that term sometimes.

Predictably, perhaps, the discussion eventually connected broader discourses of 'ethnic' and 'exotic' to the Ethno community:

> **Every year I find myself wondering whether the concept of Ethno is in fact working so well because it does capitalise on the whole exoticisation to an extent (as well as essentialisation… 'This is the Moroccon tune'). Originally started with a very Western folk tradition in mind, many Ethnos now are a vessel for all kinds of folk, court, classical, even pop music, original compositions and spiritual music. Nothing wrong with that inherently, but the framing is often one still heavily dominated by the European discourse. Is it just me who feels that uneasiness sometimes?**

Expressions of the desire for wider discussions on important issues was arguably the most revealing aspect of the discussion post. Several members agreed on the need to encourage more discussion of intercultural issues within Ethno camps, for example. Some members celebrated the nature of the social networking interactions—e.g., 'It's great that we can have these discussions as a community in a friendly but still challenging / thought-provoking way'. Notably, one member emphasized the need for having more representation of intercultural issues integrated within Ethno activities, 'because here is where the intercultural dialogue actually starts'. Another member concurred, 'Yes! I think these topics and kind of reflective discussion and collective work towards decolonization need to be more present in the camps and organizing communities'.

The desire for broader discussions on intercultural issues was especially evident in a post where a member took the initiative to host a focus group discussion (presumably on a web-based platform like Zoom) in order to go beyond the text-based discussions on Facebook. The post is worth quoting at length for what it suggests about the nature of the Ethno community:

> **Dear members,**
>
> **A while ago (26 feb) Max Christensen posted a thought provoking question on terminology of ethnicity and exoticism, triggering an interesting debate on cultural boundaries, colonialism, hybridity… the list goes on. It appeared to me that many members of this FB group deal with these questions either professionally, in relation to our academic education and/or because of personal interests.**

It struck me that, even though we have so much knowledge to share (and to discuss), I have rarely encountered a group discussion on these topics at the Ethno camps I attended. A missed opportunity, I would say 😉

The overwhelming response to the post included vast topics such as folk music revival, cultural heritage/tradition, ethnicity, nationalism/patriotism, essentialization of culture, exoticism, cultural politics, accessibility, racism, (post)colonialism, self/other dichotomies, white privilege, gender, class, (world/folk) music industries… (This is obviously not a summary)

Because talking and listening is way easier than scrolling through a facebook thread of nearly a hundred comments,

I therefore suggested to host a focus group: a self-reflexive space to scrutinize, on a semi-academic level, concepts surrounding the Ethno program, but more importantly, to come up with ideas to introduce such topics as part of Ethno gatherings.

CONCLUDING OBSERVATIONS

It should be noted that social media platforms in 2021 far exceed the dominant players of Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter. It is possible that Ethno subcommunities may be using alternative platforms (WeChat, WhatsApp, Snapchat, Discord, etc.) beyond the scope of this report. On the whole, engagement on the Ethno-related social media examined for this report does not appear to be frequent or widespread based on an analysis of creation and sharing. It is difficult, however, to ascertain causal reasons for the lack of engagement (e.g., apathy, negative reactions, access, and so on). Moreover, creation and sharing behaviours do not account for those classified as *observers*. It could simply be that social media participation far exceeds what can be assessed on the basis of creator/sharer behaviours alone. It could also be that, while a percentage of the Ethno community view social networking as 'Professional Facebooking', this percentage remains a minority. Although the majority no doubt wish to support the professional musical and artistic aspirations of their peers, the appearance of commercial or monetary interests in promotional postings go against the grain of the anti-commercial spirit expressed by many Ethno interviewees. This seems especially true when postings appear self-serving rather than embodying the 'selfless' ideals considered consistent with the ethos of Ethno gatherings. Finally, it could be that the value of Ethno for most participants resides primarily in the offline, face-to-face encounter rather than the online, disembodied encounter.

The enthusiasm of the Ethno community for the Facebook discussion of ethnicity and exoticism represents an interesting exception to the overall low level of online engagement. Not only did comments and reactions appear passionate about this topic, there were overt expressions of need for greater discussions of intercultural issues in the Ethno community, regardless of whether these are a formal part of Ethno gatherings (as a few posters suggested) or ad hoc initiatives made possible through social media.

The Arts and Culture Team did not conduct interviews to investigate participant views about social media. A previous Ethno Research interview, however, reveals a popular perception about the democratizing aspects of the internet, albeit with an acknowledgement of Facebook's imperfections as a platform:

> **Facebook—yeah, that's happening and there are problems with that. But it's beautiful because it unites us and we get a common ground. We have Ethno Facebook pages and everybody has access to them. And then people gathered from all over the world and these things spread more. And that is like counter-colonialism as a result of colonialism. (Interview #20061)**

This interviewee's comments are interesting for several reasons. Most notably, they embody and are representative of the views of many in the Ethno community. Second, there is an acknowledgement that there are problems with social media engagement on Facebook. Third, there is a misperception about equality of access. Finally, there is a naive idealism about the potential of Ethno-related social media interactions to have material consequences on historical and structural inequalities. While the altruistic aims of Ethno are not in doubt, the virtue-signaling aspects of many social media postings, especially those made by those from the Global North, run the risk of appearing performative at best and out-of-touch at worst.

The examination presented here should be interpreted with caution. As McCay-Peet and Quan-Haase remind us, 'Despite the plurality of voices on these sites, scholarly work has consistently shown that social media only provides a narrow view of our social world, as not all social groups are equally represented' (2017, p. 14). It simply cannot be assumed, for example, that people in all countries have equal access to online resources. Consistent with the overall findings of the Arts and Culture Team, a Global North-South divide is the most obvious disparity, but a deeper analysis would no doubt reveal additional inequities that continue to pose a challenge to the espoused value of intercultural dialogue and understanding. Ultimately, the analysis of Ethno-related social media sites raises as many questions as it answers.

Conclusion

This report has addressed five 'arts and culture' questions arising from *Framing Ethno-World: Intercultural Music Exchange, Tradition, and Globalization* (Mantie & Risk, 2020). Taken together, the answers to these five questions paint a complex picture, one filled with ambiguities and contradictions. This is hardly surprising, given the globalized, interconnected nature of the *ethnoscape* in the 21st century (see *Framing Ethno-World*). One of the major takeaways from the Arts and Culture Team's examination is that, by leveraging the non-discursive properties of music to bridge language differences, the Ethno World program provides a space where meaningful intercultural encounters can occur. These may not always live up to Ethno World's lofty aims and ambitions of a peace-filled, borderless world, but they do initiate relationships and musical collaborations that might not otherwise occur, affirming a much-needed sense of optimism amongst participants. The direct cultural impact of Ethno World is mostly limited to its specific subculture. It is difficult, however, to measure the intangible 'reverberations' Ethno attendance has had since its inception in 1990. Hopefully, any well-intentioned efforts to standardize, codify, and brand Ethno will not stifle the organic, rhizomatic energy at the heart of the program's success.

Appendix A:
Social Media Research Ethics

Research Question #5 involves numerous grey areas in the field of social media research. Unlike other academic research involving 'human subjects' that falls under institutional ethics board approvals based on such things as minimizing potential risk or harm, anonymity, confidentiality, and so on, online research raises complicated questions around ownership, privacy expectations, and what does or does not constitute 'human subjects' research. These questions are further complicated by platform-specific 'terms of service' requirements. Do the posters on social media own their content or does the hosting platform own it? Do Facebook users or other social networking users have an expectation of privacy when it is common knowledge (e.g., the Netflix docudrama, *The Social Dilemma*) that commercial entities regularly monitor and exploit their activity?

Scholarship in media studies (e.g., Beninger, 2017; Mancosu & Vegetti, 2020; Vitak, 2017) paints a picture of an evolving ethical field, with a complex interplay of legal and regulatory considerations. On the one hand, Vitak (2017) cautions that researchers should not automatically assume that social media content is fair game for collection and analysis because it is essentially 'public'. When it comes to Facebook specifically, Mancosu and Vegetti (2020) point out that, while unlikely in most cases, 'scraped' data can expose researchers to potential violations of the European Union's General Data Protection Regulation or the risk of being charged for violating Facebook's terms of service agreement. On the other hand, Beninger (2017) points out that '[consent] remains contentious amongst social media researchers and views change depending on the topic, website, and sample population one is working with' (p. 58), and that '[m]ultiple judgements are possible, and ambiguity and uncertainty are part of the process. Research needs to be supported by an inductive and flexible approach to ethical thinking' (p. 59).

The Arts and Culture Team has adopted a conservative, measured stance that has considered a number of ethical research factors. Following Beninger (2017), it has paid particular attention to the nature of content (text, photos), sensitivity of content, user expectations, the nature of the research, researcher affiliation, and research purpose. Taken together, several factors suggest that ethically-sound research has been conducted:

- The overarching purpose of Ethno Research is to generate findings relative to the aims and goals of JMI and Ethno World, a purpose consistent with the motivations of Ethno participants; there are no commercial, marketing, or third-party motivations at play.

- Participation on Ethno-related social networking sites constitutes a form of *relational maintenance* and professional network development (*professional Facebooking*). In other words, affinity group sites, such as those studied here, are not 'friends and family' pages. Members are fully aware of their contexts and what Quinn and Papacharissi (2017) describe as 'Boundary Work and the Rules of Social Media Connection'. As Beninger observes, 'Now more than ever, users of social media are becoming aware of inherent risks of sharing their information online' (2017, p. 62).

- Representatives from JMI and Ethno World, including the administrator of the Facebook site, Ethno Forever, were aware that research on social networking sites was being conducted. The administrator of Ethnopia, a Facebook private group site, was interviewed by researchers from the Arts and Culture Team in 2020 and is aware of Ethno Research activities.

- The research was led by established university researchers intimately familiar with research ethics, including 'Internet Research: Ethical Guidelines 3.0' published by the Association of Internet Researchers.

- The Ethno community at large is aware of Ethno Research due to regular communications through multiple channels, multiple research survey invitations, the presence of researchers at multiple Ethno gatherings, and the conducting of close to three hundred interviews (all of which required signing participant consent forms).

The research team's foremost consideration was (and is) the minimizing of the potential for inadvertent risk or harm. While risk can never be completely eliminated in research, every step has been taken to try to ensure that, when identifications are necessary or unavoidable, the individuals in question have been informed and/or provided permission. In other cases, direct quotations have been paraphrased to minimize back-tracing identification. In the case of the corpus-based analyses conducted for this report, data are aggregated and detached from individual speakers, thus not meeting common definitions of 'human subjects research'.

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