

RES MUSICA

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Saateks koostajalt

Popmuusika ja subkultuuride uuringud ei asu kaasaegses muusikateaduses ammu enam äärealal. Võõrad ei ole popmuusika ja subkultuurid ka Res Musica veergudele (vt. nt. Res Musica 10, 2018). Käesolevas numbris pakuvad autorid neile teemadele avarat vaadet, kombineerides mitmel juhul ka teadlase pilku n.-ö. praktiku omaga. Nad jälgivad nähtusi, millest osa kuulub otseselt popmuusika alla, mõni jääb küll popist väljapoole, kuid on selgitatav subkultuursuse mõiste kaudu. Seda tehes näitavad autorid muusika seoseid laiemate ühiskondlike teemadega, nagu soorollid, identiteediloome, aktivism või vaimne tervis. Kokkuvõttes näeme, kuidas sageli marginaalsena tunduvad kultuuriväljundid võivad esitada olulisi ühiskondlikke väljakutseid ja algatada muutusi.

Käsitluste suur väärtus on metodoloogiline interdistsiplinaarsus ja lai geograafiline haare. Mitu artiklit balansseerivad peavoolu ja alternatiivkultuuri piirimail, nii lokaalses kui ka globaalses kontekstis. **Kerli Kirchi** ja **Katrin Tiidenbergi** artikkel „Force of Nature, Forced by Nature? *Esthonus Silvanus* Inspired Femininities in Popular Music” seob muusikateaduse soouuringutega. Autorid vaatlevad naiselikkuse kujutamist Eesti popmuusikas ja analüüsivad, kuidas seostatakse naismuusikuid nii muusikavideote kui ka nende endi narratiivide kaudu loodusega ning milline on nende suhe ökofeminismi ja rahvusliku identiteedi diskursustega. **Jaana Davidjantsi** artikkel „Stefania for Identity, Affinity, and Disruption: The Role of Sound in TikTok War Activism” ühendab sotsiaalmeediauuringud rahvusliku identiteedi ja aktivismi teemadega. Artiklis analüüsib autor Ukraina 2022. aasta Eurovisiooni võidulaulu „Stefania” rolli TikToki platvormil. Heli toimib Vene-Ukraina sõja kontekstis võimsa aktivismi tööriistana, aga ka osana Venemaa propaganda-sõjast Ukraina vastu.

Mitu artiklit keskendub kitsamalt subkultuursetele skeenedele. **Polina Holitsyna** artikkel „Authenticity and the Subcultural Network of the Estonian Pagan Metal Scene” vaatleb kohalikku *pagan metal*’i subkultuuri, ühendades muusikateaduse etnoloogilise vaatepunktiga. Autor näitab, kui keerukas ja mitmetahuline

konstruktsioon on autentsus ning kuidas mõjutavad seda nii visuaalsed kui ka sotsiaalsed tegurid. **Natalie Metsa** artikkel „Klubikultuur eesti- ja venekeelsete inimeste integreerijana Sveta baari näitel” ühendab subkultuuriuuringud kultuurisotsioloogiaga ning näitab klubikultuuri lõimivat potentsiaali. Selgub, et menukas Sveta baar oli midagi enam kui lihtsalt meelelahutusvõrk – seal löid sotsiaalseid sidemeid eesti- ja venekeelsed inimesed, kes muidu polekski ehk kokku puutunud. **Jānis Daugavietise** ja **Arnīs Balčuse** artikkel „Rīga’s New Underground Scene in Arnīs Balčus Documentary Photographs” tutvustab Riia *underground* punk- ja DIY-muusikaskeneet. Tuginedes dokumentaal fotograafia, pakuvad autorid eksperimentaalset vaadet, kuidas lugeda piltidelt ühe *underground*-skeene lugu.

Mitu artiklit süveneb muusika ja vaimse tervise seostesse. Näiteks seob **David Čelakovský** artikkel „Music and Personal Well-Being in the Life of a Rap Musician” muusikateaduse ja positiivse psühholoogia PERMA mudeli. Tšehhi räppari Meitoni näitel selgub, kuidas aitab muusikaline loomeprotsess tulla artistil toime vaimse tervise väljakutsetega. **Marju Raju** ja **Brigitta Davidjants** näitavad artiklis „Juhtumiuuring harrastuskoorilauljate meeleolu- ja ärevusnäitajate muutustest proovi- ja kontserdisituatsiooni võrdluses LGBTQ+ segakoori Vikerlased näitel”, milline on subkultuursete tunnustega LGBTQ+ segakoori puhul koorilaulu positiivne mõju ärevuse vähendamisel ja meeleolu parandamisel.

Lisaks eelretsenseeritud artiklitele leiab numbrist Res Musica 15 jätkuna Theodor Adorno teemalise käsitluse „Stravinski kui saatan: kolm kriitilist pilku” **Max Paddisoni** sulest (tõlkinud **Jaan Ross**, ilmunud 2003. aastal väljaandes „The Cambridge Companion to Stravinsky”) ning traditsioonilised arvustused, neist esimene **Aare Toolilt** Friedrich Nietzsche raamatule „Wagneri juhtum. Nietzsche *contra* Wagner” ja teine **Aimar Ventselilt** Artemi Troitski raamatule „Back in the USSR: roki ajalugu raudse eesriide taga”.

Res Musica artiklid on avaldatud inglise keeles ja eestikeelsete resümeeedega või eesti keeles

inglisekeelsete resümeedega. Kõik artiklid on läbinud anonüümse retsenseerimise. Koostaja avaldab koostöö eest tänu aastaraamatu tegev-

toimetajale Anu Schaperile, kujundajale Maite Kottale ja autoritele. Number on valminud Eesti Teadusagentuuri grandide PSG838 toetusel.

Brigitta Davidjants

Editor's Preface

Research on pop music and subcultures no longer occupies the fringes of contemporary musicology. Both these areas have also been met before in the pages of *Res Musica* (see, for instance, *Res Musica* 10, 2018). In the current issue, the authors offer a broad perspective on these topics, often combining the academic gaze with that of the practitioner. They observe phenomena, some of which fall directly under the umbrella of pop music, while some which lie outside the field of pop can be explained through the concept of subcultures. In this way, the authors demonstrate the connections between music and broader societal topics such as gender roles, identity construction, activism, and mental wellbeing. In all of these, we see how cultural expressions that may often appear marginal can pose significant societal challenges and initiate change.

The great value of these approaches lies in their methodological interdisciplinarity and geographical scope. Several articles balance the boundary between mainstream and alternative culture in both local and global contexts. **Kerli Kirch** and **Katrin Tiidenberg's** article, "Force of Nature, Forced by Nature? *Esthonus Silvanus* Inspired Femininities in Popular Music", connects musicology with gender studies. The authors explore the portrayal of femininity in Estonian pop music. They analyse how female musicians are associated with nature through both music videos and their personal narratives, and how these associations relate to ecofeminism and discourses of national identity. **Jaana Davidjants'** article, "Stefania for Identity, Affinity, and Disruption: The Role of Sound in TikTok War Activism", combines social media studies with the topics of national identity and activism. The author analyses the role of Ukraine's 2022 Eurovision-winning song "Stefania" on the TikTok platform. She reveals how sound acts as a powerful tool for activism when the country is at war, but how it can also be hijacked by Russia for its propaganda war.

Several articles focus more narrowly on subcultural scenes. **Polina Holitsyna's** article, "Authenticity and the Subcultural Network of the Estonian Pagan Metal Scene", examines the local

pagan metal subculture, combining musicology with an ethnological perspective. The author reveals the complexity and multifaceted nature of authenticity and how both visual and social factors influence it. In **Natalie Mets'** article, "Club Culture as an Integrator of Estonian- and Russian-Speaking People: The Case of Sveta Baar", the author combines subculture studies with cultural sociology and highlights the unifying potential of club culture. The famous Sveta Baar was more than just a space for entertainment – it fostered social connections between Estonian- and Russian-speaking people who might not otherwise have interacted.

Jānis Daugavietis and **Arnis Balčus'** article, "Riga's New Underground Scene in Arnis Balčus Documentary Photographs", introduces Riga's underground punk and DIY music scene. Drawing on documentary photography, the authors offer an experimental perspective on interpreting the story of an underground scene through images. Several articles delve into the connections between music and mental wellbeing. For instance, in his article "Music and Personal Well-Being in the Life of a Rap Musician", **David Čelakovský** combines musicology with the positive psychology PERMA model. Through the example of Czech rapper Meiton, the article reveals how the process of music-writing helps the artist cope with challenges to his mental wellbeing. **Marju Raju** and **Brigitta Davidjants**, in "A Case Study of Changes in the Mood and Anxiety Indicators Among Members of the LGBTQ+ Mixed Choir *Vikerlased* in Rehearsal and Concert Situations", analyse how choir singing can reduce anxiety and improve mood, as demonstrated by the LGBTQ+ mixed choir *Vikerlased*.

In addition to peer-reviewed articles, this issue includes a discussion on Theodor Adorno as a continuation of *Res Musica* 15, "Stravinsky as Devil: Adorno's Three Critiques" by **Max Paddison** (translated by **Jaan Ross**, originally published in 2003 in *The Cambridge Companion to Stravinsky*), as well as traditional reviews – the first by **Aare Tool** (Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Case of Wagner. Nietzsche Contra Wagner*), and the second by **Aimar Ventsel** (Artemi Troitsky, *Back in the USSR: The History of Rock Behind the Iron Curtain*).

Res Musica articles are published in English with Estonian summaries, or in Estonian with

English summaries. All articles undergo anonymous peer review. The editor is grateful for the collaboration with the series' managing editor,

Anu Schaper, designer Maite Kotta, and the authors. This edition was supported by the Estonian Research Council grant PSG838.

Brigitta Davidjants

Force of Nature, Forced by Nature? *Esthonus Silvanus* Inspired Femininities in Popular Music

Kerli Kirch Schneider, Katrin Tiidenberg

Abstract

A prevalent theme in the construction of Estonian pop music femininities is their strong connection with nature. In this article we examine the connections between portrayals of women and nature in Estonian pop music, focusing on visual and textual discourses in Estonian pop artists' music videos and in-depth interviews. More specifically, we look at how these depictions intersect and interact with the prevailing local eco-nationalist folk femininity discourse. Our analysis shows that the dominant characteristics of nature-inspired femininity are simultaneously reinforced, challenged, and negotiated. We present two nature-related forms of femininity that emerge in popular music portrayals: on the one hand, a mystical, goddess-like *woman as a force of nature*, or a woman "naturally" belonging to nature; on the other hand, a broader alignment of a woman as agent of biological reproduction, women as natural, which merges femininity with motherhood, and can, we suggest, be made sense of as *woman as forced by nature*.

Keywords: pop music femininities; music videos; eco-nationalist femininity; folk femininity; *Esthonus silvanus*

Introduction

Popular music is an influential instrument when it comes to making meanings in our everyday lives and constructing the world around us (McKerrel 2016: 425). Celebrated pop stars, their billboard hits and music videos, media coverage and self-representation help to shape the ways we see ourselves and others, including our expectations for gender roles and identities. In this study we examine the ways femininity is constructed in Estonian popular music. We explore how Estonian pop music femininities are represented in 19 music videos (2016–2022) and by renowned Estonian pop stars (13), music producers (2), managers and experts (3) whom we interviewed in 2021. More specifically, we explore one prevalent theme in how femininity is represented in Estonian pop music, that is, through its strong connection to nature (Kirch Schneider, Tiidenberg 2024 (forthcoming)). "Nature", in this context, comprises references to the natural environment and natural phenomena (e.g. the forest); an invocation of the Mother Nature/Mother Earth narrative wherein nature and earth are personified as feminine, and women, in turn are positioned as having a special relationship with nature (Merchant 1990), albeit in ways that tend to essentialize them as caregivers by reaffirming sexist notions of their place in society (MacGregor 2006; Tomalin 2008); a related

invocation of "natural" beauty and "natural femininity" and its employment in discursive governance of femininities (McCann 2015); the discursive connection of Estonian culture and national identity (including perceptions of Estonian femininity) to a particular attitude towards natural phenomena in Estonian identity (Rommel, Jonuks 2021; in detail see below); and Estonian folkloric beliefs about women's connection to animism and totemism. We situate the co-constitutive representations of nature and femininity in its local context – exploring pop music femininities within Estonia's specific cultural and historical setting (Marling, Koobak 2017), focusing, in particular, on the ways they intersect and interact with the prevalent local eco-nationalist folk femininity discourse.

By studying the visual and textual representations of femininity in how Estonia's female popular musicians are portrayed, how femininities are constructed in their music videos and lyrics as well as how they reflect on this on the basis of their lived experiences, this study adds greater depth to critiques of portrayals of women in popular music, by making space for noticing alternative depictions of femininity and the negotiations involved in constructing them. Furthermore, this study enriches the field of pop music and gender studies by introducing a focus on Estonian folklore and women's connection

with nature. This adds a less-explored empirical exploration to studies of the representation of women in pop culture/music while suggesting a line of analysis applicable to other localized forms in other cultures. Overall, by presenting a case study on the construction of femininities in Estonian popular music, this work contributes empirical and conceptual nuance to pop music studies as well as (post-Soviet) feminist studies.

Popular Music and Gender

According to social constructivist thinking, femininity, or womanliness, is a performance (Butler 1990) that is political and can be used to reinforce or challenge gender (and other) hegemonies (Kaneva 2015: 1). So, the ways in which gender, as well as femininity and masculinity, are constructed in the media and popular culture (including popular music) does have an impact on gender relations and politics in real life. In this study, we define *pop music femininity* as a socially constructed set of different (sometimes contradictory) characteristics, roles, and behaviours that are represented/expressed in the popular artists' performances of womanliness (e.g., through their appearance, songs, lyrics, music videos, in-person interviews, etc.) as well as portrayals of women and womanliness in popular music in the mainstream media (Elu24 2019; Öhtuleht 2019; Pere ja Kodu 2015; Postimees Naine 2016).

In the global West, pop culture femininity is constructed according to the prevailing post-feminist discourse (Gill 2016; McRobbie 2004; Tasker, Negra 2007) that celebrates women who are resilient, strong, (economically) independent, self-possessed, active, heterosexual, assertive, able-bodied, and sexually empowered; but at the same time traditionally feminine, beautiful, sexy, and motherly (James 2017: 29). This has led to the prevalence of resilient, self-possessed, publicly displayed femininity among Western pop stars and other celebrities (Dubrofsky, Wood 2015). Yet, alternative expressions of femininity do exist among Western popular artists (James 2017: 28). Lady Gaga, for instance, is known for her gender-bending practices, constantly mixing what is considered masculine and feminine (Auslander 2016: 187).

In Central and Northern Europe, however, self-assertiveness is usually considered a masculine characteristic and "women are (still) raised with a strong focus on others instead of themselves" (Berkers, Hoegaerts 2019: 1–2). Berkers, Smeulders and Berghman (2019) found that 44% of Dutch female musicians feel unease in promoting their own music (compared to 25% of men), and 74% of them believe that the Dutch music industry – in which men also earn more and only less than ten percent of 2000 Top songs are performed by women – is male oriented. In the Flemish music industry, female managers have to mimic masculine behaviours to succeed (Mullens, Zanoni 2019). Similarly, the Estonian music scene is also described as male oriented, with men earning more and securing the most live gigs (Kirch Schneider, Tiidenberg 2024 (forthcoming)). Gender inequalities and stereotypes are also noted in Norwegian and Swedish musical performances and education (Blix, Vestad and Onsrud 2021). For instance, the studies by the Swedish Arts Council and Swedish Arts Grants Committee demonstrate that in the Swedish music scene, female musicians and composers are substantially under-represented (Statens Musikverk 2024). Moreover, in Norwegian musical education, traditional gender norms determine the choice of musical instruments for (future) artists (Blix, Ellefsen 2021).

However, the Central and Northern European musical landscape has also been viewed as a space in which gender nonconforming trans* persons can express their non-binary/queer identities, as seen in the Belgian music scene (Wasserbauer 2019). Finally, Icelandic pop star Björk, who is both celebrated and criticized because of her differences from much of Western pop musicians, has explicitly explored the ecomaternalist and ecofeminist (Merchant 1990; MacGregor 2006; Tomalin 2008) link between nature and womanhood, suggesting that women are naturally expected "to take care of others before or instead of themselves", which she sees as problematic (Goldin-Perschbacher 2014: 58). Representation(s) of femininity in Björk's music and interviews "reveal multiple feminist stances, sometimes in tension, around essentialist, difference, and equality perspectives,

all articulating a maternalist position on world politics” (ibid.).

Eco-Nationalism and Femininities in Estonia

Although the principles of Western as well as Nordic gender roles and femininity also find traction in Estonia – the yearning for westernization has been one of the main characteristics of the original post-Soviet discourse (Tlostanova, Thapar-Björkert, Koobak 2019: 83) – these depictions are also shaped by our local culture, ideologies, and history (Kase 2010). Therefore, the image of a beautiful, traditionally feminine, proper and polite woman who does not disturb anyone has dominated the Estonian pop music scene for decades (Kirch Schneider, Tiidenberg 2024 (forthcoming)). We follow the call by feminist scholars for more critical femininity studies (Dahl 2012: 57) by focusing on specific local contexts (Annuk 2019).

Although Estonia regained its independence over three decades ago, “one can argue that the post-Soviet space still exists” as “identities and political discourses in many former Soviet republics are still largely shaped by their relation to the Soviet legacy [...] (whether by embracing it or rejecting it)” (Hushcha 2021). Soviet occupation also continues to reverberate through popular music. For example, various Estonian hip-hop artists “have explored aspects of being ‘post-Soviet’ in contradistinction to the official hegemonic discourses, which outright reject the Soviet past and emphasize titular ethnicity as a cornerstone of national identity” (Cole 2024: 272; see also Pasdzierny 2018).

The specific local context most relevant for the argument at hand is that of the emergence of eco-nationalist discourse in the post-Soviet period (Rommel, Jonuks 2021). In the late Soviet period and newly independent post-Soviet Estonia, the notions of rebuilding the nation were linked to an eco-nationalist discourse (Malloy 2009: 375), which highlighted nationalist beliefs, but also focused on the revitalization of local folklore, including Estonians’ connection with nature (Rommel, Jonuks 2021: 34). The widespread vernacular of “*Esthonus silvanus*,

the forest Estonian” links Estonian-ness to the local natural environment, especially the forest, and its preservation (Rommel, Jonuks 2021: 34). In Estonian folklore, women in particular have been linked to animism and totemism, which has cultivated werewolf stories that feature a woman – usually a nursing mother – being turned into a wolf (Metsvahi 2013: 65). This has been framed as a punishment but also as an advantage and a source of enjoyment for a woman. Both the wolf and the woman have been associated with fertility.

As the nationalist discourse is conservative and masculine, womanliness was defined in conservative terms (Annuk 2019: 406) that reinforce the idea of a natural, childbearing woman whose responsibility was “to be both mother and caregiver, a person with Koidula-like¹ love for the homeland that demanded silent acceptance of male dominance in reawakening a culture suppressed during Soviet occupation” (Kaskla 2003: 306). Further, as a reaction to the Soviet faux equality where the widespread employment of women outside of the household was deemed evidence of gender equality (Ghodsee 2004), the (eco-)nationalist discourse positioned mothers and working women as contradictory subject positions (Kurvinen 2008). Overall, “the liberation of a nation did not necessarily liberate women from a society that remains patriarchal” (Kaskla 2003: 298).

What is interesting for the argument at hand is how eco-nationalist ideas align with gender essentialism and its promotion of heteronormativity, including Mother Nature myth that emphasize women’s biological/motherly characteristics and their necessity in (re)building a nation (Goldin-Perschbacher 2014). In the case of post-Soviet Estonian eco-nationalism, we see its gender essentialism both in how the vernacular of *Esthonus silvanus* is internalized and circulated as well as the reproduction of folkloric narratives of nature-bound women in popular discourse and beliefs (Renser, Tiidenberg 2020). As one of our study participants, Heidi Purga – a music expert, DJ, and Estonia’s current minister of culture – illustrates in her interview: “An Estonian woman’s religion is nature.”

¹ Lydia Koidula (1843–1886) – Estonian poet, writer and journalist from the period of the first national awakening in the 19th century (ed.).

Although traditional gender standards have been changing quite rapidly over the past two decades, a recent study confirms that women in Estonia are still expected to conform to multiple standards – they must attentively attend to their children and partners, take care of their looks, and be successful in their careers and hobbies (Raud 2022). Further, gender scholars have found that the representation of women in the Estonian mainstream media usually reinforces traditional gender roles, portraying them in connection with home and family as housewives and mothers (Marling 2010), and emphasizing their physical appearance and heteronormative relationships (Piltvre 2011).

Even though the Estonian music scene is seen as traditional and male oriented (Kirch Schneider, Tiidenberg (forthcoming)), performances of womanliness that steer away from the “template of normative femininity” (Banet-Weiser, Gill, Rottenberg 2020: 5) do exist. Davidjants (2022: 307) explains that alternative representations of femininity in the form of girl punk bands existed already during the late Soviet era. While Western punk bands protested capitalist values, Estonian ones rebelled against Soviet standards, but also against prevailing designer fashion trends deriving from the West. In the 1990s there was an explosion of hypersexualized femininities, which was, around the millennium, supplanted by a portrayal of a “proper, good girl”, which continues to dominate the discourses of femininity in the Estonian music landscape (Davidjants, interview). This image was inspired by the above-mentioned (eco-)nationalist discourse of good women who possess “natural”, heteronormative beauty, and are motherly, or at least whom a “good man” would imagine making the mother of their children. It was not until the 2010s when a more explicit feminist approach that encourages the construction of alternative femininities started to raise its head in Estonian pop music (Davidjants 2021: 221).

Our article explores how the construction of Estonian pop music femininities intersects with the eco-nationalist discourse and its emphasis on nature. However, beyond analysing how this dominant discourse is reproduced, we consider Estonian pop artists’ attempts to challenge and/or negotiate the prevailing ideas and explore the alternative, hybrid and dialectical femininities that emerge in the process.

Methods

In this study we examine the links to nature in the constructions of Estonian pop music femininity by focusing both on in-depth interviews with renowned Estonian pop artists, their music producers, managers, and music experts, and on the interviewed pop stars’ most viewed music videos (2016–2022). A multiperspectival approach (Kellner 1995; Tiidenberg 2017) allows us to analyse constructions of Estonian pop music femininities not only from the media representation perspective, or as something that “is done to women”, but also to include their “active participation in it” (Kaneva 2015: 4) and view enactments of femininity (and gender) as performative and political (Butler 1990). We weave together a variety of discursive strands presented in music videos and interviews to highlight the negotiation of the more hegemonic discourses of femininity in Estonian pop music.

We pose the following research questions:

RQ1: What are the nature-inspired themes in Estonian pop music femininities?

RQ2: How are the portrayals of femininity in the music videos and interviews shaped by the discourse of eco-nationalist folk femininity?

RQ3: How do the participating pop-artists interpret and negotiate these discourses of femininity?

We collected two types of data: in-depth interviews with renowned Estonian pop artists (n=13: 11 women, 2 men), media producers (n=2: a music video director and a lyricist), music experts (n=3); and the interviewed female pop stars’ most viewed music videos on YouTube (n=19).

To select the interviewees we conducted desk research of Estonian music websites (such as Estonian Music Awards; MyHits TOP 30; Sky Plus TOP 20; R2 TOP 20) to identify award-winning pop artists and most played songs. To also include some up-and-comers and musicians who are known for their distinct representations of femininity, interviews with Estonian music experts – a radio host, a music journalist, and a music manager – were also conducted. Some artists from the desk-research based wish list were not able or willing to participate, so the final sample included one to two artists for each popular music category – pop, indie, folk, hip hop, soul/RnB, blues, art pop, and a few

up-and-comers. The semi-structured interviews were conducted from June to November 2021. The average duration of the interviews was one hour (varying from 43 minutes to one hour and 25 minutes). The interviewees were asked about the portrayal of women and femininity in Estonian culture and media, including pop music in general and in their own repertoire, their understandings of femininity, representations of femininity in their stage personas and music videos, their favourite female artists, etc. The interviewees were not anonymized in accordance with the interviewees' wishes in the informed consent agreements. The sample of music videos includes the interviewed female pop stars' most viewed YouTube music videos from 2016–2022.

We conducted multimodal discourse analysis (Tiidenberg 2017; Rose 2022) to identify key themes, their connections and contradictions (Rose 2022: 228–244) in textual and visual data and their intertextual assemblage. We started with descriptive coding of interviews, music videos and music lyrics. This means that basic topics of a passage of data were summarized in a short word or a phrase (Saldaña 2013: 70). We followed up with pattern coding, where we identified emergent discursive themes by pulling together descriptive codes (Saldaña 2013: 152). Our coding of music videos relied on analytical frameworks by Vernallis (2004), Railton and Watson (2011), and Rambarran (2021), where we focused on how femininities were represented in the images, performers, lyrics, background, choreography, camera work, editing, aesthetics, and their interplay with each other, with the melody and the lyrics. One of the key themes pertaining to the discourses of femininity in our data was links to nature, with further sub-themes of natural women, women of nature, and mothering and nature.

Discussion of Results: Estonian Pop Music Femininities' Two Ways with Nature

We have found that the construction of Estonian pop music femininities is simultaneously accepting, rejecting, and negotiating elements from the dominant eco-nationalist folk femininity discourse. One of the prevalent themes in the representations of Estonian pop music femininities is women's close relationship to nature (Kirch

Schneider, Tiidenberg 2024 (forthcoming)), which we see as relying on and gendering the vernacular of the forest Estonian (Rommel, Jonuks 2021). As one of the study's participants, Heidy Purga, a DJ and a politician, notes in her interview: "This is our heritage, our culture. Being in nature and caring about it is no doubt one of the things that defines us."

Our analysis shows that the nature-boundness of Estonian women is presented from two different, but interlinked perspectives. On the one hand, there is a romanticized, mystical version of Estonian pop music femininity, in which women are made of, represent, or belong in nature (*Femininus silvanus* in Estonian pop music). On the other hand, this framing also refers to a broader theme of women as agents of biological reproduction (Yuval-Davis 1996), which relegates women to the role of mothers, linking them to nature and nation through the figure of "mother earth" (women as agents of biological reproduction). These nature-inspired constructions of Estonian pop music femininity appear in visual and textual representations of womanliness, as well as in the interviews of the study's participants. They are also evident in the mainstream media's framing of pop music femininities.

"If two women make music together, people already assume it's mysticism." Femininus silvanus in Estonian pop music

A "naturally beautiful" (McCann 2015) female singer – hair down, simple cut dress, minimalist makeup, and bare feet – performing in the natural background is a common theme in almost half of the music videos analysed – for example, Liis Lemsalu rides a horse in a hayfield ("Halb vői hea"), Manna appears from exotic shrubs ("Disposable society"), Synne Valtri is swinging and lying on the beach ("12 kuud"), Sandra Sillamaa (Sandra Vabarna at the time of the interview) sings in a rural garden full of trees ("Kallimale"), Anna Kaneelina walks in a birch forest ("What have I done for love"), Yasmin wanders in the desert ("Slow fall"), HUNT girls and singers appear in a meadow ("Spring"), etc. They are portrayed as beautiful, but in a soft, gentle way. Remarkably, naturally beautiful femininity situated in nature appears across genres, including music videos

for songs in the genres of pop, hip-hop, ethno, soul, indie, etc. Pre-eminent Estonian pop star Liis Lemsalu confirms the prevailing norm of “natural beauty” for Estonian women in her interview: “We are more like Scandinavian women, favouring minimalism. We like softer beauty [...] that has air and lightness to it.”

Some of these “naturally beautiful” femininities are portrayed as ordinary, as naturally belonging to or fitting in with nature; while others are shown as mysterious and unearthly. Depictions of women as goddesses, fairies, witches, or other nature-inspired magical beings evident in the music videos often highlight the supernatural powers of enigmatic femininity, borrowing from Estonian folklore (Metsvahi 2013) and mysticising the vernacular of “the forest Estonian” (Rommel, Jonuks 2021). For instance, in the video for the folk band Trad Attack’s song “Kuukene” (“Little moon”), the long opening shots carefully capture each detail of the forest, including moss, berries, tree trunks, treetops, sky, etc., to stress the importance of nature and its connection to the video’s characters – the uncanny forest Estonians. After 45 seconds of nature shots, the first person makes a shy appearance from behind the trees. It is a red-haired woman (a model, not a singer) in a short white dress. Her hands, arms, mouth, and jawline are painted red, which suggests folkloric interpretations (Metsvahi 2013): Is it blood covering her mouth and hands? Is she a werewolf? Does she come at the viewer with some wild, raw power? Instead, she meets a blue-mouthed, blue-armed man, and they reach out for each other. With that reach, magic is born – blue blueberries and red lingonberries start rising in the air, and the forest fills with red and blue steam. Then the man and the woman also start rising in the air with the berries, exercising their supernatural powers, still reaching for each other. As they finally embrace, the red and blue steam mix, and the couple remains floating, surrounded by moonlight. To maintain the magic and tranquillity, everything takes place in slow motion. Even though the portrayal of femininity in this video is fortified by nature, visualizing the forest Estonian trope (Rommel, Jonuks 2021) as mystical and supernaturally powerful, it is firmly heteronormative – it is the meeting of the man and the woman that ignites the magic, and the

conventional colour scheme of blue for male and red for female reinforces traditional gender roles. Here, depictions of folk femininity are employed in the service of the traditional gender roles of the eco-nationalist discourse. As these forest Estonian images rely on conventional gender norms (Kaskla 2003), the connection between nature and women does not necessarily imply female empowerment.

However, according to Rambarran (2021), and Railton and Watson (2011), it is important to notice that the characters in the music video are not the singers of Trad Attack, which does not automatically tie this portrayal of femininity to Sandra Sillamaa, the only female member of Trad Attack, nor to the perceptions of femininity held by the male members of the band. In fact, in her interview, Sillamaa is very reflective about portrayals of femininity, pointing out that in the case of ethno-music, in particular, audiences really lean into the discourses of folk femininity, expecting an “authentic” version of Estonian culture, wherein nature and femininity are inextricably intertwined. The example she offers is people often suggesting that, as a folk musician, Sandra should really be living in the woods. Heidy Purga also illustrates the mainstream idea of folk femininity presented in ethno/folk music videos in her interview: “We have niche artists, such as Curly Strings, who carry forward the Southern Estonian heritage” through the images of women “sitting on a bale of straw, holding a daisy”.

In another music video for the song “What Have I Done for Love” by an indie artist Anna Kaneelina, three fairy-like Anna Pärnoja characters (the soloist of the Anna Kaneelina band) appear in the middle of a dreamy birch forest, wearing airy, red dresses, and waving red veils. In this case, the magic power embedded into femininity is the ability to multiply, which is achieved through editing techniques (Vernallis 2004). The video presents half see-through, kaleidoscopic images of Anna and her red veil, which sometimes dissolve into the trees, representing an enigmatic femininity that blends in with, or even into nature. Although her actions appear mysterious, Anna’s character is not wearing heavy makeup, her dark hair flies loose in the wind, and she is wearing a simple cut dress – all markers of traditional femininity and its “natural beauty” imperative (McCann 2015). As

the “What Have I Done for Love” lyrics talk about searching, reaching, and living for love (not love for someone, but love itself), Anna’s red dress can be seen as a signifier for love, as well as for (traditional) womanliness and feminine, romantic beauty. In the Estonian mainstream media, Anna Kaneelina is often referred to as enigmatic, primal, and mysterious – this reading aligns with what is portrayed in the video. However, in the interview, Anna reveals that when people describe her stage persona as “the primal feminine” it confuses her. “I don’t know what to do with it, it is so big. I wouldn’t know how to characterize myself using this phrase.”

A third example of the nature-inspired, romanticized pop music femininity that is reinforced in the music videos, yet questioned by the artists themselves (Rambarran 2021), comes from the video for the two-woman indie band HUNT’s song “Spring” (for this song, HUNT is accompanied by a third woman, VJ Kristin Pärn). This artsy black-and-white music video embodies strong nature vibes through its portrayals of a blooming apple tree and barefoot, white-dressed young girls – the new generation of forest Estonians – who are hugging the tree, sleeping on grass, and running barefoot in flower fields. Although the video does not explicitly demonstrate the girls having supernatural powers, it nevertheless imagines them as belonging in nature, having a close relationship with it. Since they do not share a frame with any adults, and appear to be sleeping in the forest, they can be argued to be literally *of* the forest. Similarly to Anna Kaneelina’s appearance, the girls in the “Spring” also represent natural feminine beauty through the black and white shots of their bare feet; simple white dresses and long (blonde) hair, which make them almost blend in with the tree in full bloom with white blossom. The girls are contrasted with three nostalgic-looking women (singers) in severe black gowns. They are singing in nature, wearing modest make-up, and angularly cut dark hair. The figures the singers cut clearly contrast those of the girls, yet it remains vague, in what capacity. Are they the future awaiting the young girls in white?: is this what happens as women grow up? Or are the adult women in sombre black the overseers or protectors of the girls’ playful, childish, budding femininity?

Further, as the video consists of only women – little future women in white dresses and adult women in black – the video has no heteronormative orientation towards men. The women do not seem to search for men, wait for them, or even acknowledge their existence. The non-heteronormative world created in this music video can be argued to resemble the mythical society imagined by Doris Lessing in her novel *The Cleft* (2007) which is (at least seemingly) free of men and (hetero)sexual intrigues. Overall, womanliness in this video is portrayed as natural, yet mysterious; as ascetic and simple, but also shaped by sharp contrasts.

Yet, similarly to the previous examples, the band members’ ideas of themselves do not align fully with these depictions. As band member Brigitta Davidjants explains in her interview: “The video was about some girls running in slow motion [...] I did not identify with it at all. I feel like I’m a much rougher soul than that.” She also questions the mainstream media portrayals of HUNT members as “mystical and cosmical”, confirming they “are rather down to earth women. [...] But maybe, if two women make music together people already assume it’s mysticism.” This gestures to a common trope (also noted by our interviewees) in Estonian pop music videos, where women tend to appear either solo or with a man. So, two or more women (and no men) hint at something mysterious from a heteronormative perspective – an ominously manless, mythological world like the one in *The Cleft*. Although thought-provoking, the non-heteronormative world portrayed in the video does not present same sex relationships, which were noted in two other music videos analysed, which were not linked to nature: “Tra pls” (“Fucking please”) by art pop performer Valge Tydruk, which displays two women kissing in the bath; and “Ookean” (“Ocean”) by blues band Kaisa Ling Thing in which the lead singer Kaisa (who practices gender-bending during her live shows) leaves the bar scene with another woman (instead of a man who appeared to be her cheating ex-lover).

In the music video for the WATEVA ft. Manna song “Disposable Society”, award-winning music video director Marta Vaarik portrays rapper Manna as a solo heroine – a “Mother Earth” or a goddess who saves our planet. The music video

is known for its special effects which help to visualize Manna's deep connection with nature and our planet – she has flowers covering her face, roots spreading on her arms, she seems to grow out from the exotic shrubs, there are kaleidoscopic images of bloom-like elements that seem to reproduce and multiply, etc. Although these images infuse her femininity with power, they do so through the female biological ability to reproduce, which will be further discussed in the next section.

***“And, f**k, then you also must give birth!”
Estonian pop music femininity between
biological and artistic (re)production***

The second idea that combines nature and femininity borrows from a broader alignment of women as agents of biological reproduction to the nation (Yuval-Davis 1996), nature and “Mother Earth”. Converging the representations of Estonian pop music femininities with motherhood reinforces the (eco-)nationalist ideal of a natural, childbearing woman (Kaskla 2003) whose main job in this world is to reproduce and to be a mother – whether to rebuild a nation or more broadly, humankind.

The idea of femininity as motherhood is frequently reinforced in the Estonian mainstream media. In public interviews, female pop artists are asked how they negotiate their parenting and music careers, who is watching their children when they attend public events, about their pregnancies and post-partum bodies, etc. The (eco-)nationalist contradiction between a mother and a working woman that emerged in the newly independent Estonia (Kurvinen 2008) still causes female musicians to experience various tensions in terms of choosing which fragments of their lives and identities they are willing to include in their public personas.

Most of this study's female interviewees have care duties as parents and many of them admit that negotiating motherhood and femininity is something they find quite challenging in their everyday lives. Sandra Sillamaa, for instance, opens up about how she did not discuss her first child and pregnancy in public, so motherhood would not define her:

For a long time, I thought that I must be able to take care of both – my child and my work,

and that I can't reduce my workload. I did not talk about motherhood (publicly). I was afraid that once the child comes, I won't be able to have anything else. That was my biggest fear, and I went to extremes in terms of pushing it aside.

Furthermore, Anna Kaneelina also admits the hardships of juggling children and a music career:

I'm not self-confident [...] The time is ticking and I'm thinking, oh god, what is my next step [in terms of her music career; authors]. Of course, I want to be home with my children, so I don't have to regret missing any moments with them. This [parenting] takes so much time that I don't even notice that I'm not doing anything. And suddenly I discover again that I want to do it [music]. There is a crazy whirlpool going on in my head. It's like you are split. [...] you are not one or the other, and you are not good at anything.

In her interview, Anna also expressed the conflicting nature of motherhood in a song “Mother”:

I'm happy I got to express my hardships of growing into a mother in a song. You are constantly wavering between love and fear. [...] This is my truth, and it is a special feeling when I perform this song. It is painful, and in a way, it is not beautiful.

According to Anna, the song is not for mothers only: it is also for children, as everyone is someone's child. We would argue that it can also be read as pushing back against the eco-nationalist dominant discourse that values women for being mothers. In her interview she explicitly confronts the dominant perception of femininity equalling motherhood: “I don't think that women who are mothers are somehow more women.”

Contrary to several interviewees who said that they prefer not to answer questions about motherhood in public (although the mainstream media journalists keep asking), music video director and artist Marta Vaarik uses her public persona and creative platforms to address this topic. In her interview, Vaarik speaks up about the hardships of being a single mother: “I'm a single mother and I live in a wood-heated apartment. In the winter I carry bags of firewood up the stairs

and think how idiotic it all is." She is referring to the discord between women's expectations and reality:

We (women) are being raised to live in a magic land as princesses, as little, soft, beautiful, cute things, who will be saved by a prince someday. But sooner or later we understand that no one is coming to save us, and we must be a thousand times stronger than men.

Yet Vaarik does not frame this through a lens of victimhood. Rather, she believes it is important to publicly highlight that motherhood, including single motherhood, is a position of strength:

I'm the first generation of women who can proudly say that I'm a single mother and people don't scowl at me for this. I think it is necessary to publicly show this strong woman, strong character, and to not turn her into a victim ... but to make her a power-woman. The one who we need to be as women. So that we can predict the future a little bit.

Thus Vaarik combines the notions of motherhood, which we have analysed primarily from the perspective of the reproductive links to nature, with the discourse of woman as a force of nature discussed above. In her music video for Wateva ft. Manna "Disposable Society" this comes together in an idea of mother as a force of nature. She comments on the narrative (Rambarran 2021; Vernallis 2004; Railton, Watson 2011) and images of the post-apocalyptic earth in the video: "This is 5000 years from now when everything is completely f...d up. The earth is used to the last drop." In the video, Vaarik turns rapper Manna into a heroine, a female goddess who saves the world by (re)birthing our planet. In her interview for the Estonian National Broadcaster, Vaarik discusses the video by saying: "I believe that the world needs smart and strong women, then things will get better. New humans come from inside of women. Kids and the world need to be hugged." (ERR Muusika 2021) Here, there is a reproduction of the eco-nationalist femininity that elevates motherhood, yet instead of it being disempowering or objectifying as originally attributed to the discourse (Kaskla 2003), Marta Vaarik complicates and challenges the heteronormative origins of the idea by

highlighting single-motherhood and by portraying motherhood as a supernatural force of nature. In the case of "Disposable Society" Vaarik shows it directly through the image of Venus (Manna) giving birth to the earth.

Although Vaarik's video celebrates the (biological) superpowers of women, it also elevates the "darker side" of woman- and motherhood, depicting it through Manna's transformation from a virgin girl covered with flowers and vibrant colours into a scarred and bleeding postpartum Venus – representing the price women pay for being/acting as forces of nature. As Vaarik comments in her interview with us: "Everything is on your shoulders. And f..k, then you also must give birth."

Overall, the eco-nationalist stereotype of women as reproductive agents for nature/nation (Yuval-Davis 1996; Kaskla 2003) is a topic of engaged negotiation, if not outright contestation in the constructions of Estonian pop music femininity. Although most of the interviewees critically reflect on it, motherhood nevertheless remains a crucial part of their daily lives. And whether the female members of the Estonian music industry want to express it as part of their public personas or not, the mainstream media make sure to discuss parenting in relation to women – by highlighting women's role as mothers (Elu24 2019; Öhtuleht 2019), by making lists of female celebrities who don't have children (Postimees Naine 2016), by contemplating whether women are too old to have children (Pere ja Kodu 2015), etc. As Hannaliisa Uusma from HUNT illustrates in her interview:

The expectations that we set for ourselves are still archetypical. Even if you have been living a different life for a long time, even if your mother has [...], you still don't feel perfect if you steer too far away from these archetypes. So, these stereotypes are constantly gender-policing you. It is still deep in our culture.

Conclusion

In this study we focused on the constructions of femininity in Estonian popular music. More specifically, we examined the nature-inspired themes in Estonian pop music femininities, how they are informed by the dominant local

eco-nationalist folk femininity discourse, and how renowned Estonian pop artists (and other members of the music industry), and their most watched music videos reinforce, negotiate and/or challenge these prevailing depictions of womanliness. Additionally, their understandings and enactments of femininity were placed in the broader cultural discourses prevalent in the Estonian mainstream media.

As women's strong connection with nature emerged as a significant theme within Estonian pop music femininities, we argue that the eco-nationalist discourse retains a strong foothold. However, our results show that nature and femininity are interlinked in pop music discourses of femininity via two different but connected perspectives. This highlights a recurring negotiation of the eco-nationalist narrative. The visuals and narratives in music videos routinely borrow from the vernacular of *Esthonus silvanus* and its connection to "real" Estonian-ness (Rommel, Jonuks 2021), portraying women as *forces of nature* – goddesses, fairies, witches, and other mystical beings (which can also be interpreted as enactments of post-feminist values of female strength, resilience, and independence – or as "naturally" blending in with nature. Although these depictions can be empowering because of the forest Estonian vernacular links of the *Esthonus silvanus* identity to an authentic, independent Estonianness, they are often presented in ways that reinforce dominant heteronormative values (present in both the eco-nationalist as well as the post-feminist discourses). Women in music videos often inhabit the position of a force of nature in relation to men or when sparked. When this is not the case, they are overtly framed via mystery and mysticism, which arguably situates women who are not oriented towards men as incomprehensible, and thus the magic woman as a force of nature still reinforces the heteronormativity by its "otherness". However, the interviews reveal that artists tend to question these mystical nature-inspired depictions, describing themselves as ordinary women of this world rather than the divine characters in the music videos.

The other thread that surfaced in our analysis of the depictions of nature-linked pop music femininity is one that is strongly reinforced by the mainstream media portrayals of women

in Estonian pop music – an imagery of them as agents of biological reproduction (and thus related to nature). This thread, too, bolsters the (eco-)nationalist discourse of a childbearing, natural woman whose most important role in this life is to (re)build the nation and/or humankind (Yuval-Davis 1996; Kaskla 2003: 306). This idea is being rendered more complex by female music video creators like Marta Vaarik who do portray women's essence as linked to motherhood, but whose depictions of mothers are non (hetero)normative in some way – she speaks of single mothers, mothers who do not bear the burden of motherhood easily, but rather bear visible marks of being a force of nature. Furthermore, our female study participants, most of whom were mothers, both challenge and negotiate this stereotype by confirming in the interviews that femininity should not equal motherhood, even if it often feels as if it does.

These themes surfaced multimodally, through both visual and textual representations and as expressed by the participants in the study. There is an obvious orientation to nature in Estonian pop music femininity, though it may pull in a variety of directions. On the one hand, it presents womanliness as magical and mystical, portraying women as powerful, God-like forces of nature or naturally belonging to nature. On the other hand, there are elements in this femininity that are "forced by nature", as some depictions of women follow the traditional path of eco-nationalist folk femininity that celebrates heteronormative women who are "naturally" programmed and responsible for continuing/rebirthing our nation and humankind. This in turn can be more or less subtly pushed back against. There is agency there, but one constrained by a variety of dominant discourses, and one that requires persistent effort to maintain.

By providing a case study on the representation of Estonian pop music femininities, this article expands the dominant Western conceptual framework for analysing constructions of gender in popular music/culture. The Estonian experience in constructing pop music femininities is crucial when viewed in a larger context as postmodern knowledge creation encourages the richness of small, local stories rather than one great narrative (Lyotard, as cited in Annuk 2019: 407).

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Looduse jõul või looduse sunnil? „Eestlased on metsarahvas”, popmuusika naiselikkuses

Kerli Kirch Schneider, Katrin Tiidenberg

Käesolev artikkel uurib loodusest inspireeritud naiselikkuse kujutamist Eesti popmuusikas ning viise, kuidas need kuvandid suhestuvad kohaliku valitseva ökorahvusliku naiselikkuse diskursusega. Täpsemalt vaadeldakse, kuidas tunnustatud Eesti artistid (ja teised muusikatööstuse esindajad) ning nende vaadatuimad muusikavideod neid domineerivaid naiselikkuse kuvandeid juurutavad, problematiseerivad ja/või vaidlustavad. Lisaks uuritakse nende arusaamasid ja naiselikkuse väljendamist ka Eesti peavoolumeedias levinud laiemate kultuuridiskursuste raames.

Tulemused näitavad, et looduse ja naiselikkuse suhe on Eesti popmuusikas väljendatud kahe erineva, kuid omavahel seotud vaatenurga kaudu. Muusikavideote visuaalid ja narratiivid laenavad rutiinselt *Esthonus silvanus*'e ehk metsaeestlase pärimusest (Rommel, Jonuks 2021) ning selle seostest „päris” eestlusega, kujutades naisi loodusjõududena – jumalannade, haldjate, nõidade ja muude müstiliste olenditena – või „loomuliku” loodusesse sulandumise kaudu. Kuigi sellised naiselikkuse kuvandid võivad näida jõustavana – kuna metsaeestluse pärimus ühendab *Esthonus silvanus*'e identiteedi autentse, iseseisva eestlusega –, esitatakse neid sageli viisil, mis tugevdab ökorahvuslikes diskursustes domineerivaid heteronormatiivseid väärtusi. Teisalt aga näitavad intervjuud, et naismuusikud ise kipuvad nendes müstilistes loodusest inspireeritud naiselikkusekuvandites kahtlema, kirjeldades end pigem ilmalike naistena kui muusikavideotes nähtud jumalike tegelastena.

Teine uuringus esile kerkinud loodusest inspireeritud popmuusika naiselikkuse kujutamise viis on näidata naisi kui bioloogilise (looduse) taastootmise teostajaid. Seda kuvandit juurutatakse eelkõige Eesti peavoolumeedias ning see toetab (öko)rahvuslikus diskursuses esile tõstetud ideed loomulikust, lapseootel naisest, kelle tähtsaim roll siin elus on rahvuse ja/või inimkonna (üles)ehitamine. Seda ideed komplitseerivad naissoost muusikavideoloojad, kes küll kujutavad naiste olemust seotuna emadusega, kuid kelle emakujutus ei ole mingil moel (hetero)normatiivne. Selle stereotüübi seavad kahtluse alla ka naissoost intervjuueeritavad, kellest enamik on emad, kinnitades intervjuudes, et naiselikkus ei tohiks võrduda emadusega, isegi kui see sageli nii tundub.

Esitades juhtumiuuringu Eesti popmuusika naiselikkuse kuvanditest, laiendab käesolev artikkel Lääne domineerivat kontseptuaalset raamistikku popmuusika/-kultuuri sookonstruktsioonide analüüsimisel. Eesti kogemus popmuusika naiselikkuse konstrueerimisel on laiemas kontekstis ülioluline, kuna postmodernne teadmusloome toetab pigem väikeste, kohalike lugude rikkust kui üht suurt narratiivi.

“Stefania” for Identity, Affinity, and Disruption: The Role of Sound in TikTok War Activism

Jaana Davidjants

Abstract

This article examines the role of sound in war-related activism on TikTok by thematically analysing TikTok clips featuring the Ukrainian song “Stefania” by the Kalush Orchestra. The theoretical framework draws from social media, activism, nationalism and sound studies. From the analysis, four wider themes emerged. Firstly, the sound was utilized to express national identity by re-emphasizing and expanding on the patriotic themes present in the song. Secondly, the song was combined with diegetic (actual) sound to amplify the material’s affective impact and to foster affinity and resilience during challenging times, such as war. Thirdly, as the content spreads across the platform, controlling its use becomes challenging, which allowed Russian social media users to appropriate “Stefania” and contest Ukrainian narratives. Lastly, the sound functioned as a hack for visibility, with the aim of reaching broader imagined audiences. It is important to note that the sound on TikTok is not monolithic – there were uses of diegetic and non-diegetic sound and their layering, and these uses of sound served different functions.

Keywords: TikTok, sound, digital activism, Russo-Ukrainian War, identity building, affect

Introduction

This article examines the role of sound pertaining to war-related activism on TikTok. In my case study, I focus on the 2022 Eurovision Song Contest winner, “Stefania” by the Kalush Orchestra, which has emerged as a widely embraced war-time soundtrack (Post 2024). The current conflict in Ukraine began in 2014 when Russia annexed Crimea and supported pro-Russian separatists in the Donbas region. However, in February 2022, Russia launched a full-scale invasion (Walker 2023). By the end of 2023, millions of Ukrainians had been displaced (UN Refugee Agency 2024). Next to the physical battlefields, the war has been unfolding on social media platforms. TikTok has been at the forefront of war activism, with various actors creating and sharing material on the platform. The conflict has been referred to as the “first TikTok war” in news outlets (Chayka 2022). However, it has been noted that TikTok was also used, albeit on a smaller scale, in earlier conflicts, such as the Second Nagorno-Karabakh War (Tiffany 2022).

TikTok is a relatively new platform. It gained traction around 2020 during the COVID-19 pandemic. The platform differs in many aspects from other larger social media platforms. Firstly, TikTok prioritizes content engagement over

creator or friend interaction (Zulli, Zulli 2022). This emphasis is underscored by the platform’s “For You” page, which is driven by an algorithm that tailors content primarily according to user interactions (e.g. likes, saves) and viewing history. Secondly, the platform’s content is predominantly audio-visual, with sound playing a pivotal role in both content creation and consumption (Radovanović 2022). The platform has around 1.7 billion users as of 2023 (Press 2023), and its cultural impact is incontrovertible (Zulli, Zulli 2022; Sadler 2022). Overall, the platform brings “a new level of engagement with the notions of ‘participatory culture’” (Ramati, Abeliovich 2024: 5373).

As TikTok experienced significant growth during COVID-19, a considerable portion of research has centred on the platform’s content during the pandemic (Lundy 2023; Li et al. 2021; Unni, Weinstein 2021). Owing to the platform’s relative novelty, there is still a scarcity of studies exploring TikTok in the context of social movements and activism, though there are exceptions (e.g. see Hautea et al. 2021; Zhao, Abidin 2023). Cervi and Divon (2023) have particularly examined TikTok activism in a conflict setting, with a focus on how Palestinian users engaged in playful acts of resistance during the

2021 escalation of violence with the Israelis (on Sheikh Jarrah, see also Abbas et al. 2022). Studies focusing on sound on TikTok have started to emerge (Radovanović 2022; Vizcaíno-Verdú, Abidin 2022), including research on sound, TikTok and social movements. For example, Sadler has analysed protest music on TikTok and has highlighted how the use of sound can “create new avenues for expression” (2022: 8); however, users also perpetuate capitalist ideologies via gaming hashtags, thereby diluting the potential of protest music.

This paper builds upon existing research, but with a specific focus on the role of sound in conflict-related activism. The Russo-Ukrainian War provides a significant case study in this regard. Previous research has explored the portrayal of the Ukraine War on social media platforms (Badola 2023; Primig et al. 2023) and investigated the role of music in the conflict (Clark 2024). This article contextualizes these aspects within TikTok to explore how the affordance of sound shapes war activism on the platform.

For data collection, I conducted digital ethnography on TikTok in the autumn of 2023 to investigate the themes and content surrounding the Russo-Ukrainian War. The song “Stefania” by the Kalush Orchestra, the winner of the 2022 Eurovision Song Contest, emerged as a recurring audio motif. Consequently, my attention was directed towards posts incorporating “Stefania” as their soundtrack. My corpus consists of 102 audio-visual clips that were open-coded and analysed in depth using thematic analysis (Braun, Clarke 2006). Additionally, I interviewed two Ukrainians residing in Estonia to contextualize the material and the conflict.

This article begins by providing context to the Russo-Ukrainian War. It then presents the theoretical framework, which draws from social media, activism, nationalism and sound studies. The methodology section will be followed by an analysis focusing on four key themes related to the use of sound for activist purposes: “Stefania” was used to build national identity; combined

with diegetic sound to foster affinity and resilience; appropriated by pro-Russian TikTok users for contestation; and employed for visibility. The paper concludes by highlighting how the affordance of sound is shaping activism on the platform and calls for further research in this area.

Background: Russian Invasion of Ukraine

Before discussing the material of the war in Ukraine, a brief introduction to the conflict is necessary. The Russo-Ukrainian War is a complex conflict that started in 2014 with Russia’s annexation of Crimea. In 2013, Ukraine faced a political crisis when then-President Viktor Yanukovich rejected a trade deal with the European Union in favour of closer ties with Russia. This decision led to widespread protests in Kyiv, known as the Euromaidan movement, ultimately resulting in Yanukovich’s ousting in February 2014. In the aftermath, Russia seized control of Crimea, a region with a significant ethnic Russian population.¹ Following the annexation of Crimea, pro-Russian separatist movements emerged in eastern Ukrainian regions, particularly Donetsk and Luhansk. These separatists, supported by Russia, declared independence and sought to break away from Ukraine (Open Society Foundations 2019).

In February 2022, Russia launched a full-scale invasion of Ukraine. According to Masters (2023), Russia’s attack on Ukraine is motivated by geopolitical interests, with Russia historically viewing Ukraine as part of its sphere of influence. Regarding Ukrainians and Belarusians as “Little Russians” and “White Russians” rather than as distinct nations was an important element of Tsarist nationality policy in the nineteenth century (Kolstø 2023). Some Russians continue to view Ukraine as part of a “Greater Russia” (Wickström 2008). Domestic politics also plays a role, as the war served to bolster support for Vladimir Putin and his government by diverting attention from domestic issues (Ferraro 2024). Additionally, the quest for resources may have

¹ The demographic composition of Crimea has been subject to change. Prior to the 1944 deportation of the Crimean Tatars by Joseph Stalin, ethnic Russians did not constitute the majority on the peninsula (Hromenko 2019). In 2001, according to the Ukrainian census, ethnic Russians comprised 58% of Crimea’s population, Ukrainians made up 24%, and Crimean Tatars accounted for 12% (State Statistics Service of Ukraine 2014).

been a factor, given Ukraine's fertile land and energy reserves (European Parliament 2024; Masters 2023).

The war has led to a major humanitarian crisis. By the end of 2023, over six million Ukrainians had been displaced abroad (UN Refugee Agency 2024). 30,000–70,000 soldiers have been killed in the war (Richardson 2024; Armstrong 2024). The conflict has far-reaching geopolitical implications, straining Russia's relations with the West. In response to Russia's invasion, the United States and several European Union member states have provided military assistance to Ukraine, comprising weaponry, equipment, and training, alongside implementing economic sanctions against Russia.

Identity Building, Music and Ukraine

National identity has been examined through diverse theoretical frameworks. Primordialist theories posit that identity is intrinsically linked to land and bloodlines. In contrast, later theories, such as the concept of imagined communities, contend that national identity is constructed (Anderson 2006 [1983]). Brantly (2024) considers identity to be anchored in both spatial and social contexts, balancing its primordial and imagined foundations. The author highlights four aspects of identity, which are: "a shared understanding of history, language, religion, and othering" (Brantly 2024: 380). Music significantly contributes to identity formation, as it intersects with all these aspects. It is through music that people build communities. According to Bohlman, "our music" holds significant power as it is created within a group, serving as a means of communication among its members (2001: 20–21). Music, as a social phenomenon, "has the capacity to unite people and to create and/or strengthen social cohesion" (Darweish, Robertson in Clark 2024: 156). However, it is also via music that people differentiate themselves from other groups of people, thus signalling out-groups (Berger, Heath 2008). The link between identity and music

is further reinforced by war. Extreme events frequently shape national identity, with war being one of the most significant factors that can influence identity building (Brantly 2024: 386).

Ukraine and Russia have a complex historical relationship, with Ukraine experiencing periods of domination by Russia. This is reflected in Ukraine's music policies. In the 1920s and early 1930s, Soviet officials, as part of the early Soviet policy of Ukrainization,² promoted Ukrainian-language music. However, this ended with Stalin's purges in the 1930s and was replaced by a policy of Russification. During the Soviet period, Russian remained the dominant language, and individuals who sang exclusively in Ukrainian were labelled "bourgeois nationalists" by the Communist Party (Wickström 2008: 63). Following the collapse of the Soviet Union and Ukraine's independence in 1991, there was a revival of Ukrainian-language music, blending traditional elements with electronic beats influenced by Western music (Splaver et al. 2022). After 2014, and specifically after February 24, 2022, Ukrainian music gained mainstream popularity, especially music using ethnic and neo-ethnic instruments (Vashchenko et al. 2022). An increasing number of artists began singing in Ukrainian, using this as a means to "emphasize a cultural difference and national identity distinct from Russia" (Wickström 2008: 63).

"Stefania" by Kalush is a vivid example of the revival of Ukrainian music. The Ukrainian language song blends folk motifs and traditional instrumental music from the Carpathian Mountains with hip hop. The song, written by the band's frontman Oleh Psiuk before the war, is dedicated to his mother: "Stefania mom, mom Stefania / The field is blooming and she's turning gray / Sing me a lullaby, mom / I still want to hear your native language".³ When the war began, the song took on new significance, becoming associated with the ongoing conflict. While the lyrics originally referred to motherhood, they came to symbolize the broader theme of the motherland. Kalush's performance at Eurovision

² Ukrainization occurred within the broader context of the indigenization policy (*korenizatsiia* in Russian), which aimed at integrating non-Russians into the party and state apparatus, promoting the use of local languages, and supporting cultural and social development among various nationalities (Subtelyny 2009).

³ In Ukrainian: "Stefaniia mamo, mamo Stefaniia / Rozkviataie pole, a vona syviie / Zaspivai meni mamo kolyskovu / Khochu shche pochuty tvoie ridne slovo".

included a vast amount of different Ukrainian (folk) themes and symbols – the orchestra members blend traditional embroidery in their costumes as part of their performance aesthetic. The distinctive pink hat, worn by the frontman, referred to as panamka, has become a prevalent item in war-themed merchandise in Ukraine (Helbig 2023). The song itself has emerged as a widely embraced wartime soundtrack (Post 2024).

Sound’s Roles in War: Music for Resilience

The utilization of music in conflicts, of course, predates the current war in Ukraine. Throughout the 20th century, music has been employed in various ways, though it has not always served to empower. Music has been used as a tool for psychological torture, as seen during the Vietnam War, in which the US troops used loud music in attempts to disorient enemy combatants (Heys 2011: 142). Another notable example of music being employed for violence, in conjunction with physical violence, occurred in Nazi camps during World War II (Brauer 2016; Karloff 2020). Conversely, however, some prisoners in the camps voluntarily composed and performed music as a means of coping with their circumstances (Clark 2024). Guido Fackler (2010) suggests that musicking in camps fostered “a feeling of community and solidarity”, enabled inmates to preserve their cultural identity, and provided a chance to preserve their dignity (cited in Clark 2024: 155).

An important dimension of music is its affective force (Clark 2024; Brauer 2016). Music can be a means through which new emotions are produced and can, moreover, serve as a vital resource for processing one’s pre-existing emotions (Brauer 2016: 7). Music can foster a “deep sense of pleasure and satisfaction” (Clark 2024: 153). Through the medium of music, emotions can be shared, giving rise to interconnected streams of affect (Suttie 2016). Scholars, particularly in the field of psychology and neuroscience, have explored various ways in which music can support resilience. Resilience can be defined as “the process of effectively negotiating, adapting to, or managing significant sources of stress or trauma” (Windl 2011: 152). Music can create a shared emotional experience

among group members, and this emotional connection can foster a sense of solidarity, helping to cope with stress (Suttie 2016). Much of the research on music and resilience has focused on the role of positive emotions; however, shared negative emotions (e.g. sadness, anger) can also contribute to resilience by fostering solidarity and prosocial behaviour within communities (Garcia, Rimé 2019).

Today, imagined communities are formed largely on the internet. Similarly, a lot of activism takes place online. Social media users can be “present within the social network” without being connected through user accounts or having direct conversations (Zappavigna 2015: 274), with this being even more the case with TikTok, which encourages users to engage with the content, not creators or friends. These ambient activist publics emerge around content that invites “affective attunement”, supports “affective investment”, and propagates “affectively charged expression” (Papacharissi 2016: 308).

TikTok’s Affordances

TikTok was introduced in 2017 by the Chinese firm ByteDance, emerging from the fusion of two platforms: the lip-singing app Musical.ly and the video platform Douyin. The COVID-19 pandemic fuelled the already rapid growth of the app. As of 2023 TikTok had around 1.7 billion users, with the app being available in over 40 languages (Press 2023).

Different platforms offer distinct uses, so it is essential to analyse their specific affordances when studying them. Kreiss et al. (2017) have defined affordances as “what platforms are actually capable of doing and perceptions of what they enable, along with the actual practices that emerge as people interact with platforms” (2017: 12), highlighting the importance of both the technical capabilities of platforms and the ways in which users perceive and utilize these capabilities in practice. TikTok varies in several aspects from other large social media platforms such as Facebook or Instagram. Guinaudeau et al. (2022) delineate particular affordances specific to TikTok. First is its algorithmic recommendation. TikTok’s “For You” page is curated using an algorithm that tailors content to each user’s preferences based on their interactions (likes etc.)

and viewing history. Interpersonal connections are de-emphasized on the platform, directing users to engage more with the content rather than with creators or friends (Zulli, Zulli 2022). Secondly, TikTok is a televisual medium, meaning that it is characterized by a video feed (Guinaudeau et al. 2022). TikTok affords built-in video editing tools and a variety of effects to assist with video creation (Zulli, Zulli 2022).

The majority of TikTok videos feature a soundtrack. Numerous studies have underscored the pivotal role of sound on TikTok (Radovanović 2022; Sadler 2022; Zhao, Abidin 2023). Sound is highlighted on the platform's "For You" page with a rotating icon located at the bottom right corner of the screen. Clicking on the icon directs users to a page containing all the videos created with that sound. On that page the user can also find the "Use sound" button that affords detaching the soundtrack from its original video and pairing it with new material. This kind of remixing of sound with different content has introduced "a new level of engagement" with participatory culture (Ramati, Abeliovich 2024: 5373). Sound, moreover, plays a role in how material scales up. When a particular sound gains traction on the platform, the algorithm is more likely to recommend videos using that sound (Lang 2024). Users, in the hope of boosting the visibility of their content, use trending sounds for their clips (Zulli, Zulli 2022).

Methodology

I conducted digital ethnography on TikTok during October and November of 2023. I checked into TikTok two times a week to get a better understanding on the themes covered, and more specifically music used as a soundtrack for the material. As my focus was on the Russo-Ukrainian War, I followed related hashtags, such as #ukrainewar, #ukrainevsrussia, #війнаукраїні (*viynavukraini*; "war in Ukraine"), #путинхуйло (*putinkhuylo*; "putin is a dick"), #война (*voyna*; "war") (in English, Ukrainian and Russian). My goal was to identify soundtracks used in war-related videos. Different songs emerged, such as "Dobroho vechora" ("Good Evening") by the ProBass and Hardi, "Shum" ("Noise") by the Go_A, and "Stefania" by the Kalush Orchestra. Since the first two songs had been largely used also before the full-scale war in Ukraine, I decided to focus

on "Stefania" by Kalush, as it is a well-known war-related song. I then opened the view with all other clips using "Stefania" as their soundtrack by clicking the sound icon at the bottom right of the screen. This revealed 261,4K posts. I reviewed the first 300 with the aim of obtaining a purposive sample. As my focus is on war-related activism, the criteria for inclusion (alongside using "Stefania" as a sound) was explicit references to war, such as mentions of war in captions both textually and in emojis (e.g. using both country's flags) and/or hashtags (e.g., #ukrainewar; #війнаукраїні (*viynavukraini*; "war in Ukraine"), #война2022 (*voyna2022*; "war2022") etc.). Thus, clips that focused solely on Kalush's performance at Eurovision were excluded.

This left me with 102 audio-visual clips. I downloaded these 102 clips from TikTok to my computer for analysis. Approximately 80% of creators had allowed their videos to be downloaded. For the remaining videos, the analysis was conducted on the platform – all videos were also bookmarked under my account. Downloading the video clips facilitated conducting thematic analysis in a structured manner. However, I set myself the task of studying the clips in parallel directly on the platform to gain a deeper insight into their dynamics within their environment. As for the method of analysis, the clips were open-coded and analysed using thematic analysis (Braun, Clarke 2006), specifically focusing on identifying themes in the content and examining the role of sound in relation to these themes. I followed an iterative method in phases – familiarizing myself with the data, generating codes, searching for themes, reviewing them, defining them. In today's social media environment, emojis and hashtags, along with text, visuals and sound, contribute to conveying meaning (Tiidenberg 2015). Thus, these elements were taken into account in the process of analysis. Additionally, I conducted two semi-structured interviews with Ukrainians residing in Estonia, who helped me to contextualize the material. They also assisted me with translating the posts in Ukrainian – the clips under analysis were in Ukrainian, English, and Russian (the latter two languages I speak myself). The interviews were conducted on Zoom.

When it comes to studying war-related material, ethics is of the utmost importance, as

the creators can include vulnerable groups of people in the conflict zone or people who had to flee and are vulnerable due to their status in a host country. No interviews with content creators were carried out. The two contextual interviews were not recorded, researcher notes were de-identified and password protected. The content under analysis received a minimum of 30,000 to 50,000 likes, with most clips garnering over 100,000, reaching up to a million. This suggests the material already had significant visibility. However, due to the contentious nature of the topic of war, no material from TikTok has been replicated. The clips downloaded for the analysis to my computer were deleted post-analysis.

Concerning my positionality, I am not Ukrainian and do not speak the language. To mitigate this, the previously mentioned contextual interviews with Ukrainians living in Estonia were conducted. However, my Estonian background provides a certain geographical proximity and insight into the historical context, as Estonia shares the history of Soviet occupation with Ukraine. While this background knowledge can be advantageous, shared history also introduces the potential for bias, which is a consideration that I am keenly aware of.

Findings

This article explores the role of sound in war-related activism on TikTok. A thematic analysis of TikTok clips featuring “Stefania” by the Kalush Orchestra uncovered four broad themes regarding how the sound was utilized for activism. The themes partially overlapped; for example, national symbols appeared in multiple themes, but the first theme featured the highest concentration. First, the sound was utilized for national identity building via expanding on the patriotic themes present in the song. Secondly, the song was used in combination with diegetic (actual) sound to amplify the material’s affective impact and to foster affinity during challenging times like war. Thirdly, “Stefania” was used to counter initial Ukrainian narratives, as it was appropriated by Russian social media users. Lastly, the sound functioned as a hack for visibility, aimed at reaching broader “imagined audiences” (Litt 2012).

“Stefania” for national identity building: “playful patriotism”

Nationality is expressed by showcasing cultural traits (such as foods, habits, and traditions) or by displaying political symbols (such as flags and emblems) (Cervi, Marín-Lladó 2022). In the TikTok content analysed, Ukrainian identity, too, is conveyed through both. Cultural aspects are highlighted through traditional customs and clothing, while political symbols, including the national flag and emblems, are also prominently featured. The material is characterized by a patriotic tone, which is common in wartime contexts (Keller 2015), on TikTok, however, patriotism adopts a more playful tone.

A good example of patriotic content is a video featuring a young man decorating his face with various Ukrainian symbols. The clip begins with him applying the symbols – the trident from the coat of arms on his forehead, the Ukrainian flag on his cheek, followed by a sunflower and blue-yellow butterfly, until his entire face is adorned with symbols. These symbols carry different connotations. Both the coat of arms and the flag convey a more formal (political) symbolism. The sunflower, adopted during the war as a symbol of resistance, alludes also to nature and is a frequent motif in Ukrainian traditional folk art (Saienko 2023). In another clip following the format of a makeup tutorial, we see a woman applying makeup in the colours of the Ukrainian flag. She demonstrates the process step-by-step: first painting her upper lip blue, then her lower lip yellow. Her look is fully coordinated: a flag-coloured t-shirt, blue nails, and a Ukraine-shaped pendant. These two clips are united by their extensive use of symbols, albeit in different forms, to express national identity. Symbols play a crucial role in constructing national belonging, providing tangible means for individuals and groups to communicate their sense of belonging to both in-groups and out-groups.

According to Cervi and Marín-Lladó, TikTok affords a novel type of activism by encouraging “the users to tackle ‘hard’ topics more playfully, somehow ‘softening’ them, through the use of more playful communicative style” (2022: 428). According to Chen et al., playfulness implies “a light-hearted tone and something that is intended for amusement rather than to be taken seriously” (2021: 111). A similarly playful tone is

apparent in the analysed clips featuring patriotic content, such as the makeup tutorial described earlier or, for example, posts showcasing patriotic cats. We see a cat wearing a cape in the colours of the Ukrainian flag, with the coat of arms displayed prominently in the background and sunflowers scattered around the cat on the floor. In another video of that kind we see a cat wearing a small pink panamka, a hat similar to the one worn by a member of Kalush at Eurovision. Thus, not only do we observe a frequent use of national symbols, but unlike traditional patriotic content, which is typically serious, patriotism here is conveyed in a light-hearted or even cute manner, in a way that suits TikTok's unique culture, resulting in "playful patriotism" (Chen et al. 2021).

The analysed clips also prominently feature an enemy figure, often depicted through the image of Vladimir Putin. For example, there is a video montage of Putin where he appears to be conveying how bad life is in Russia (the video is made in a very low-key manner). However, sometimes the enemy figure is the whole of Russia. In another clip, we observe the blending of the Ukrainian flag's colours, blue and yellow, resulting in the formation of the colour green. A narrator explains that green represents the fields where flowers grow. When the colours of the Russian flag are combined, they produce the colour brown. The narrator states in a resolute tone that it is the colour of "shit" ("govno" in Russian). "Othering" has been highlighted as particularly crucial in identity building as it provides a framework for self-definition (Brantly 2024). In these cases, identity is expressed through the portrayal of an "enemy", specifically by mocking the enemy's flag and way of life.

To sum up, in this case, sound paired with symbols plays a pivotal role in national identity building. There are many different symbols, including national ones like the coat of arms, the flag and the sunflower, as well as newer ones, such as the panamka worn by Kalush's frontman, symbolizing Ukraine's victory at Eurovision during a time of war. The communicative style of this patriotic content is playful and light-hearted, even cute (Cervi, Marín-Lladó 2022) – we see cats wearing little hats and superhero capes, exemplifying what Chen et al. (2021) refer to as "playful patriotism". The main role of the sound

is to reinforce and amplify the patriotic themes present in the song.

"Stefania" for affinity and resilience building

Another significant theme that emerged from the analysis revolves around videos depicting life during wartime. These clips often portray destruction caused by conflict, yet they also highlight resilience. The content can be categorized into videos depicting the lives of civilians and soldiers in the war zone. Many civilian videos are filmed in bomb shelters, although there are also scenes of people returning to their homes. As an example of the first, there is a clip showing children in a bomb shelter with "Stefania" playing in the background. We can observe one of the children break-dancing to the music. As the song progresses, a couple of other children join in dancing, then, led by a teacher, start singing along. The music blends with the singing of children, as the song is playing in the shelter itself and has not been added later on TikTok.

This highlights the need to differentiate between diegetic and non-diegetic sound. Diegetic sound reflects real life, such as dialogue or footsteps (also known as actual sound). Non-diegetic sound, like a soundtrack, is added in post-production (Woltmann 2022). The analysis of the material illustrates the use of various sounds. The majority of clips use non-diegetic sound (around 70%), meaning the only sound used is "Stefania" added on TikTok. However, there are also videos that combine different types of sound. This can, for example, involve combining diegetic and non-diegetic sound (e.g., a person filmed talking with "Stefania" added to it on TikTok). It can also include layers of only diegetic sound, as in the aforementioned case of children singing to "Stefania", which is playing in the actual space. The clips depicting life during the war often feature diegetic sound, as many were filmed in real locations, such as shelters or on the front lines.

A good example of sound layering is a clip featuring a soldier singing "Stefania" amidst the sounds of bombing, with the song also added to the video on TikTok, playing in the background. The text overlaid on the clip emphasizes both the sound and the bombing: "A soldier (Ukrainian

flag emoji) inside the Mariupol steelworks sings Stefania. Under the bombs of (Russian flag emoji). Sound on (loudspeaker emoji)”. According to Clark, musicking can challenge “the acoustic shocks and stressors of war” (2024: 158). In both of the previous examples, diegetic sound is used, albeit in slightly different ways. In the first clip, it is probably aimed at fostering a more positive atmosphere for children, as the music can serve to mask the sounds of war. In the second instance, with the soldier singing, there is a performative element involved, as the soldier is expressing his patriotic sentiments and his readiness to defend his country. Additionally, the role of diegetic sound is to emphasize the reality of the situation, demonstrating that this – the bombing – is really happening, maximizing its emotive impact.

In addition to audio references to bombs, there are also several clips showing distant explosions visually, including the damage that the bombs have created – we are shown burnt and destroyed houses. However, alongside these, there are video clips showing people returning to their wrecked homes, foregrounding the theme of resilience. In these clips, people clean and repair their homes, for example, sweeping the floor with a broom, mopping surfaces, and covering cracks in window glass with duct tape. Many of the videos conclude on a more “optimistic” note, with a clean home or a fridge filled to the brim with food.

This theme includes content that portrays life during wartime, often incorporating diegetic (actual) sound. The diegetic sound is employed to underscore the severity of the situation and amplify affect, which is conveyed through combining “Stefania” with the sound of bombing. However, the diegetic sound is also used to create a more positive atmosphere and likely to mask the acoustic stressors of war, building affinity and resilience.

“Stefania” for disruption: challenging narration by Russians

TikTok allows for creative use of sound, giving users considerable freedom in how they work with audio. However, as Sadler points out, “this free reign also affords the potential loss of agency” since the sound can be reappropriated in an uncontrollable manner (2022: 8). In the corpus,

Russian content creators appropriate the song for their own purposes, challenging the initial Ukrainian material (three times in the corpus).

The first example of sound being used for disruption shows a young woman walking on the street in a selfie-like close-up shot. The text in Russian overlaid on the clip reads: “(yelling head emoji) What are you going to do now in your Russia?” This is followed by scenes of the same young woman casually enjoying herself in various restaurants, eating different dishes, including dessert. The second clip follows a similar idea but differs in execution. It begins with a bird’s-eye view of Red Square, with text at the bottom of the image saying (in Russian originally): “The whole world: to be Russian is shameful! We are ashamed of you.” Subsequently, we are shown highly aestheticized shots of Russia, showcasing its nature, cities, and monuments. The text at the bottom states: “Shame? No! No! Not ashamed. I’m proud to be Russian!” (with Russian flag emoji). Hashtags reinforce the idea of pride #ягоржусь (*yagorzhus*; meaning “I am proud” in English), followed by Russian flag emoji and #горжусьсвоейродиной (*gorzhussvoyeyerodinoi*; “proud of my country”) #мненестыдно (*mnene-styдно*; “I am not ashamed”). Interestingly, neither clip disputes the ongoing war, or Russia’s role as the perpetrator, or the fact that people are dying. What is being challenged is that Russia should be ashamed, and that such shame should be individualized.

It can not be said with certainty who the “imagined audiences” (Litt 2012) of these videos are, as I have no data on this. No interviews with content creators were made. However, the fact that these social media users employed a Ukrainian song suggests they sought at least some visibility within Ukrainian TikTok streams (while Russians were targeted via Russian hashtags such as #россия (*rossiya*; “Russia”). The use of a Ukrainian war song for pro-Russian content can be interpreted as a form of trolling. Trolling refers to the act of deliberately provoking, upsetting, or causing disruption in online communities and social media platforms. Trolls often seek to elicit strong emotional reactions from others (eSafety Commissioner 2024).

While I am not studying comment sections in this article, an exception was made for pro-Russian content, as contextualizing posts is

difficult without analysing comments. Most of the comments are largely in agreement with the initial posts. The largest number of comments can be found under the clip with Russian monuments, landscapes and sites – there are 3506 comments. Most of the comments support the initial idea of “pride” via repetition “proud to be Russian” (in Russian: *gorzhus, chto ya russkiy*), “proud of Russia” (*gorzhus Rossiyey*), “the best country” (*samaya luchshaya strana*), often followed by heart, thumbs up or Russian flag emojis. The language in the comment section is mainly Russian. It’s difficult to know whether the commenters are Russians or Ukrainians based on their use of language, as some of the Ukrainian population also speaks Russian.⁴ However, it is clear that the commenters are decidedly pro-Russian. While “Stefania” is likely used to troll Ukrainians, the tone of the language and the choice of emojis in the captions also suggest an aim to build affinity with other pro-Russian social media users, achieved in part by provoking Ukrainians.

“Stefania” for visibility

While hashtags on TikTok serve a scaling function similar to other major platforms, Lang (2024) notes that, in addition to hashtags, sound plays a crucial role in how content gains traction on TikTok. When a particular sound becomes popular, the algorithm is more likely to recommend videos using that sound. To enhance content visibility, users employ popular sounds in their clips (Zulli, Zulli 2022).

Thus, in addition to what the song symbolizes, its widespread use can be attributed to its status as a trending soundtrack at the time. In the corpus, there are six video clips in which “Stefania” has been used but in which the song can be barely heard or not at all. This means that “Stefania” is highlighted on the rotating icon at the bottom of the screen and the clip featured on the page dedicated to videos using the song (which is why it is included in the corpus). However, “Stefania” itself is either muted or barely audible; instead, viewers are presented diegetic (actual) sounds from the environment or, in some instances,

additional non-diegetic audio elements such as a voice-over. As such, it functions as a visibility hack, helping to reach broader audiences, without actually being present as a background sound.

When it comes to text, the clips analysed typically include minimal captions, often consisting of just a single brief sentence or relying solely on emojis. This may be attributable to the video format’s capacity for storytelling through dynamic visuals and overlaid text, which reduces the need for lengthy captions. Today, content creators increasingly adhere to what they perceive as acceptable on social media, keeping their captions on TikTok “short and snappy” (Denote 2023) to maintain the entertainment value of their content (Cervi, Divon 2023). The text on the clips – both in captions and in an overlaid format – include very few calls to action, which is a departure from the typical content related to war on social media platforms like Twitter and Instagram (Davidjants 2024). This implies an expectation that the content will scale up through other methods than explicit calls.

In addition to sound, hashtags were also utilized to increase the material’s reach. This is well exemplified in the aforementioned pro-Russian content: while pro-Russian social media users were targeted through hashtags (e.g., *#россия* (*rossiya*; “Russia”)), Ukrainians were presumed to be reached through the use of sound (via “Stefania”). It is common to have multiple imagined audiences for a single post. TikTok affords targeting these varied imagined audiences via a soundtrack and hashtags. This allows for finer targeting strategies, making it possible for the creators to build in-group affinity via targeting (and possibly looping in) the other side of the conflict.

Conclusion

This article examined the role of sound in Ukrainian war-related activism on TikTok, focusing on clips featuring the Ukrainian song “Stefania” by the Kalush Orchestra. 102 clips were thematically analysed. Four broader themes emerged from the analysis.

⁴ According to the 2001 census, approximately 30% of the population spoke Russian as their first language, predominantly in the Eastern region (State Statistics Service of Ukraine 2014).

Firstly, “Stefania” was utilized for national identity building. The sound was used to re-emphasize and expand on the patriotic themes present in the song, expressing national identity through symbols such as the trident from the coat of arms, the Ukrainian flag, the sunflower and the panamka. Identity was also built via the image of the enemy, often personified by Vladimir Putin and sometimes represented by all of Russia. “Hard” topics were conveyed more playfully, in a “softened” form (Cervi, Marín-Lladó 2022), resulting in “playful patriotism” (Chen et al. 2021). Secondly, in content depicting life during the war, diegetic sound was employed for maximizing the material’s affective impact, for instance, via combining “Stefania” with singing and the sound of bombing. However, diegetic sound was also used to create a more positive atmosphere and likely to mask the acoustic stressors of war, building resilience. Thirdly, as the content spreads across platform, controlling its use becomes challenging (Sadler 2022). “Stefania” was appropriated by Russian social media users for their content that challenged the idea that Russians should feel ashamed due to the war. The use of “Stefania” in pro-Russian content can be seen as an effort to build affinity with pro-Russian audiences by provoking Ukrainians. Fourthly, the sound was employed by Ukrainian social media users in a muted or barely audible form, which served as a hack for visibility. Thus, as this analysis has shown, sound on TikTok is not monolithic. There are uses of both diegetic and non-diegetic sound and their combination, and these serve different functions.

The affordance of sound shapes activism on the platform by amplifying affect. However, the activism on TikTok has a certain playful tone (Cervi, Marín-Lladó 2022; Chen et al. 2021). TikTok fosters a sense of community by allowing users to collaborate, reinforcing “imagined communities” online (Anderson 2006 [1983]). “Stefania” serves

as a focal point for these collaborations, as the song is “ours” (Bohlman 2001). The “feeling of community and solidarity” (Fackler 2010 cited in Clark 2024) contributes to both identity and affinity building. However, as TikTok makes it easy to appropriate sound, the in-group affinity building can be easily disrupted by the other side of the conflict.

Limitations

This article is based on the qualitative analysis of 102 clips, which, though a relatively small corpus, allowed for an in-depth examination – serving as both a limitation and an advantage. Future studies could expand to include a larger corpus or select multiple background songs for comparison. Such studies could benefit from mixed methods, incorporating both quantitative and qualitative approaches to accommodate a larger corpus while maintaining the depth of analysis characteristic of qualitative studies.

Furthermore, the focus of this study was on the audio-visual material itself, without examining other sites of meaning-making such as production, audiencing, or circulation (see Rose 2016). Comments were not analysed, except for those under pro-Russian content; however, this included only comments under a small number of posts. Future studies could explore these additional sites of meaning-making via conducting interviews with content creators to see how they conceptualize their activities (site of production) and analysing comments on audio-visual clips to study user engagement (site of audiencing).

Lastly, as the analysis of the material showed, both diegetic and non-diegetic sound is used on the platform, sometimes in combination. Future studies could explore the layering of sounds in greater detail to better understand their distinct roles in online activism.

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„Stefania” identiteediloomes, vastupanus ja trollimisel: Heli roll TikToki sõjaaktivismis

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Jaana Davidjants

Artiklis uuritakse heli rolli sõjaga seotud aktivismis platvormil TikTok. Juhtumiuuringuks on valitud 2022. aasta Eurovisiooni lauluvõistluse võitja Kalush Orchestra laul „Stefania”, mis on kujunenud ukrainlaste poolel Venemaa-Ukraina sõja aegseks *soundtrack*’iks (Post 2024). Tänapäeval rulluvad sõjad lahti lisaks füüsilistele lahinguväljadele ka sotsiaalmeedia platvormidel. TikTok on viimastel aastatel olnud sõjaaktivismi esirinnas. Kuna tegu on suhteliselt uue platvormiga, on endiselt vähe uuringuid, milles vaadeldakse TikToki rolli sõjaga seotud liikumistes ja aktivismis, kuid on ka erandeid (vt. nt. Hautea jt. 2021; Zhao, Abidin 2023; Cervi, Divon 2023; Primig jt. 2023). See artikkel tugineb olemasolevatele uuringutele, keskendudes heli rollile TikToki konfliktiga seotud aktivismi puhul.

Artikli teoreetilise raamistiku moodustavad sotsiaalmeedia, aktivismi, rahvuslikkuse ja heli uuringud. 102 klipi temaatilise analüüsi põhjal (Braun, Clarke 2006), milles kasutatakse „Stefania” lugu, ilmnes neli laiemat teemat. **Esiteks** kasutati „Stefaniat” rahvuslikuks identiteediloomeks, täpsemalt, rõhutati ja laiendati laulus sisalduvaid patriootilisi teemasid, väljendades rahvuslikku identiteeti sümbolite kaudu, nagu näiteks Ukraina lipp, päevalill ja panamka-müts. Identiteeti kujundati ka vaenlase pildi kaudu, keda sageli kehastas Vladimir Putin, aga mõnikord ka Venemaa. Raskeid teemasid edastati mängulisemalt, pehmemdatud vormis (Cervi, Marín-Lladó 2022). Näeme klippides kasse väikeste panamkade ja superkangelase keepidega – viisil, mis sobib TikToki ainulaadse kultuuriga, mille tulemuseks on „mänguline patriotism” (Chen jt. 2021). **Teiseks**, sõjaaegset elu kujutavas sisus (nii sõdurite kui ka tsiviilisikute hulgas) kasutati tihti mittediegeetilise heli kõrval (lihtsalt *soundtrack*) ka diegeetilist heli (tegelik heli, näiteks kellegi kõne või sammud). Seeläbi maksimeeriti materjali emotsionaalset mõju, nimelt kombineerides „Stefania” *soundtrack*’i päris pommitamise helidega. Samuti kasutati laulu positiivsema õhkkonna loomiseks ja tõenäoliselt sõja akustiliste stressitegurite varjamiseks, näiteks lastes lastel sõjavarjendis „Stefaniale” kaasa laulda, aidates tugevdada toimetulekuvõimet. **Kolmandaks**, kui sisu platvormil levib, muutub ka selle kasutamise kontrollimine keeruliseks (Sadler 2022). „Stefania” „omastasid” Vene sotsiaalmeedia kasutajad, kes seadsid oma sisus küsimuse alla Ukraina narratiivid ning vastandusid ideele, et venelased peaksid sõja pärast häbi tundma. „Stefania” kasutamist venemeelse sisu jaoks võib näha katsena luua seotust laiemaga vene publikuga, tehes seda osaliselt ukrainlaste provotseerimise kaudu. **Neljandaks** rakendasid ukrainlastest sotsiaalmeedia kasutajad heli summutatud või vaevu kuulda kujul. Nii toimis „Stefania” nähtavuse „häkina” – laulu kasutus aitas jõuda oma sõnumiga laiemaga publikuni, olgugi et taustahelina polnud seda peaaegu kuulda.

Nagu analüüs näitas, ei ole heli TikToki monoliitne. Sõjaaktivismis kasutatakse nii diegeetilist kui ka mittediegeetilist heli ja nende kombinatsioone, millel on erinevad funktsioonid. Tulevased uuringud võiksid vaadelda helide kihistumist üksikasjalikumalt, et paremini mõista nende erinevaid rolle veebipõhises aktivismis.

Authenticity and the Subcultural Network of the Estonian Pagan Metal Scene

Polina Holitsyna

Abstract

The article demonstrates how authenticity is constructed, negotiated and “reproduced” (Larsson 2013) within the subcultural space of the Estonian pagan metal subculture. The author discusses the vision of subcultural authenticity from both emic and etic perspectives and bases her analysis on fieldwork conducted between November 2021 and April 2023.

The article examines the given community using “Estonian pagan metal subculture” as a methodological construct for the research analysis. Specifically, the author’s attention is aimed at the first-order zone of the subcultural network (Williams 2011) – musicians and people who possess the most subcultural knowledge and experience.

The fieldwork was done in Tartu, Tallinn, Vana-Vigala (Hard Rock Laager 2022, 2023) and online. The author’s fieldwork methods included in-person and online interviews, online questionnaires, participant observation and netnography. The fieldwork data was analysed using inductive thematic analysis.

The main findings revealed the density and encapsulation of the first-order zone network, which results in a quite homogenous understanding of subcultural authenticity within the network. The author claims that the etic characteristics of subcultural authenticity in this case can be described as devotion, presence and knowledge.

Keywords: subculture, authenticity, pagan metal, information transmission

Introduction

Pagan metal is a subgenre of extreme metal music that musically derives from black metal and may or may not collide with some elements of folk metal (like the incorporation of folk instruments or traditional singing elements in music). Lyrically, its main interest lies in the – often poeticised – representation of pre-Christian historical times, frequently with an emphasis on praising pre-Christian religions or gods; diverse historical events mostly related to national history; nature and native landscapes.

The research participants I united under the umbrella of the “pagan metal subculture” share a common thematic orientation in their bands: drawing inspiration from the history and the natural landscapes of their homeland. The musicians in the subculture infuse their creations with historical narratives and cultural traditions, shaping a subcultural identity deeply rooted in Estonia’s rich heritage and history. Despite the global reach of metal fandom, the Estonian metal communities, particularly the pagan metal scene, remain relatively unexplored in academic research. This article stands as a pioneering attempt to comprehensively explore the

network of the Estonian pagan metal subculture and its members’ perception of subcultural authenticity. The article examines how the subcultural authenticity of Estonian pagan metal is perceived, negotiated and reproduced by the members of the subculture from both individual and collective perspectives. I first investigate the subcultural network and present my understanding of it in the form of three zones: first-order zone (the musicians and most active subculturists in the scene), second-order zone (many of the fans) and liminal zone (non-permanent subcultural participators).

According to J. Patrick Williams (2011: 39), “subcultures refer to culturally bounded, but not closed, networks of people who come to share the meaning of specific ideas, material objects, and practices through interaction”. In the dimension of the Estonian pagan metal subculture lies a diversity of social units interwoven into a subcultural network. To explore and explain this network, I used the concept of subcultural network developed by J. Patrick Williams (2011) and Dorothy Noyes’ (1995) concept of network, which allowed me to develop the above-mentioned division. The first-order zone involves the

subculturists who possess the most subcultural capital, meaning the musicians, label owners, merch designers, i.e. subculturists who are actively involved in subcultural processes in their everydayness. The second-order zone, in turn, is a far larger network that mainly includes fans. Then, there are also liminal members, who do not perform any subcultural roles on a regular basis but, for example, occasionally attend metal music events. The article focuses on the first-order zone, which is why I chose musicians as my research participants.

Between the zones, the transmission of subcultural information takes place, shaping the subcultural identity and subcultural sense of authenticity. In order to investigate how subcultural authenticity is generated, perceived and reproduced, I used the “reproducing authenticity” concept designed by Susanna Larsson (2013). The manner of the interplay between creating and reproducing subcultural authenticity and the transmission of subcultural knowledge is based on the level of subcultural capital a subculturist possesses (knowledge, practices and symbols that individuals accumulate within a particular subculture – see Thornton 1995). The choice to focus on the musicians in this research is based on the wish to obtain the perspective of those who are actively and immediately involved in creating and shaping the subculture, rather than merely observing it from the outside. Band members, in particular, play a crucial role in the subculture as they are the ones who create the music and lyrics that embody the subcultural values and ideas.

To explore these topics, I conducted fieldwork between November 2021 and April 2023. Through the course of my fieldwork in Estonia, I have become a part of the community of my research interest and obtained a somewhat insider position that became valuable in my interpreting the community as I could understand the details: symbolism, meanings, merchandise, memes, jokes, etc. All these subcultural details are not used solely in performative contexts, but they construct the subculturists’ “everydayness” (see del Negro and Berger 2004). The analysis of fieldwork rests upon the foundations of thematic

analysis, which identified and analysed themes and patterns within the collected data.

The terminology of the article involves such terms as subculture, scene, community, cluster and network. The terms “subculture” and “scene” are used interchangeably. Scene, however, refers to a more closed, localised version of the broader subculture (e.g. “Tartu scene”, “Tallinn scene” etc.). As for the “community”, this refers to a group of people who share common interests, values, goals or identity and interact with one another within a particular social context. Not every community is a scene or a subculture but every scene and subculture are communities. “Cluster”, in turn, is a smaller group of people who share particularly strong bonds or connections within a larger scene. Finally, “network” emphasises the interconnectedness of relationships, interactions and affiliations among individuals within a particular subculture.

I will present the above-mentioned thematic threads starting from an explanation of what pagan metal is and presenting the Estonian pagan metal subculture. After that, I will discuss the methods of data collection in terms of my fieldwork and, finally, will delve into the subcultural network of the pagan metal scene in Estonia and explore subcultural authenticity formation and reproduction.

The article is largely based on the findings from my master’s thesis, defended at the University of Tartu in June 2023.¹

Pagan Metal as a Subgenre of Extreme Metal

The history of metal music is long and varied, dating back to the late 1960s and early-mid 1970s, when the first heavy metal bands started emerging from blues rock, psychedelic rock and hard rock genres. Extreme metal, in turn, grew out of late heavy metal bands, who had been progressing in the direction of heavier sounds, motives and meanings. Extreme metal is an umbrella term for the group of metal subgenres that can be characterised as harsh and aggressive, most usually technical, fast and hugely transgressive in terms of violating the social order morality and sense of aesthetics

¹ *Estonian Pagan Metal Subculture: Community and Authenticity* (see Holitsyna 2023), online: <https://hdl.handle.net/10062/91206> (last access 21.06.2024).

(Kahn-Harris 2007). The subgenres united under the term include black metal, death metal, thrash metal and sometimes doom metal.

Pagan metal, consequently, appeared as one of the subgenres of black metal. While musically it lies within the black metal soundscape and can often be identified as such (since metal genres can be perceived as a continuum of transitions between them rather than as clearly distinct systems of sounds), it might incorporate some elements of folk metal such as folk or orchestral musical instruments or traditional folk singing (as the leading vocals are typically extreme, i.e. growl). Lyrically, pagan metal refers to representations – often poeticised – of pre-Christian historical times, commonly with an emphasis on praising pre-Christian religions or gods as opposed to imposed alien religions (especially Christianity). Not infrequently, pagan metal bands delve into the exploration of the historical past of their countries, which is also represented in their lyrical themes in the form of glorifying or grieving about events related to national history and prominent historical figures. The other common and important topic for the bands in the genre is nature and native landscapes.

Hence, pagan metal is a subgenre that functions around a certain idea, or rather a set of closely interrelated ideas. This form of the genre in metal history can first be traced back to the iconic *Blood Fire Death* (1988) – an album of the Swedish band Bathory, which started out in their first albums as a “Satanism”-focused black metal band, but which slowly shifted to topics of Scandinavian history and Norse mythology. Some of the well-known modern pagan metal bands include, for example, Enslaved, Moonsorrow, Kampfar or Havukruunu. As for the Baltic States, the most well-known bands associated with pagan metal are Obtest from Lithuania (1992–present), Skyforger from Latvia (1995–present), and Tharaphita from Estonia (1995–present).

Metal Music Studies and Pagan Metal

Metal music studies, being a highly interdisciplinary academic field, focuses on the study of both metal music itself and its surrounding culture. Hence, since the birth of the first research endeavours in the field in the 1990s

(see Weinstein 1991; Gaines 1991; Walser 1993) and up until the present metal music studies scholars conduct and publish their research under affiliations with musicology, sociology, cultural studies, anthropology, folkloristics, etc. Since the beginning of the 2000s, scholars have started to focus more on the specific features of the different metal subgenres, including specific symbolism, political ideologies, gender discussions and other subcultural aspects (e.g. see Purcell 2003; Mudrian 2004; Phillipov 2012 on death metal; Maspero, Ribaric 2015; Wilson 2014; Shadrack 2021 on black metal).

The black metal subculture tends to be the one most investigated, mainly owing to the occurrence of a few shocking episodes that have aroused public concern over the course of its existence, such as church arsons and murders committed by black metal musicians, or their far-right affiliations. Researchers of black metal music and subculture have discussed its symbolism, ideology, aesthetics and history from a diversity of angles (see e.g. Hoffin 2018; Steinken 2018; Tyft 2021; Hoffin 2023; Patterson 2023).

While there seems to be a consensus among scholars on what black metal is and how to approach it, pagan metal remains a rather vague and under-researched area. According to some, pagan metal is not even considered a separate subgenre of metal (e.g. von Helden 2012), while others offer different definitions and categorisations that sometimes need justification (Weinstein 2014; Manea 2016; Hofmann 2020).

Among Estonian scholars, Kristiin Hanimägi defended her bachelor’s thesis on pagan metal and its religious component (Hanimägi 2015). Otherwise, only a few aspects of Estonian metal subcultures have been researched, such as the role of communication in the Estonian heavy metal subculture (Araste 2010; Araste, Ventsel 2015), the history of the Estonian metal subculture, and the subculture’s social constitution (Karjalainen 2019, 2022) or the aspects of nation building and cultural trauma in the lyrics of the folk metal band Metsatöll (Polese et al. 2017; Valijärvi 2022).

Estonian Pagan Metal Subculture

In this research, “pagan metal subculture” serves more as a tool for analysis rather than a distinct

subculture and assists me in narrowing down the focus of the analysis. I use this concept as a collective indicator for the bands and band members that are united by the certain types of music and thematic ideas described above and who, at the same time, are tightly interrelated with the general pool of extreme metal bands in Estonia.

It is important to indicate that, from the emic perspective, not all participants refer to their bands as pagan metal, and not all of them consider pagan metal subculture as something that even exists within the Estonian extreme metal scene. This is not uncommon in the world of metal music and popular music in general as the self-definitions of musicians and the audience's perception might differ; hence, I based my definition on the etic reception of the bands' music and creative activities. Moreover, some participants disagree with the mere functionality of the term "pagan metal" in their understanding: during the interview, participant C told me that "there is no such riff or pagan metal riff or something like that. There is nothing like that" (interview 13.10.2022). Generally, my participants consider themselves members of the extreme metal scene or its specific clusters, which may often be socially (friend/interests groups) or geographically (Tartu/Tallinn) based, and they can be involved in multiple, and in terms of subgenres, diverse, music projects.

Thus, the participants I defined as members of the analytical pagan metal subculture take part in one or more bands as well as being members of other bands that might not even be metal per se (e.g. punk or neofolk).

Methods and Fieldwork

My fieldwork methods included interviews, questionnaires, participant observation and netnography. The majority of my fieldwork for this research was conducted between November 2021 and April 2023, with some of the additional details being collected up to the time of writing this article (October–December 2023). During that time, I became an active part of the subculture. My personal journey into the Estonian subculture began with an encounter at a merch stand during the first gig I attended in Tartu in November 2021. After that, my subcultural involvement quickly

expanded through snowballing recommendations and meeting new participants at diverse events.

Bands

The focus of my study mainly involved such bands as *Ulguränd*, *Langenu*, *Loits*, *Bestia*, *Wolfskrone*, *Tapper*, *Kaev*, *Pagansarv* and *Tharaphita*. Some members were my interviewees, while others were subjects of online research or participant observation during their live performances. Some other bands, such as *Pime* or *Kõdu*, were taken into account, though, the possibility of contacting them personally did not emerge during the course of my fieldwork. The bands were chosen on the basis of my theoretical framework (i.e. what I define as pagan metal in my research).

Participants

Overall, there were seven participants from the above-mentioned bands who were interviewed or responded to a questionnaire, and four more were questioned orally in the course of participant observation, making a total of overall eleven active participants. All the respondents were musicians – vocalists, guitarists, bass players and drummers. The majority of the participants were Tartu-based, so the data mainly represents the Tartu cluster of the subculture. In terms of age, they were in their 20s–50s, and gender-wise all were men due to the prevalent number of male musicians over female ones in the scene (on gender in metal see e.g. Schaap, Berkers 2014, or Kinnunen, Honkanen 2021).

Additionally, there were some subculturists who I had rather brief conversations with during my participant observation – at least fifteen more persons, including both musicians and fans. These people provided me with contextual data about the scene, the history of Estonian metal, music recommendations, etc. that I recorded in my mental or digital notes, and this helped me with pinpointing patterns and important details in my data analysis.

Interviews and questionnaires

Overall, I conducted four semi-structured interviews: two face-to-face interviews in Tartu and two online interviews. The average length of an interview was two hours. There were twelve thematically divided blocks of questions, each

of which contained three to five questions. The themes included the beginning of personal interest in music, first experience with playing in a band, discussion on pagan metal as a genre, views on style and authenticity, etc. Each participant represented one or more bands of my research interest.

With regard to the questionnaires, there were three detailed questionnaires, each of which consisted of 17 sets of questions (the participants could respond to all of them or select the most relevant ones). The questionnaires were sent to the participants online, using social media, in docx format. The choice of questions was based on my interview experience in the sense that the previous knowledge gained from interviewing allowed me to select the questions that would be more personalised and allow participants to reply in a more descriptive manner and, as a result, feel more comfortable and open to write as much as possible. Some of the topics included music background, former and current bands, sources of inspiration, upcoming releases, symbols and rituals in the scene, understanding of authenticity, etc.

I chose questionnaires as an additional method due to some participants' reluctance to be interviewed. Originally, there were five questionnaires sent out to the participants who agreed to participate, but two of these did not manage to return them owing to personal issues.

Participant observation

Overall, I attended over 30 metal music events (or "gigs", as subculturists call them in English²), mostly in Tartu. I also had a chance to attend gigs in Tallinn as well as going to the biggest metal festival in Estonia, Hard Rock Laager, twice – in the summer of 2022 and 2023. Additionally, as in the course of my fieldwork I have become part of the Estonian metal community, I was welcomed at private gatherings and after-parties, where I had access to the observation of the most exclusive subcultural performance and knowledge production.

As for note-taking, in most cases, I took mental notes and then wrote them up in a private document later on. Sometimes, I took quick

notes in my phone note app, especially when it concerned personal names, places, names of bands and the like.

With four participants, more elaborate conversations during participant observation occurred. As there was no way to provide direct quotes, information from those encounters is expressed as freely formulated ideas in the text. The same applies to my other encounters during participant observation.

Netnography

Netnography is a qualitative method designed for studying online communities. The choice of netnography as a method was based on its efficiency in collecting and analysing the online presence of the bands under research. The bands' choices in maintaining an online image provided me with considerable insight into their symbolism, common practices and morals, as well as with practical information such as dates of online performances or album releases. Thanks to my prior online research, I found and attended my first gig in November 2021, where Ulguränd, Bestia and Pagansarv were performing,³ and where I was finally able to shape my research idea.

Language of the fieldwork

The interviews, questionnaires and overall communication with the participants was predominantly in English, with me using Estonian to the extent my skills allowed at the time.

Data analysis

Inductive thematic analysis was prevalent in the fieldwork data analysis. The main aim of thematic analysis lies in defining and enunciating thematic threads in data (Coker 2021). The choice was based on the nature of the research process and the process of collecting my fieldwork, as inductive thematic analysis is more exploratory. I started analysing the data without any pre-conceived expectations, which allowed me to track themes and patterns emerging directly from the data. During this process, I could apply open coding, which involved engaging with the raw data in a detailed and line-by-line manner without

² *Keika* or *konsa/kontsert* in Estonian.

³ Facebook event link: <https://fb.me/e/2MrynsM4Q> (last access 7.08.2024).

predetermined categories and generating codes based on the actual content of the data. Themes emerged organically through repeated examination of the data, and they guided the structure of my research in an approach that was exploratory and which led to the discovery of unexpected insights and patterns within the data.

Limitations

As this article is based on my master's thesis, it has allowed me to review the work I have done and pinpoint certain limitations in the research analysis and its results. First of all, the participant selection implies a level of limitation in the research results in terms of gender representativeness as, during the fieldwork process, I did not specifically consider bringing in gender diversity but just went with the "snowballing" flow of participants. In addition, the participants' responses were analysed without taking their age into account as the pool of the participants was relatively small and I did not ask the age of those questioned during participant observation. As a result there was no emphasis on how responses differed in terms of gender and age dimensions.

Secondly, while integrating into the community significantly enhanced my research, the ethical considerations of forming close friendships during fieldwork posed challenges, which resulted in minor clashes and misunderstandings. Although such encounters offered valuable insights into conflict resolution when conducting fieldwork in the subculture, they also presupposed an expectation of side-taking in diverse antagonisms, which sometimes slowed down the research process.

Finally, the nature of the thematic analysis was predominantly descriptive; employing an alternative approach could offer different results.

Subcultural Constitution and Information Transmission

To understand how authenticity is reproduced in the first-order zone, a reader first and foremost must understand what a subculture is and how subcultural information is shared within its borders.

A subculture can be described as a "culturally bounded (but not closed) network of people"

(Williams 2011: 148), within which the subcultural network zones are formed and maintained. To investigate the social constitution of this network I turned to Dorothy Noyes' understanding of network (Noyes 1995). She describes network as containing a division between the first-order zone (immediate acquaintances) and the second-order zone (friend of a friend). She also talks about them having greater or lesser density, centrality and peripherality, and clustering (Noyes 1995: 457). All these features can be applied to the Estonian pagan metal subculture, which functions as a social network.

The first-order zone is dense and can be multiplex, meaning that individuals often hold multiple roles within the subculture. For example, a person may own a label that releases music produced by pagan metal bands while also being a merchandise creator, a band member or a friend or acquaintance of many musicians within the subculture. I also consider the most dedicated fans actively engaged in the subculture's internal processes as integral members of the first-order zone. An example of such groups of people can be the creators of extreme metal music clubs, such as the Black Magic Estonia in Tallinn or Pergerus in Tartu. Music-wise, these clubs are mainly black metal-centred. The main difference between the two groups is that Pergerus only includes band members and their venue serves as a rehearsal room, whereas Black Magic Estonia includes like-minded people fond of black metal who organise events like concerts or movie nights. Pergerus occasionally organises small-scale events too but their main focus is communal practices related to bands-members' activities: "We see ourselves as a group of creators of music and visual art" (interview 11.08.2022).

The second-order zone, on the other hand, is much larger and involves the audience. The network connections within this zone are sparse (there are individuals who do not know each other) and the level of clustering is high (individuals form tighter groups of interests, mainly friend groups, which can be highly distinct and not familiar with each other). This is a constantly changing zone of the network as many "outsiders" may occasionally attend thematic events, for example when invited by friends who do not have anyone else to go with. The position of the outsiders, however, depends

on their level of integration in relation to the subculture. Unless they have a deep interest in the subculture or attempt to integrate with it, they mostly remain in the liminal zone – a zone of floating memberships, where actors interact with the subculture without being a part of it.

Within the subculture under research, the first-order zone mainly consists of the musicians themselves – band members – as well as venue owners, label owners, merchandise artists, gig photographers and others closely related to the organisational and performative aspects of the subculture activities. As such, musicians have a deep understanding of the subculture because of their regular participation in the subcultural practices; they are often the most stable contributors to the collective subcultural capital as being in a band leads to regular presence in the subculture and the most immediate communication with other musicians. Musicians are also crucial for the study because metal subcultures are music-centred subcultures, where the “music comes first” notion is the whole pillar of their entire existence.

Subcultural knowledge transmission within different zones varies, however, among the first-order zone; some of the most common channels of transmission are:

- 1) Daily interactions – rehearsals: Information transmission becomes an integral part of the daily routine, occurring organically during regular rehearsals. Such interactions serve as a ground for the exchange of ideas, creative collaboration and the passing on of subcultural capital – cultural knowledge, skills and practices that are valued within a particular subculture (Thornton 1995; Jensen 2006). It includes both material and symbolic resources that are used to establish and maintain social status and subcultural authenticity within the scene.
- 2) Music composition and lyric writing: The creative process of making music and writing lyrics becomes a significant channel for subcultural knowledge transmission. The act of composing not only involves the technical aspects of music creation but also incorporates subcultural narratives that contribute to the shaping of the subcultural identity.

3) Leisure time together:

Beyond formal settings, leisure activities shared among subculturists play a crucial role in knowledge dissemination. Whether bonding over shared interests, discussing subcultural themes informally or simply spending downtime together, these moments contribute to a mutual understanding of the shared subcultural symbols, practices and rituals of subcultural everydayness.

While the subculture itself is a socially bounded but not closed network, the inner subcultural network zones function in the same manner. The concept of “communication-interlocks” emphasises the possibility of subcultural knowledge spreading through diverse sorts of societal channels. Williams argues that “ideas, objects, and practices – the essential parts of culture – are transmitted via ‘communication-interlocks’, social linkages or conduits within and among networks of people” (Williams 2011: 40), and distinguishes between four types of such linkages: multiple group cultures, structural roles, “weak ties” and media diffusion. The first three widely resonate with Noyes’ features of the network (clustering, first-order zone and second-order zone concepts respectively).

The first type of communication-interlocks, group cultures, is based on the idea that subcultures consist of smaller group cultures. One way of calling these group cultures is “idiot-cultures” (see Fine 1979), but for this research, the name “scenes” is more appropriate as this is the most common way participants themselves refer to a subculture, as well as being widely used by scholars in subcultural studies (Williams 2011: 40). Williams illustrates this interlock with an interest in “tribal” tattoos: one person finds a tattoo in a magazine, shares it with a friend, and both develop an interest, leading them to festivals. Through these interactions the newborn subculture evolves over time as new elements are introduced into the cultural process (ibid.: 40).

The example provided by Williams largely corresponds with how the participants described the scene formation to me, or rather how they formed smaller clusters (bands and groups of interests) that later became part of the Estonian extreme metal scene and within which the formation and transmission of the subcultural capital occur. All my respondents started playing

musical instruments very young, with the age range being 9–15 years old, and they indicated a fondness for metal (sometimes also punk) music as their first and foremost motivation to start learning how to play. They were introduced to metal by someone from their environment: for instance, H mentioned a metalhead relative, while for C it was the school environment where older schoolmates played in bands. Their passion for music eventually led to them forming bands with a few like-minded friends: J was already in his first band when he was 14 and at the age of 16 joined one of the bands of my research interest.

Participants from the smaller towns, however, indicated that they were not able to form or join the scene in their hometown, and for A, for instance, this was one of the reasons for moving to Tartu. A, following his interest in music, started attending a guitar class advertised in his town and eventually founded a band with acquaintances from Tartu, which was the main reason for him to move there after graduating from high school. He explains:

If you go to a bigger place, like Tallinn, you can actually maybe chase your passions of becoming a musician there, there are people who are doing this. There are concerts and everything going on. But in [hometown name], you cannot do that there. And I had to get away from it, me staying there was just not an option for me (interview 10.07.2022).

When it comes to “weak ties” communication-interlock, these are the kinds of relationships subculturists sustain in different networks such as, for example, among work colleagues or classmates at school (Williams 2011: 41). The name “weak ties” comes from the fact that the subculturists may only interact with each other in some institutional context (e.g. school or work), where their relationship with others is mainly functional (ibid.: 41). However, these weak ties are present both inside and outside of the scene network. The second-order zone members can serve as weak ties for the first-order zone members and, subsequently, the second-order zone can also hold this function for the liminal members.

The structural roles, however, are located in the first-order zone. Recognised members of a subculture may perform the roles of gatekeepers

and guides to becoming a “core” member of a local scene (Williams 2011: 41), where I locate my research participants. The research participants’ description of the community structure fits this concept. One of the creators of Pergerus describes their community this way: “We have a core group, people who are more active, and there are some kind of like satellites who sometimes are more with us and sometimes they just mind their own business” (interview 11.08.2022).

Such a complexion of the first-order zone demonstrates the density and multiplexity of the network connections within it. The subculture’s multiplexity is the reflection of the inter-relational aspect – the musicians usually share the roles of either friends, close acquaintances or even family members. For some of them, this factor can be defining in their motivation to support their communal belonging. For example, F, a bass player, says that there is no “scene” in Estonia as it was before, in times of Loits and Tharaphita (meaning the late 90s and early 2000s), and he himself plays in bands just because his friends play in those bands. One of his family members was also a member of one of his current bands. H indicates that he was invited into both bands where he currently plays on the recommendations of friends (from the questionnaire materials).

The fact that musicians often share roles as friends or acquaintances reinforces a sense of camaraderie and shared experience that can contribute to the subculture’s overall cohesion, sense of community and density of the network. It also suggests that the scene represents a rather tight network, where multiple social roles can be at play.

A contribution to this idea can be an idea shared as a joke by some research participants that there are 15 musicians in the scene and they all are just mixed up between bands with different names. Furthermore, the documentary *Tartu Under the Horns* (2022) conveyed the idea that despite many bands producing only a demo and then disbanding, the individuals involved still remain active in the subculture, often forming new bands and continuing to contribute to the scene.

On a side note, the density and multiplexity of the social relationships in the network can also be a source of conflicts, which leads to the

bands splitting or certain band members quitting a band. For instance, B mentioned that they had to ask one of the former band members to quit: “... Then we kicked him out. [...] I think he grew a bit tired and we felt that we better to do it ourselves” (interview 11.08.2022).

One of the dispersion factors in the scene is the geographical factor. There are research participants who distinguish between the Tartu and Tallinn scenes and sometimes characterise them in different ways: some see the Tartu scene as more creative but at the same time more isolated. For example, G mentions that there are two sides in Estonian extreme metal – North Estonia and South Estonia – and that he can hear differences very well (from the questionnaire materials). However, even though I focused on Tartu-based musicians more, it is important to indicate that these two units are still deeply interrelated. For example, one band can consist of musicians based in Tartu, Tallinn or other cities, who constantly travel between different areas for rehearsals and gigs. Due to this factor, I suggest that on the first-order zone level, the dispersion is not a crucial factor for the objectives of my research and that the geographical factor would be more relevant if the research included the second-order zone too. In addition, the geographically based division is not strong enough to suggest that there are two distinct metal scenes – rather, there is one scene with different units. H specifically touched upon this topic in a questionnaire response: “What bothers me a bit is the talk of scenes. Many people who are more into metal like to talk about the differences between the scenes in Tallinn and Tartu for example like they are two completely different things, but Estonia is so small and it feels stupid to somehow try to divide it even more” (from the questionnaire materials).

Finally, one of the main specifics of the extreme metal scene in Estonia lies in its underground position, meaning that metal can be considered a minor genre compared to mainstream music genres such as pop, hip-hop, rap or generic rock (Karjalainen 2022: 232). As a result, the subculture is placed in a somewhat peripheral position within the larger music industry and operates on a much smaller scale compared to mainstream genres. This position of metal strengthens the sensed cohesion among the

subculturists (Karjalainen 2022: 233) and creates a sense of solidarity among the members. This is especially visible in the first-order zone as the scene members often have to rely on their own resources to organise and promote the events, distribute music and produce merchandise – all these practices contribute to the density of the network and its cohesion.

Performing and Reproducing Authenticity Within the Estonian Pagan Metal Scene

In addition to the above-mentioned features, the first-order zone can be further characterised by the process of encapsulation (Noyes 1995). Encapsulation refers to the process of maintaining the boundaries between a subculture from the larger society or culture in which it exists. In the case of the pagan metal subculture in Estonia, encapsulation acts towards the relationship between the local subculture and mainstream culture, and between the subculture and the global extreme metal scene as well. C described the latter as “the most important problem in the Estonian scene” (interview 13.10.2022) because, in C’s opinion, this prevents bands from getting “out there” and establishing international connections. However, the majority of my research participants expressed a reluctance to get global. B justifies it as follows: “Since I don’t want to be world-famous myself, then I don’t pay so much attention to be approachable to everyone” (interview 11.08.2022). Furthermore, the *Tartu Under the Horns* documentary largely discusses the “Tartu scene” as an isolated network that does not strive for fame: “In Tartu, they want to preserve art for themselves” (*Tartu Under the Horns* 2022).

Such an ongoing thread can also be explained by the fact that the first-order zone of the subculture contains the most subcultural capital, as this is where the most committed and dedicated members of the subculture are found. The subculturists from the first-order zone have invested a significant amount of time, effort and resources into their involvement in the subculture, which has allowed them to accumulate such substantial subcultural capital. Moreover, they have developed a strong influence on the other members of the subculture and a reputation among them, which further enhances their status

and recognition within the subculture. It does not mean that the first-order zone is entitled to the subcultural values in a way that the second-order zone has no access to; however, the first-order zone is more resistant to liminal memberships and external cultural influences.

Talking about the encapsulation of a community, Noyes writes: “resistance to the exit of the expressive forms from the network is easily understood as a protection of cultural capital, the appropriation of which robs the network of a resource” (Noyes 1995: 464). In the context of the quote, the “exit” of expressive forms from the network can refer to the loss or removal of resources from the subculture, which can lead to a decrease in its subcultural capital. For example, if a member of the subculture stops participating in certain subcultural practices or stops creating subcultural artefacts, it could result in a loss of subcultural capital for the community. The resistance to this exit I see: 1) as a protective measure to preserve the subcultural capital of the community, and 2) as insurance for preserving *authenticity* within the subculture.

I would like to indicate here that authenticity in folkloristics has been a subject of debate and discussion because of the fluid nature of folklore (e.g. see the monumental Bendix 1997 on authenticity and the history of folklore studies; see Venbrux and Meder 2004 on authenticity as an analytic concept and defining “authentic” folk narratives; see van Ginkel 2004 on a debate between authenticity as untouched cultural heritage and “invention of tradition”). The situation is similar in research on subcultural authenticity, where scholars have been trying to figure out who is a “true” subculturist based on the emic point of view of the subculturists (e.g. Jasper 2004; Skadiang 2017; Barnard 2020). Finding emic authenticity criteria in subcultures is crucial for understanding how subculturists form their individual and collective identities. A sense of what is authentic is something that helps subculturists to distinguish “ours” from “theirs”, yet there is no guidebook for a researcher or a newcomer as to what is “right” – this is why, if we want to understand subcultural identities, we must search for answers in fieldwork among the subculturists. The right ground for joining a subculture is often implied in comparisons, rather

than explicitly articulated (Widdicombe, Wooffitt 1990: 274).

My research participants are not an exception in this matter. Preservation of subcultural authenticity serves as an active mechanism to uphold the distinctive identity and values that define the subculture and, as a result, assists the subculturists in performing their belonging and understanding such a performance as coming from others. To grasp this process, I turned to Susanna Larsson’s concept of “reproducing authenticity” (Larsson 2013). Larsson understands authenticity as related to individual morals (one’s own sense of originality) and as related to socially constructed morals – an in-group social negotiation of morals (Larsson 2013: 98). This suggests that authenticity is a combination of an individual’s sense of originality and the socially constructed morals of their subculture. These social norms and values act as a barrier that distinguishes the subculture from the wider society, which means the encapsulation of subcultural capital. Therefore, authenticity involves both being true to oneself and being a part of a group that shares similar values and beliefs. In the context of my research, it implies that the authenticity of the Estonian pagan metal subculture is shaped by the subculturist’s own sense of originality and the subculture’s socially constructed morals, values and practices. These morals, values and practices, in turn, are developed and reproduced within the in-group context.

The authenticity reproduction process occurs on two levels, social and thematic, both of which are strongly interrelated and cannot exist without each other (Larsson 2013). Social in-group authenticity can be investigated through the behavioural patterns of the subculturists, their worldviews and morals, while thematic in-group authenticity can be seen as the implementation of those through style, visuals and subcultural artefacts.

Social In-Group Authenticity

When it comes to social in-group authenticity, one’s position in the scene and one’s “level” of authenticity in the scene are defined by other first-order zone members in the Estonian pagan metal subculture according to the amount of time

one invests into one's lifestyle as a metalhead. For example, participation in a band rehearsal for a truly devoted (and hence, authentic) musician must not be a "special event" but a part of their performed everydayness (Berger, del Negro 2004: 10) and must be perceived by other scene members as such. C indicates: "I think in metal scene, or black metal scene, or extreme metal scene, the most important way of existing is [...] that ideas that you represent and the lifestyle must be a part of your life" (interview 13.10.2022). In the interview, B particularly talked about unstable musicians who have so many other tasks to do that they eventually quit their bands or quit the scene entirely: "They want to get into the things, but after some time they get tired of it and they simply disappeared from that [the scene]" (interview 11.08.2022). I interpret this in the sense that the participants perceive a person who does not have enough time to participate in the life of the band or the scene activities as less authentic.

From this, the aspect of *devotion* emerges, since "less authentic" members are less devoted to the subculture and, thus, cannot be trusted in practical matters of the subculture like event organising or band managing activities. Being devoted to a subculture implies the necessity of having a sincere interest in music and subcultural life – as long as the intentions of the individual are based on sincerity, it is possible to be able to live authentically in subservience to a pre-existing social framework (Rodger Beehler, quoted from Barnard 2020: 6).

This leads to another characteristic of an "authentic musician", which is the length of one's participation in the scene. I indicated earlier that all of my participants started getting into metal as children or teenagers, which allowed them to accumulate the most subcultural capital over the years and, in this way, to maintain their devotion to the subculture. Even though it was not clearly phrased and stated by any of the participants, my analysis results show that the longer one is in the scene, the more one is perceived as authentic. The most devoted subculturists have gained a reputation for being authentic over the years which does not require additional "proof" from their side. This is what can be called recognisability in the social in-group, meaning the social in-subcultural context where

"individual and collective dedication is known and need not be argued for" (Larsson 2013: 95).

At the same time, from the etic standpoint, the reputation one has in the first-order zone does not tell an outsider about the specific reference points according to which this reputation was constructed in the collective perception. This is why at different points in my conversations with the research participants some of them brought up concrete evidence of dedication or a life story that would exemplify someone else's devotion. Such examples can demonstrate a collective acceptance based on others seeing one as more authentic.

The individual understanding of authenticity can be illustrated by the multiple examples C mentioned when talking to me. Firstly, he provided me with a story about a young musician at an international festival who tried to present his special promo text to different musicians, event organisers and record label representatives. However, doing so did not lead to getting his promo accepted. In the context of this story, C highlights several moments of individual understanding of authenticity: finding contacts and networking – *presence* ("you have to be present") in the scene's social activities always, not only when, for instance, you need promotion for your band; complete understanding of the scene members, their values and morals – *knowledge* based on the accumulated subcultural capital ("the most important is that you know the guys, you know the background [...] you are just there drinking beer with them [...] and [eventually] you are much more successful because you don't press yourself into their world, you are already there and you already understand everything") and, subsequently, this presence and knowledge combined give you collective acceptance based on others seeing you as more authentic. C then shared another story about one scene member who was mostly inactive in the scene's social life but who was a great collector and who had an extensive collection of cassettes, vinyl records and CDs. The interviewee mentioned that the man did not consider himself a scene member because of his lack of presence in social settings but the comprehensive collection was seen as devotion and thus was perceived by the interviewee as authentic interest. At first glance, it somewhat contradicts what C said earlier

about presence, yet from this story I drew the conclusion that the collector had been present in the scene long enough and had participated enough in the subcultural practices to obtain the reputation of an authentic subculturist. I suggest that this example further demonstrates the way authenticity reproduction works in terms of acceptance: the devotion to collecting is individually recognised as something authentic by C, but this recognition is also based on the collective understanding of subcultural authenticity.

From the in-subcultural standpoint, however, the participants themselves unanimously refer to authenticity simply as “passion”. When answering the questions about others’ authenticity, the musicians tended to prefer this word to others. The participants used expressions like “you just have to be passionate”, “passion is the most important factor” and alike (based on fieldwork materials).

Thus, passion seems to be an umbrella term for participants that unites the values of devotion, presence, knowledge and acceptance, and from passion is derived the “true sense of self”, which can be experienced by both individual subcultural self-expression and observing the subcultural expressions of others. One of the demonstrative examples of this process is the subcultural sense of style.

Thematic In-Group Authenticity

In the thematic in-group, people can only rely on markers of recognisability such as attributes, symbols or other visual expressions (Larsson 2013: 104). The constituent “look” is one of the defining features of the metal subcultures around the world and it serves as the indicator of belongingness, especially in the subcultural social contexts where one is not necessarily familiar with other subculturists.

From the emic perspective, devotion to music is seen to be more significant than the visual rules when it comes to authenticity. The majority of the research participants stated that for them looks do not define authenticity. For example, H wrote in the questionnaire response the following: “[...] I wouldn’t tie authenticity to a certain look. I’m more wary about people who talk about being fans of metal but really not knowing many bands

at all besides Metallica or some other mainstream ones” (from the questionnaire materials). This also corresponds to the importance of the knowledge aspect already discussed above. Knowledge is more crucial than wearing “leather and spikes” in H’s perception of other musicians as authentic. This is why the power of knowledge and cultural awareness in validating a participant’s perceived “trueness” within the scene is of greater significance than any aesthetic dimension (Barnard 2020: 7).

In support of this idea, C even underlines that the level of devotion might not always be related to what extent the scene members care about the subculturally “accurate” appearance: “Those guys who are very serious into this scene and have been in the scene very long time in Estonia, they actually look like a quite usual person. The look has never been important” (interview 13.10.2022).

Yet the research participants themselves had attributes that to me, as a metalhead, served as a clear indication of their subcultural belonging. These visual attributes are the ones commonly spread in metal subcultures around the world: T-shirts and hoodies with local and foreign metal bands, patches with band names and logos sewn on jackets or vests, chains and long hair. I paid careful attention to the appearance of the subculture members in the contexts of communal activities such as gigs, informal events and the Hard Rock Laager festivals, and noticed that it is rather unlikely for a subculturist not to have at least one or two identifiers of subcultural belonging. Larsson suggests that even though music precedes the visual rules when it comes to authenticity, “this clashes with an implicit demand for belongingness” (Larsson 2013: 104). Subcultural recognisability and, thus, acceptance depend on visual indicators, which are, in turn, the sole method of directly connecting individuals with a particular social setting. This is why collectivism in metal subcultures is present both within the visually powerful uniformity of the dress code and in the display of knowledge and cultural awareness (Barnard 2020: 9).

The discrepancy between the claims of the research participants that looks do not matter and their consistent adoption of a specific dress style associated with extreme metal fandom suggests an interesting dynamic regarding authenticity and its reproduction. From an

emic perspective, the participants may see their dress style as a natural expression of their authentic subcultural identity, while at the same time rejecting the notion that appearance is a defining aspect of this identity. From an etic perspective, it can be argued that a certain look is a symbolic representation of the subculture and that the consistent adoption of this style by the participants reinforces its authenticity in the eyes of both insiders and outsiders. This suggests that subcultural authenticity may be a social construct that is perpetuated through the reproduction of specific subcultural practices, rather than being solely determined by individual self-expression. The observation of the participants bearing subcultural attributes even outside the official subcultural events demonstrates that, for a truly authentic subculturist, metal is a lifestyle and not a special occasion. It is such a natural part of everydayness that it becomes seen as the “usual” way of looking.

In support of this point is the fact that subculturists comment on those scene members who overdo their looks by “trying too hard”. It can be explained through Widdicombe and Wooffitt’s “being” versus “doing” punk: there is a distinction between those who are “doing metal”, as in merely performing a role, instead of “being metal”, as in having the correct grounds for subcultural affiliation (Widdicombe, Wooffitt 1990). I noted jokes that addressed those who try too hard and comments regarding how “ridiculous” or “pointless” it is to overdo merchandise or accessories. Some musicians connect it mostly with the young people who have just started getting into metal and wear merchandise associated with the world’s most famous metal bands (for instance, Metallica, Slayer or Slipknot). B commented on it in this way: “I used to listen to some bands like Metallica myself [...] I think it’s acceptable that younger people don’t know that much, but at the same time, it definitely helps if one is simply devoted to the music they like. There are many for whom metal is just a phase” (interview 11.08.2022).

Considering those participants who referred to some scene members as “usual-looking”, I see choices regarding appearance as important but not as the sole determinants of authenticity. Thus, the implication is that spending too much time on dressing up as a metal fan is seen as pointless (as

it must derive “naturally” from one’s subcultural knowledge). On the other hand, musicians do rely on looks as a recognisability factor when it comes to second-order zone subculturists. This suggests that if one’s awareness of someone else’s subcultural reputation is absent, they “evaluate” authenticity according to the way someone else is able to transmute their subcultural knowledge and devotion into visual attributes such as, for example, the selection of patches on their jackets. From the first-order zone members’ perspective, it may demonstrate their commitment to the scene: “If you see that a youngster is wearing a battle vest and there is a Metallica or Darkthrone patch, then you know that this is the beginning of the road [...]. Not because it’s a statement. You’re wearing statements. So it must be thought through, not just random favourite bands” (interview 13.10.2022).

Authenticity Reproduction in the Collective Dimension

Larsson suggests that the authentic interest in music is something created by the individual and then reproduced culturally by the collective since a “heavy metal moral is reproducing authenticity when someone from the same context utters it” (Larsson 2013: 103). The mechanism through which authenticity is reproduced can be seen as a social process, where members of the subculture collectively negotiate and establish what is considered authentic and desirable within the group. This negotiation can take place through social interactions, shared experiences and the production and circulation of cultural artefacts such as music, literature and visual art.

Events and festivals are the crucial and most common spaces where ideas of what is authentic are transmitted between members in communication-interlocks. In such spaces, authenticity is reproduced through the acts of engagement of the audience with the performers, the performers with other performers, and the fans with each other. By engaging with the scene and participating in the scene practices, both musicians and fans construct the scene as a collective instead of as a group of separate individuals who listen to metal music.

One of the concrete examples of such collective engagement is the festival space of the

Hard Rock Laager. There, I investigated the diverse aspects of authenticity reproduced from the mundane subcultural capital, which is accumulated through a commitment to the collective (Kahn-Harris 2007: 127). Mundane subcultural capital refers to the collective power that arises from the everyday actions and contributions of all members of a subculture. It is built over time through the various practices and activities that keep the subculture alive and thriving and through which the scene is reproduced (Kahn-Harris 2007: 122).

Naturally, the interaction between the first and second-order zones is essential for maintaining the vitality of the subculture. Without the participation of the fans, the musicians would not have an audience to perform for, and the subculture would lose its communal aspect. Similarly, without the musicians, there would be no music for the fans to consume. At the Hard Rock Laager (HRL), the sense of unity and shared mundane capital is stronger than at any smaller-scale local events. Most musicians, who come to perform there, stay for the whole duration of the festival and, thus, become one with the crowd as listeners of the other performing bands.

Hence, the HRL is one of the essential collective experiences where the scene's collective values and sense of authenticity are reproduced, considering both social and thematic in-group authenticity aspects. The first point of reference for authenticity "evaluation" is the presence and length of subcultural participation. The most obvious visual evidence in this regard is HRL T-shirts. Every year, the festival organisers release festival T-shirts with diverse designs that necessarily include the year of the festival.

Even though it is possible to buy T-shirts from the previous festival years at the online store, the audience and musicians will consider an actual T-shirt bought on the spot from the merchandising stand as the most authentic evidence of dedication. This way, although I have not witnessed such cases myself, based on my personal in-subcultural experience I could assume that buying former years' festival T-shirts without actual attending the festivals could be ridiculed and disregarded.

Annual attendance at the festival is therefore also considered by the participants as a big indicator of one's devotion. Since the festival takes place in Vana-Vigala, people travel



Figure 1. HRL 2022 female T-shirt and HRL 2009 male shirt. Taken from Hard Rock Laager online store, <https://shop.hardrocklaager.ee> (last access 7.08.2024).

there from all over Estonia, and for many it is a significant sacrifice of time, money, and the stability of everyday comforts – the vast majority of the participants live at a camping area in tents for the duration of the festival.

As for the knowledge aspect, in the context of HRL, a great example would be an instance of festival lore. During my stay there, festival visitors at the camping area would shout “Eero!” intermittently during nighttime. Being deprived of a chance to sleep, I started asking around about the meaning of this behaviour. By investigating at the festival and afterwards in Tartu, I found two versions of the story’s origins. The first one tells of a man named Eero who borrowed money from somebody at the festival and did not return it. The person or people from whom Eero had borrowed the money were looking for him at the camping area and shouting “Eero! Eero!”. Over the festival years, the regular festival visitors appropriated the shout, sometimes also adding an additional part to it: “Eeero! Maksa võlg ära!”⁴

In the second version, Eero did not borrow any money but simply got lost at the festival area and did not make it back to the tent where he was staying with friends. His friends were looking for him and shouting his name. I could not find information about the exact year when the incident took place, however, some participants mentioned that the tradition of shouting Eero’s name has already existed since 2009.

In the collective context of the Hard Rock Laager festival, all the factors combined are perceived as subculturally authentic by those who attend the festival regularly, and this sense of authenticity is reproduced by the newer audiences (like me, for instance). By reproducing authenticity, the newcomers accumulate subcultural capital and acquire means of subcultural belonging, which can be the rewarding collective experience of the scene.

Conclusions

This article offers a lens through which to understand local cultural expressions and identity formations by looking at the case of the subcultural authenticity of the Estonian pagan

metal scene. The use of “pagan metal subculture” as an analytic tool let me investigate a part of the extreme metal subculture that reflects a diversity of mindsets and musical talents but at the same time coherence in their subcultural perceptions. This, in turn, allowed me to engage with the previous research in folkloristics and subcultural studies and develop a theory for the scene’s social constitution, integrating the concepts of zones and the communication-interlocks, where the subcultural knowledge is passed on inside, between and outside the units.

The first-order zone, consisting of the scene members with the most subcultural capital, expressed itself as a community that strives for reservedness rather than openness. I describe this dynamic through the process of encapsulation – the subcultural resistance to individuals who stop participating or contributing to the subculture (Noyes 1995). This resistance serves as a means to protect subcultural capital but, more importantly in the context of the study, it stands as an insurance for maintaining the authentic nature of the in-subcultural expression.

To have a better grasp on the both emic and etic understanding of the authenticity in the Estonian pagan metal subculture, I looked at it from angles of social in-group and thematic in-group contexts, following Larsson’s conceptualisation (Larsson 2013). Investigation of the social life of the subculture, participants’ opinions and behavioural self-expressions formed my view on what can be called the etic perception of authenticity, which I categorised as devotion, presence and knowledge. These categories, however, are deeply interrelated and can be tracked together in the subcultural discussion of authenticity. The data demonstrates that from the emic perspective, authenticity can be equated to the notion of passion, which seems to be based on the idea of utmost contribution to the subculture and living for the sake of it.

This can be supported by the results of the thematic in-group analysis, which shows how social understanding of authenticity is realised in the visual attributes of the subculture. The main outcome of the contradiction between a concrete understanding of the authentic

⁴ “Eero! Pay off the debt!”

visual elements alongside their representation through one's own subcultural style versus claims that look has never mattered in metal reveals that subcultural authenticity is not merely an outcome of individual self-realisation but rather a social construct sustained by the perpetuation of specific subcultural practices.

Observing participants wearing subcultural attributes outside formal subcultural occasions shows that, for an authentic subculturist, metal transcends being a mere musical preference; it evolves into a pervasive way of life rather than being reserved for a special occasion. This perspective highlights the notion that sporadic acts of self-expression, both social and thematic, do not solely determine authenticity as a constituent of a subcultural identity, but are rooted in the consistent embodiment of subcultural elements in one's everydayness. This, in turn, suggests that the authentic subculturists' commitment to the metal lifestyle extends beyond the confines of the performative subcultural frame by shaping their appearance and identity as an integral part of their everydayness.

The final outcome emerges from the case of the Hard Rock Laager as a space for authenticity reproduction in the collective context. The festival space reveals mundane subcultural capital that is formed by multi-levelled rituals of subcultural everydayness. This is where the diversity of group cultures clashes with structural roles and where it forms, consumes and reproduces new subcultural knowledge. Although the main focus of the study was on the first-order zone, the Hard Rock Laager case suggests that subcultural tendencies for authenticity perception could also be applied to the second-order zone; this, however, would have

to be investigated and supported with more data from the given zone.

Overall, the information transmission and authenticity reproduction analysed in the present study demonstrate the multidimensionality of the in-subcultural social processes, which shape subcultural dynamics in a way not visible or understandable for an outsider, but which at the same time have been formed under the influence of external cultural and geopolitical factors.

Besides, my fieldwork demonstrated that the first-order zone of the Estonian extreme metal scene is quite small and most of my research participants play in other bands in different subgenres of metal. This is why it can be assumed that the finding of this article could also be applied to other subscenes of the Estonian extreme metal scene more generally. My results encourage me to expand the research focus to more units within the subculture in order to provide a deeper understanding of authenticity from both individual and collective standpoints which will contribute to the debate around authenticity in folkloristics and subcultural studies through the etic interpretation of emic perception of authenticity. In my doctoral dissertation, I am currently exploring this process using a comparative perspective of Estonian, Finnish and Ukrainian extreme metal subcultures that will allow me to find scene-specific characteristics of authenticity while also considering the historical circumstances of subcultural development in the respective countries. Meanwhile, I invite the reader to read my master's thesis (Holitsyna 2023), which gives a more detailed overview of the Estonian pagan metal subculture.

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Autentsus ja Eesti *pagan metal*'i subkultuurivõrgustik

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Polina Holitsyna

Artiklis uuritakse subkultuurse autentsuse konstrueerimist ja taastootmist Eesti *pagan metal*'i skeenes nii seesmisest kui ka välisest perspektiivist. *Pagan metal*'i skeene all mõistab autor *extreme metal*'i skeene ühte osa Eestis, mis on ühtlasi artikli analüütiline tööriist. *Pagan metal* hõlmab bände, mis muusikaliselt lähtuvad *black metal*'i helimaastikust ning mille tekstid on seotud ajaloo ja looduse teemaderingiga. Oma analüüsis toetub autor subkultuurivõrgustiku (Williams 2011) ja võrgustiku (Noyes 1995) mõistetele, defineerides subkultuursust kolme tsooni kaudu: esimene tsoon (muusikud ja kõige aktiivsemad subkultuuri liikmed), teine tsoon (paljud fännidest) ja liminaalne tsoon (ebapüsivad subkultuuris osalejad). Analüüsi keskmes on välitööde andmed, mis pärinevad esmajoones muusikutelt. Seega on artikli fookus autentsuse tajumisel ja konstruktsioonidel esimeses tsoonis. Välitöö meetodid hõlmasid intervjuusid, küsimustikke, osalusvaatlust ja netnograafiat (veebiruumide uurimist). Andmeid kogus autor kontsertidel, eraviisilistel koosviibimistel, järelpidudel, festivalidel ja üks-ühele-intervjuudes.

Autor uurib subkultuuri seemisi autentsuse konstrueerimise ja taastootmise protsesse temaatilistes ja sotsiaalsetes mõõdetes (Larsson 2013), mis on omavahel tihedalt seotud. Sotsiaalne autentsus hõlmab antud juhul subkultuurseid käitumismalle ja praktikaid, samas kui autentsuse temaatiline aspekt puudutab visuaalseid väljendusi, stiili ja sümboleid. Kuigi seesmisest perspektiivist kiputakse subkultuurisest autentsust samastama „kire“ mõistega, mis viitab esmajoones sotsiaalsele mõõtmele, näitab välisest perspektiivist lähtuv, et osalejad väljendavad oma arusaamu autentsusest, väärtustades pühendumust, kohalolekut ja teadmisi. Kuigi osalejad ise vaidlustasid idee, mille kohaselt määravad subkultuuri liikme autentsuse olulisel määral välimus ja stiil, selgus uuringutulemustest siiski, et visuaal on siseringi sotsiaalset autentsust kujundava väärtusena oluline, näiteks soengute, fännikaupade ja aksessuaaride kaudu.

Selline kompleksus näitab, et pühendumus *metal*'i elustiilile ulatub kaugemale juhuslikust osalusest subkultuuris elus ning tähendab pigem järjepidevust ja subkultuuri elementide kaasamist igapäevaellu. Seega on antud skeene raames tõeliselt subkultuurne inimene see, kelle jaoks *metal* on elustiil, mis kujundab tema argivälimust ja käitumist, tuues omakorda kaasa tugeva subkultuurisese kuuluvustunde. Neid mõisteid analüüsib autor Hard Rock Laagri festivali näitel, mis on hea näide autentsuse taastootmisest kollektiivses kontekstis. Festivalil kogunevad samale pinnale, mille subkultuurilised teadmised kujunevad ja kus neid taastoodetakse, nii esimese kui ka teise tsooni subkultuurised inimesed, samuti liminaalsed liikmed. Olulisel kohal on nii sotsiaalne kui ka temaatiline siseringi autentsus, mis realiseerub Hard Rock Laagri tegevuses ja visuaalses stiilis. Tervikuna illustreerib artikkel subkultuurilise autentsuse seemiste ja väliste perspektiivide keerukust, mis kujuneb sageli esimese järgu tsoonis ja kinnistub laiemas *extreme metal*'i subkultuuris.

Tõlkinud Brigitta Davidjants

Klubikultuur eesti- ja venekeelsete inimeste integreerijana Sveta baari näitel

Natalie Mets

Abstract

This article examines alternative club culture as an integrator of Estonian- and Russian-speaking people, based on the example of Sveta Baar, located in the Depoo area of Kalamaja, North Tallinn, during the years 2017–2023. The author seeks to answer the research question regarding the dynamics of the relationships between the Estonian- and Russian-speaking audiences at Sveta Baar and the aspects that influenced the formation of these relationships. Thus the article explores how interviewees from different language groups came to Sveta Baar, became members of its community, and how club visitors oppose mainstream culture. The theoretical framework of the article is based on subculture studies and cultural sociology. The analysis is based on ten semi-structured in-depth interviews, three of which are with Estonian-speaking and seven with Russian-speaking people who have spent time at Sveta Baar. The interviews were transcribed verbatim, and thematic analysis was used to structure the material. The author's personal experience of nightlife plays a significant role as supporting material.

Keywords: club culture, integration, nightlife

Sissejuhatus

Artiklis uurin, milline on klubikultuuri roll eesti- ja venekeelsete inimeste integreerijana Põhja-Tallinnas Kalamajas Depoo alal asunud Sveta baari näitel (tegutses aastail 2017–2023). Vaatlen alternatiivse ööelu ühe võimaliku positiivse sotsiaalse aspektina selle võimekust integreerida omavahel eri keelekeskkonnast pärit inimesi. Sellisena määratlen ka artikli keskse uurimisprobleemi – kuidas integreerib alternatiivne klubikultuur venekeelseid inimesi eestikeelsetega ja laiemalt ühiskonda? Analüüsiks olen valinud Sveta baari, sest minu kogemuse põhjal oli just selle klubi küllastajate hulgas lisaks eesti- ja ingliskeelsetele väga palju venekeelseid inimesi.

Alternatiivseid klubisid käsitan artiklis sotsiaalset integratsiooni soosiva keskkonnana, kus inimesed loovad rahvuslikke erisusi ületavaid kogukondi. Sellised ruumid võimaldavad osaleda laiemas sotsiaalses ja kultuurilises tegevuses, luues seeläbi pinnase tõhusamaks integratsiooniks. Osalemine sotsiaalses, kultuurilises, majanduslikus ja poliitilises tegevuses on kaasamise tuum. Vastupidine, s.t. osaluse puudumine, tähendab väljajätmist (Burchardt jt. 2002: 30–32). Klubikultuuri kontekstis võib sotsiaalset integratsiooni käsitleda sarnaselt muusikafestivalidega – osalejaid võimestavana, pakkudes neile võimalusi sotsialiseeruda, kujundada identiteeti ja tõsta

enesehinnangut. Sageli väärtustavad muusikafestivalid inimeste mitmekesisust või tavaolukorras marginaliseeritud rühmi (Laing, Mair 2015: 255).

Integratsiooni uurimine klubikultuuri kaudu Eestis on asjakohane, sest vaatamata ühiskonna kasvanud sidususele ja positiivsetele muutustele lõimumise võtmevaldkondades on keelekeskkondade eraldatus üks suurimaid väljakutseid.¹ Ka rahvusvaheliselt on klubikultuuri küll palju uuritud (Bennett 2020; Hae 2011; Nofre 2021 jt.), ent selle võimekus inimesi ühiskonda integreerida on jäänud pigem tähelepanuta. Ja kuigi klubidest, muusikast ja selle tähendusest on ilmunud palju (sub)kultuuride-alaseid uurimusi (Matos 2015; Brewster, Broughton 2006), tuginevad poliitikakujundajad jätkuvalt pigem kvantitatiivsetele uurimustele, mis hõlmavad andmeid öise majanduse, kuritegevuse ja ööeluga kaasnevate terviseprobleemide kohta. Ööelu sotsiokultuuriline väärtus ja olulisus integratsioonis, kaasamises ja kogukonna loomisel ning kuuluvustunde ja sotsiaalse heaolu hõlbustamisel on jäänud rakenduslikes uurimustes tagaplaanile (Nofre 2021: 507).

Praktikas sekkuvad Eesti kohalikud omavalitsused ja riik siiski üha rohkem heakorra ja riskikäitumisega seotud teemadesse, edastades öise vaba aja veetmise ja meelelahutuse suhtes

¹ Lõimumisprogramm 2023–2026.

tolereerivat ja aktsepteerivat sõnumit. Näiteks loodi 2021. aastal Tallinnas ööelu nõuniku ametikoht, 2024. aastal algatati kahjude ennetamise projekt „Ööhaldjad“ ning samal aastal sõnastas terviseminister avalikus kirjas turvalisema ööelu põhimõtted.

Olles aastaid Tallinna ööelus aktiivselt osalenud, algul külalisena, seejärel korraldajana ning artikli kirjutamise ajal ka Tallinna ööelu nõunikuna, olen märganud Tallinna klubikultuuris osalejate hulgas eri emakeelega inimesi. Otsese tõuke uurida klubikultuuri kui eesti- ja venekeelsete inimeste integreerijat sain mõne aasta tagusest vestlusest kahekümnendates aastates venekeelse eestlasega. Ta leidis, et kõige kaasavamalt ja demokraatlikumalt saab venekeelne noor osaleda Eesti kultuuris just klubikultuuri kaudu. Vestluspartneri sõnul kuulus näiteks laulupidu täielikult eestikeelsetele eestlastele, mida ta näitlikustas rangelt eestikeelse repertuaariga. Samuti leidis ta, et akadeemilise muusika kontsertidel järgitakse kindlaid tavasid nii laval kui ka saalis, mis ei soosi uute kontaktide teket. Ent ööelus valitseb spontaansus, mis soodustab suhete teket ka võõraste ja eri keelt kõnelevate inimeste vahel.

Artikli teoreetiline raamistik pärineb subkultuuride uuringutest ja kultuurisotsioloogiast, mis pakuvad tööriistu, et uurida keerukaid ja mitmesuguseid kultuuriga seotud nähtusi, olgu need lühi- või pikaajalised, komplitseeritud või lihtsakoelisemad (Hall, Neitz, Battani 2003: 3). Esimesena võtsid subkultuuride mõiste kasutusse Ameerika Ühendriikides Chicago ülikoolis töötanud sotsioloogid. Ühtlasi uurisid nad linnaelu (Haenfler 2014: 3), millele ka minu uuring keskendub. Subkultuuride uuringuid arendas edasi Birminghami koolkond, leides muu hulgas, et subkultuure iseloomustavad eristuvad stiilid, millel on ideoloogiline tähendus. Neist fookustest lähtudes tugines ise näiteks Airi-Alina Allaste (1998, 2001, 2015), Jordi Nofre (2020, 2021, 2023) ja Andy Bennetti (2020) uuringutele.

Töö olulisemad märksõnad on klubikultuur, integratsioon ja ööelu. Analüüsi aluseks on kümme poolstruktureeritud süvainterviitud, millest kolm on tehtud Sveta baaris aega veetnud eesti- ja seitse venekeelsete inimestega, osalt inglise keeles. Intervjuudest saadud infot tõlgendades tuginesin ka isiklikule ööelukogemusele. Analüüsimeetodina kasutasin temaatilist analüüsi

intervjuudest moodustuvatele narratiividele. See on tavapärane meetod nii subkultuuride uurimises kui ka kultuurisotsioloogias, mis võimaldab selgitada, mõista ja kirjeldada nii üksikisikute kui ka institutsioonide tegevusmustreid (Erol 2015: 105).

Järgnevalt selgitan, mida artiklis ööelu ja alternatiivse klubikultuuri all mõistan, ning vaatlen peavoolu ja alternatiivse klubikultuuri omavahelist dünaamikat. Seejärel kirjeldan kümnendite kaupa Tallinna klubikultuuri arengut pärast taasiseseisvumist. Viimases peatükis analüüsin Sveta baari näitel klubikultuuri tähtsust eesti- ja venekeelsete inimeste integreerijana. Loodan, et artikkel illustreerib klubikultuuri potentsiaali integratsiooni edendamisel ning panustab eesti- ja venekeelsete inimeste lõimumise diskussiooni.

Klubikultuuri ning öise linnaelu majanduslik ja sotsiokultuuriline perspektiiv

Selles artiklis mõistan klubikultuuri all kogu süsteemi, milles öisel ajal tegutsevad kultuuri-asutused eksisteerivad – alates muusikast, artistidest ja peoruumidest kuni klubikultuuris osalemise põhjuste, seal peetud vestluste ja loodud suheteeni. Klubikultuur jaguneb omakorda peavoolu ja alternatiivseks klubikultuuriks. Alternatiivset klubikultuuri iseloomustab kureeritud ja läbimõeldud muusikavalik, samas kui peavoolu klubikultuuri esindavad populaarsed ööklubid, kus kõlavad pigem raadiohitid. Alternatiivses klubikultuuris osalejaid iseloomustab pikaajalisem pühendumine (Laiakask 2018: 24) ning erinevalt peavoolu klubikultuurist vaimse ja meelelise kogemuse, mitte niivõrd kaaslase otsingud (Brewster, Broughton 2006: 20). Ööelu paiku võib jagada peavoolu esindavaks ja alternatiivseteks ka majanduslike näitajate järgi. Peavoolu- ehk kommertsklubid on finantsedule suunatud ettevõtted, mida külastavad pigem majanduslikult heal järjel inimesed. Tänu kommertsklubide järjekindlale lobitööle kalduvad võimuorganid selliseid kohti rohkem aktsepteerima, pidades neid turvalisuse ja korra tagamisel pädevamaks ning väiksemateks heakorra rikkujateks (Hae 2011: 568).

Laiem avalikkus, nagu lastevanemad ja poliitikud, võib klubikultuuri stigmatiseerida vaatamata selle positiivsetele omadustele

näiteks eneseväljenduse võimaldajana, lõõgastuse pakkujana ja tähendusrikaste kontaktide loojana. Öist vaba aja veetmist väljaspool kodu on ajalooliseltki seostatud alkoholi ja narkootikumide tarvitamisega, LGBTQ+ kultuuriga, vastutustundetuma seksuaalse käitumise ja muude sageli negatiivseks peetavate nähtustega. Nii asendus Eestiski esialgne uudishimu üsna kiiresti hukkamõistuga, kui 19. ja 20. sajandi vahetusel, linnastumise algusaastail, sai alguse kaasaegne ööelu kultuur ning eestlased hakkasid regulaarselt öösiti tantsimas käima. Öist tantsimist tajuti sotsiaalsete normide rikkumisena, seda peeti moraalselt valeks ja tervist kahjustavaks. Usuti, et koos tantsimisega tarvitatakse ka narkootikume, levivad vägivald, seks ja haigused (Leivategija 2023: 15). Ometi on ööelu olnud ühiskonnas alati tähtis, see on olnud levinud viis aega veeta ja tunda kuuluvust teiste ööelus osalejatega. Ka minu intervjueeritavad kinnitasid, et ööelu ja klubikultuur ei aita ainult lõdvestuda ja end väljendada, vaid seeläbi loovad nad ka sidemeid teiste öös tegutsevate inimestega.

Öise klubikultuuriga seostub ka ööelu või ööelumajanduse mõiste – see hõlmab kõike seda, mis toimub linnas vahemikus kell 18.00–6.00, pidades silmas kõiki inimesi taksojuhtidest ja meditsiinasutuste öise vahetuse töötajatest kuni baaride personali ja meelelahutusasutustes viibijateni. Ööelu eksisteerib igas suuremas linnas, kuid prioriteetsuse ja reguleerituse aste võib olla väga erinev. Näiteks Suurbritannias sai ööelust poliitiline prioriteet, kui 1980. aastate lõpus võtsid mõned deindustrialiseeritud Briti linnad kasutusele 24 tunni linna kontseptsiooni. Seda kontseptsiooni kasutatakse linnade puhul, kus atraktiivsed elamurajoonid on integreeritud peamistesse äripiirkondadesse või nende lähedusse. Sellistes linnades asuvad mugavad kaubandusvõimalused töökoha lähedal ja keskkond on turvalisem,² neis liigub korralik ühistransport ning leidub palju meelelahutus-, kultuuri- ja vaba aja veetmise võimalusi (Kelly 2016: 13). Selle kontseptsiooni rakendamine viitab püüdlusele edendada postindustriaalse majanduse nimel ka ööelumajandust (Hae 2011: 566).

Sarnaselt Suurbritanniaga mõistavad ka paljude Saksamaa linnade võimud ööelu mõju kohalikule majandusele, panustades järjepidevalt valdkonna elujõusse ja mitmekesisusse. Et Tallinna linnavalitsuse jaoks ei ole erinevalt Suurbritannia või Saksamaa linnadest ööelu siiani olnud prioriteet ning selle korraldamiseks ei ole loodud ühtegi strateegia- või arengudokumenti, on see ka alareguleeritud ja juhuslik. Ometi on ööelul lisaks majanduslikele kasuteguritele positiivne mõju ka sotsiokultuurilisele arengule. Ööelus kohtutakse teiste inimestega, kujundatakse oma identiteeti ja lõbutsetakse (Liempt jt. 2015: 418), samuti saavad seal kokku erinevad kultuurid ja rahvused (Farrer 2008: 3). Ideaalis julgustab ööelu nii kohalikke kui ka mujalt tulnuid osalema kogukonnaelus, edendades sotsiaalset ühtekuuluvust, kogukonna identiteeti ja mitmekultuurilist mõistmist. See mõjutab suhteid erinevate sugude, vanusegruppide, rahvuste ja religioonide vahel (Nofre 2020: 131–132). Et seda kõike võimaldada, tulebki kujundada mitmekesisist ööelu soosivat poliitikat.

Tallinna klubikultuuri areng pärast taasiseseisvumist

Järgnevalt annan ülevaate, kuidas on alternatiivne klubikultuur erinevatel kümnenditel alates Eesti taasiseseisvumisest 1991. aastal Tallinnas arenenud. Selles ülevaates tuginen 1990. aastatest kõneledes Airi-Alina Allaste uuringutele (1998, 2001, 2015). Kuigi edasistes perioodides esineb uurimislünki, on mul mõnevõrra võimalik tugineda 2010. aastatest kirjutades Peeter Vihma tööle (2013) ning sealt edasi muu hulgas enda isiklikule kogemusele ööelus.

1990. aastad: klubikultuur gentrifikatsiooni eelses vanalinnas

Pärast taasiseseisvumist 1991. aastal veedeti öist vaba aega ennekõike vanalinnas ning sealsetel avalikel pidudel osalesid näiteks elektroonilise, *indie*- ja punkmuusika huvilised. Esimene avalik üritus alternatiivse elektroonilise tantsumuusikaga toimus 1991. aasta augustis Kodulinna Majas (Allaste 2001: 69), kus toimus ka aastal 1992 esimene laiemalt reklaamitud

² Kuna täielikult turvaline ruum on klubikultuurist rääkides utoopiline, kasutatakse ööelu kontekstis mõistet „turvalisem ruum“, mis tähistab püüdlust kogukondlike, ahistamisest ja vägivaldast vabade ruumide suunas.

klubiüritus. Kodulinna Maja ajalugu algas küll varem, juba Nõukogude aja lõpuaastail. Nimelt ehitati see 1986. aastal Tallinna Noorte Klubi Kodulinn staabiks ning juba 1987. aastal võõrustati seal kaheksa bändiga avalikku punk-kontserti „Sponsorparaad '87” (Vangonen 2017: 28). Pärast Kodulinna Maja üritusi asuti pidusid organiseerima teistelgi vanalinna üüripindadel (Allaste 1998: 30). Oluline koht Eesti klubikultuuri algusaastatel oli ka Tallinna vanalinnas asunud Malemajal, kus alates 1993. aasta suvest toimus samuti perioodiliselt üritusi (Allaste 2001: 70).

Lisaks nimetatud paikadele hindas alternatiivse muusika publik vanalinnas ka selliseid kohti nagu Bel Air, Restko, ENKE kelder, Biti torn, Kuku klubi, kohvik Koopakass, Tallinna Kinomaja ning Von Krahlis baar. Kommertslikule klubiskeenele andis hoogu juurde 1996. aastal asutatud klubi Hollywood, kus kohalikud koos inglise DJ Rhythm Doctoriga käivitasid pidude sarja „Heaven and Hell” ja „House of Rhythm” (Allaste 2001: 73).

Kümnendi keskel olid kohalikud sunnitud vanalinnast üha enam välja kolima ja oma tee vanalinna leidis aina rohkem turiste. Ka noored asusid vanalinna kõrval otsima uusi linnaosi, kus aega veeta. Nii liiguti 1990. aastate keskel Ida-Tallinna suunas, omajagu ööelukohti tekkis kesklinnas Kompassi asumis ja peod toimusid ka Pirital (Allaste 1998: 32). Näiteks korraldati 1994. aasta jaanuarist igal nädalal elektroonilise muusika üritusi kommertsklubis Piraat, mis asus Pirital. Sama aasta veebruaris toimus Pirita TOP-is mitu päeva kestnud ja inimmassi kohale toonud „Reivland” (Allaste 2001: 77). Sel perioodil tegutsesid väljaspool vanalinna teisedki populaarsed peokohad, nagu alates 1995. aastast mahajäetud tehasehoone RET (Raadio-Elektroonika Tehas), Dekoltee, pidusid toimus ka igapäevaselt avalik-õigusliku kunstiülikoolina tegutsenud Tallinna Kunstiülikoolis (täname Eesti Kunstiakadeemia) ja Enteris (kunstiülikooli keldris), mis kõik paiknesid kesklinnas Kompassi asumis. Ilmselt laienes pidude areaal kiiresti tänu klubikultuuri kasvavale populaarsusele, mistõttu jäid vanalinna ruumid lihtsalt kitsaks – peod jõudsid väljapoole vanalinna, sest klubikultuur oli aina populaarsem, selles osalejate hulk tõusis mõnesajalt fännilt üha suuremate arvudeni.

2000. aastad: uudistamine uutes linnaosades

Sel perioodil pidutsesid alternatiivse ja peavoolu klubikultuuri esindajad võrreldes varasema ja hilisema ajaga rohkem ühiselt vanalinnas. 1990. aastate lõpus ja 2000. aastate alguses muutus varem alternatiivseks peetud klubikultuur veelgi populaarsemaks, sündmusi kuulutati välja avalikult ja reklaamiti laialt. Üks selline peosari oli näiteks 1997. aastal Von Krahlis alustatud „Mutant Disco”, kus mängiti küll teadlikuma publiku hinnatud *house*-muusikat, ent seda külastas väga palju ka skeeneväliseid inimesi. Samamoodi populaarne peosari oli Ringo Ringvee ja Tarrvi Laamanni *reggae*-muusikale ja kultuurile pühendatud „Bashment” (Allaste 2001: 75).

Lisandus ka mitmeid gei- ja lesbiklubisid, mis olid nii LGBTQ+ inimeste kui ka heterote hulgas populaarsed, näiteks Nightman ja Angel. Nightman oli end vabameelseks nimetav klubi, kus hinnati tavatut riietumist (Talpsepp 1999), mängiti diskot, *funky*- ja *house*'i – inimesed said vabalt olla nemad ise (Klubi 2002; Drobot 2020). Kui Nightman muutus LGBTQ+ inimeste meelest heterote hulgas liiga populaarseks, avati küll heteroid tolereeriv, kuid ennekõike geimeestele suunatud glamuurne, sööki ja jooki serveeriv kolme saaliga Club Angel (Pauts 2004).

2000. aastate lõpus kujunesid alternatiivse kultuuri esindajate põhilisteks ööelu sihtkohtadeks Kristiine ja Põhja-Tallinn, mis on nii jäänud tänaseni. Liikumist vanalinnast Kristiinesse ja Põhja-Tallinnasse selgitab muu hulgas gentrifikatsioon. Tegemist on protsessiga, mille käigus muutub madalama maine ja soodsate rendihindadega vanade majade piirkond huvipakkuvaks sageli loome- ja teadmusvaldkonna noortele, kes otsivad odavat, ent põnevat elamiskeskonda. Tänu sellele kasvab huvi piirkonna vastu, paranenud maine muudab selle keskklassile vastuvõetavamaks ja turuväärtus kasvab (Tuvikene 2015).

Esimese näitena kultuuriasutustest, mis tekkisid gentrifikatsiooni tõttu linnasüdamest väljapoole, võib nimetada juba 2002. aastast Kristiines endises kummiloomade vabrikuhooones tegutsenud Kultuuritehast Polymer. Sealseid stuudioid kasutasid aegade jooksul paljud kunstnikud, muusikud, filmitegijad, seltsid ja subkultuuride esindajad (Kartau 2014). Polymeris toimusid regulaarselt ka peod, neist tuntuim „Diletantide Avangard”. See oli noorte tegevuse arendamisele

suunatud suuremahuline alternatiivmuusika üritusesari, mis kaasas ansambleid, kunstnikke, luuletajaid jt. (Diletantide Avangard 2010).

2010. aastad: peavoolu ja alternatiivse klubikultuuri erinevused

2010. aastate esimesel poolel asusid põhilised peopaigad Tallinna kesklinnas ja mõnede eranditeta äärelinnades. Selle perioodi ööelust rääkides saab klubid jaotada kolmeks: a) peavooluklubid, näiteks Hollywood, Venus ja Parlament; b) alternatiivklubid, näiteks Von Krahl, Korter ja Sinilind; ja c) nn. *underground*-klubid (Vihma 2013: 360).

Kesklinnast väljapoole tekkisid just *underground*- või alternatiivklubid. Aastal 2011, kui Polymer sulges avalikele üritustele oma suure ruumi, avati aadressil Ülase 12 samanimeline, siiani tegutsev ja end sotsiaalkeskuseks nimetav antifašistlik DIY ehk tee-seda-ise klubi. Akronüüm viitab peo- ja muusikakultuuris produktiooniviisile, mis erineb selgelt peavoolu muusikatööstuse omast. Selle mõtteviisi südames on korraldajad ja asutused, kelle väärtused asuvad võrreldes kinnisvaraarendajatega spektri vastasküljel – kui arendajad kipuvad linnu finantskasumi nimel täis ehitama, siis DIY skeene soovib linnu rikastada kogukondliku kultuuri kaudu (Moloney 2019).

Sealsamas Lille asumis ongi aastast 2013 tegutsenud mitmed alternatiivklubid, näiteks ULME, ASUM ja UNI. Alates 2016. aasta suvest praeguseni on endiste alternatiivklubide ruumides avatud *techno*- ja *house*-klubi 9/11. Sama hoovi peal tegutses aastatel 2016–2018 Sveta baari eelkäija Helikopter. Klubikülastajad on Helikopterit kirjeldanud kohana, mis tõi tänu oma asukohale juba enne Sveta baari lisaks erinevatele subkultuuridele kokku inimesi eri linnaosadest ja rahvustest (vestlus autoriga).

Et kunagises tööstuspiirkonnas asub mitmeid erineva suurusega tühje ruume, mida saab ürituste korraldamiseks edukalt ümber ehitada, on Lille asumis võimalust näinud ka peavoolupublikule keskendunud ettevõtjad. Madara tänaval on eri aegadel tegutsenud peavooluklubid Club Von Überlingen, Club Factory ja praegugi tegutsev Helitehas.

On mitu põhjust, miks asub Lille asumis juba üle kümne aasta üksteisele nii lähestikku eriilmelisi ööelupaiku. Esiteks on elumajad sealsest garaažide- ja tööstuskompleksist piisavalt kaugel,

teiseks ei ole sellele territooriumile tekkinud konkureerivaid ärihuvisid. Ühe sealse rentniku sõnul on üürileandja näol tegu ka oma kinnisvara eest hoolt mitte kandva omanikuga, mistõttu on huvi ruumide rentimise vastu tagasihoidlik. See muudab need kättesaadavaks vähenõudlikele loomeinimestele (vestlus autoriga). Siinkohal on üks traagilisemaid näiteid elektripaigaldisest ja korrast ära juhtmestikust alanud põleng 2022. aasta lõpus, mis lõppes inimese surmaga (Lomp, Veltman 2022).

2020. aastad: alternatiivklubid seljatavad vanlinna

Ööklubid ei ole ka tänapäeval vanalinnast täiesti kadunud, kuid sinna on alles jäänud põhiliselt peavooluklubid, nagu Hollywood, Venus, Privé ning vanalinnast viie minuti kaugusel asuv Amigo. Vanalinnas asub ka klubi Studio, mis eristub teistest klubidest spetsiaalselt elektroonilise muusika mängimiseks mõeldud helisüsteemi Funktion-One poolest, kuid erinevalt algusaastatest on Studiostki artikli kirjutamise ajal saanud pigem peavooluklubi.

2023. aasta lõpus avati Hollywoodi all klubi Monument, mille muusikavalik otsib peavoolu ja alternatiivse muusika puutepunkti, kuid on siiski suunatud küpses eas, keskmisest rohkem teenivale kliendile (Kröönström 2023). See pigem välistab eksperimenteeriva alternatiivse klubikultuuri publiku, kes on väljas käies orienteeritud pigem muusika nautimisele kui tarbimisele.

Kui vanlinna on peavoolukultuur ühes turistidega üle võtnud, siis alternatiivset klubikultuuri iseloomustab uudishimu ja pidev suund piirkondadesse, mis on veel keskklassistumisest puutumata. Seetõttu asub enamik 2020. aastate alternatiivklubidest Kristiines ja Põhja-Tallinnas. Muusikahuvilised on kaugemale liikunud ka gentrifikatsioonist vallutatud Kalamajast ning jõudnud Pelguranna ja Koplini. Nendesse piirkondadesse on ajutiselt või alaliselt asunud HALL, Plastik, ULM, demoClub ja Paavli Kultuuritehas. Lille asumis avati 2023. kevadel ka kväärklubi HUNGR ning 2023. aasta lõpus end salaklubina identifitseeriv Mini K (Mini K 2024).

Üks võimalik põhjus lisaks gentrifikatsioonile, miks on ööelu liikunud vanalinnast Kristiinesse ja Põhja-Tallinnasse, on vanlinna muutunud olemus. Linna küllastavate välisturistide arv on

pidevalt tõusnud, jõudes 2014. aastal üle nelja miljoni inimeseni. Kõrghooajal võib Tallinna vanalinna ainuüksi ühe päeva jooksul külastada 25 000–40 000 inimest ning seega on vanalinnast saanud turismiatraktsioon (Talk jt. 2023: 21–22). Kui mitmetes Lõuna-Euroopa linnades on korraldatud turistidevastaseid meelevaldusi, siis Tallinnas on alternatiivkultuuri esindajad eelistanud leida endale lihtsalt uued kohad.

Kui päevasel ajal on vanalinn kohalike jaoks vähem atraktiivne ajaveetmise paik turistimasside tõttu, siis öisel ajal lähevad kohalikega konflikti ka teiste linnaosade elanikud, kes sinna turistide kõrval pidutsema tulevad. Ja kuigi vanalinna leiavad tee ka tallinlased, on sealsete restoranide, baaride ja ööklubide külastaja võrdkuju üldjuhul siiski väliturist, kes kodust eemal olles lubab endale normidest kõrvalekalduvat käitumist näiteks tänaval lärmates, häirides kaaskodanikke seda enam, et sanktsioone ei järgne (Talk jt. 2023: 25).

Probleemi võimendab asjaolu, et Tallinna linnal puudub linnaplaneerimise arengusuund, mis puudutab meelelahutus- ja toitlustusasutuste paiknemist linnas. Tänaeni ei ole öise müra vähendamiseks tehtud ühtegi väga edukat sammu. Seetõttu võib mõista vanalinnaelanike aastakümnetega kasvanud vastuseisu sealsele ööelule ning mõned ööelukohad ongi lõpetanud vanalinnas tegutsemise, mh. legendaarne baar-teater Von Krahl.

Sveta baar eesti- ja venekeelsete inimeste integreerijana

Järgnevalt vaatlen Sveta baari ning laiemalt klubikultuuri võimekust eesti- ja venekeelsete inimeste integreerijana. Analüüsi aluseks on kümme poolstruktureeritud süvaintervjuid, millest kolm on tehtud Sveta baaris aega veetva eesti- ja seitse venekeelse inimesega vahemikus oktoober 2022 kuni jaanuar 2023.

Kõik intervjuueeritavad kuuluvad Y-generatsiooni, keda ühendab digiajastul koos tehnoloogiaga üleskasvamine ja ülim sõltuvus internetist igasuguse teabe hankimisel (Kruger, Saayman 2015: 369). See põlvkond oli tunnistajaks digitaalsete tehnoloogiate ülikiirele tekkele ja arengule, eriti seoses muusika tarbimisega. Ühelt poolt on muusika tänu internetile ja erinevatele tehnoloogilistele lahendustele kättesaadavam

kui kunagi varem ning žanripiiridel ei ole enam varasemaga võrreldes samasugust tähendust. Teisalt on lõpmatu infohulk viinud mõned inimesed tagasi „aeglasemate” ja lapsepõlvst tuttavate meediumide juurde, nagu näiteks vinüülid. See muudab Y-generatsiooni põlvkonnaks, keda iseloomustab tehnoloogiline eklektilisus ning kellel on muusika kuulamisel suhe nii analoog- kui ka digitaalsete tehnoloogiaga (Nowak, Bennett 2020: 348–352). Samamoodi prioriseerib Y-generatsioon vaba aja veetmist, puhkust ja sotsialiseerumist ning väärtustab mitmekesisust ja võrdsust (Kruger, Saayman 2015: 368–369).

Artikli jaoks intervjuueeritud inimesed olid Sveta baari regulaarsed külalised. Jälgisin, et valim oleks variatiivne, ning intervjuueerisin nii eesti- kui ka venekeelseid mehi ja naisi. Enamikku tunnen isiklikult ning ülejäänud leidsin lumepallimeetodil. Intervjuude läbiviimise ajal oli nende vanus vahemikus 21–31. Kümnest üheksa oli seotud ööelukultuuriga, olles ise DJ-d, promootorid või klubiomanikud. Kuigi Sveta baar seisab mitmekesisuse ja võrdsete võimaluse eest, olid seitse intervjuueeritavat mehed, mida seletab ehk asjaolu, et elektrooniline tantsumuusika on meestekeskne kultuur ning naised on sellega seotud keskkondades marginaliseeritud (Farrugia 2012: 7).

Viisin intervjuud läbi individuaalselt ning need kestsid 20 minutit kuni tund. Seitse intervjuud toimus eesti keeles ja kolm inglise keeles. Intervjuuküsimused jagunesid kolmeks. Esimene teemadering puudutas intervjuueeritavate tausta, teine uuris klubikultuuri isiklikku tähendust, teekonda klubikultuurini ning muusika olulisust intervjuueeritavate jaoks. Kolmas küsimustering käsitles klubikultuuris eksisteerivaid suhteid ja inimestevahelist dünaamikat. Intervjuu lõpus uurisin, milline võiks olla kohalike omavalitsuste ja riigi suhe klubikultuuriga ning kuidas tajub vastanute meelest klubikultuuri laiem avalikkus. Intervjuueeritavate anonüümsuse tagamiseks kasutan pseudonüüme.

Intervjuudes esile kerkinud teemade põhjal kirjeldan esmalt, kuidas kujunes Sveta baarist oluline paik eesti- ja venekeelsete noorte integratsioonis. Seejärel vaatlen, kuidas jõudsid uuringus osalejad baarini ja said selle kogukonna osaks. Sellele järgneb alternatiivse klubikultuuri väärtusruumi analüüs ning viimaks kirjeldan

eesti- ja venekeelsete inimeste omavahelist suhtedünaamikat alternatiivses klubikultuuris, samuti muusika tähtsust klubiküllastajatele.

Toetava materjalina olen artiklis kasutanud refleksiooni enda kogemustest klubielus. Minu isiklik ööelukogemus on kestnud üle 15 aasta, mille jooksul olen olnud nii küllastaja kui ka korraldaja ning Tallinna ööelu nõuniku rollis. Klubikultuurist eesti- ja venekeelsete inimeste integreerijana hakkasin mõtlema pärast seda, kui Sveta baar loodi. Kuigi küllastasin näiteks Helikopterit, kus käisid samuti koos erinevat keelt kõnelevad inimesed, joonistus just Sveta baari puhul selgemalt välja selle võime inimgrupe integreerida. Kõigist Tallinna alternatiivklubidest on minu suhe Sveta baari ning sealse kogukonnaga kõige isiklikum. Nii nagu selle artikli jaoks intervjuueeritud inimestele on Sveta baar mullegi pakkunud turvalist keskkonda, kus olen tundnud end oodatuna, hoituna ja koduselt.

Sveta baar: kontekst

Sveta baar oli Põhja-Tallinnas, Kalamajas Depoo alal asuv populaarne koht, mis tegutses baari, öökubi ja etendusasutusena ning mahutas umbes 300 inimest. Baar eristus algusest peale hoiakuga, mis oli inimeste suhtes silmatorkavalt kutsuv, sõltumata näiteks nende rahvuslikust kuuluvusest või seksuaalsest sättumusest. Sealjuures oli Sveta baaril eristuv identiteet, mille tundis ära nii kujunduskeeles, reklaamtekstides, sisekujunduses, programmis kui ka kogu tervikus. Ka lühitutvustus Sveta baari Facebooki lehel ütles, et tegu on „avatud mõtlemisega kõiki tervitava kohaga, mis tunneb uhkust oma mitmekesise programmi üle, on seiklushimuline ja heasüdamlik ning pakub platvormi mitmesugustele subkultuuridele. Alates klubiõhtutest kuni *live*-kontsertideni püütakse alati nihutada uusi piire ja tuua inimesi kokku”.³

Teekond Sveta baarini ja selle kogukonna osaks saamine

Sarnaselt globaalse kogemusega (Kulczynski, Baxter, Young 2016: 245) jõudis ka suurem osa minu intervjuueeritavatest Sveta baari ning teistesse alternatiivsetesse klubidesse, nagu Lekker, HALL või Kauplus Aasia, huvist muusika vastu. Aleksander (28) oli enne klubides käima hakkamist trummar ning Kostja (31) asus

DJ-tamist harjutama enne ööelus osalemist. Kõigil ülejäänuil tekkis huvi muusika mängimise või sündmuste korraldamise vastu pärast esimesi kokkupuuteid klubikultuuriga. Irina (22), Robin (21) ja Dmitri (22), kes jõudsid klubikultuurini juhuslikult, asusid pärast mõnda aega regulaarselt väljaskäimist ka ise DJ-de ja korraldajatena tegutsema. See näitab tavapäraselt tendentsi, mille kohaselt on alternatiivskeenedes piirid aktiivse looja ja passiivse fänni vahel sageli hägusad (Davidjants 2022: 324). Mia (25), Vladimir (23), Oliver (31) ja Andrei (24) jõudsid alternatiivklubidesse teadlikumalt ning hakkasid paralleelselt tegelema ka loominguga – produtseerima ja mängima DJ-na muusikat või esinema *drag*-artistidena. Vaid Olga (26) osaleb klubikultuuris ainult küllastajana.

Kuna väljaskäimise eesmärgid on muu hulgas suhtlus, sotsiaalse võrgustiku ja sotsiaalse kapitali laiendamine (Jiang 2017: 2), toimub ka uute tutvuste ja sidemete tekkimine loomulikult seeläbi, kui regulaarselt ööelus osalevad inimesed toovad uusi inimesi seltskonda. Aleksandr:

Tavaliselt on nii, et keegi sõber toob oma sõbra kaasa, me hakkame omavahel rääkima, vestluse käigus saame tuttavaks, räägime edasi ja tekib uus side uue inimesega. Järgmisel üritusel toob tema oma sõbra kaasa ja siis saame veel omakorda tuttavaks ja nii edasi.

Aleksandri öeldu illustreerib ilmekalt, kuidas Tallinna klubikultuuri kogukond orgaaniliselt areneb ja kasvab. Ta maalib pildi (kindla muusika-stiiliga) skeenedest – unikaalsetest lokaalsetest nähtustest, mis muudavad mingi piirkonna liikmed kogukonnaks. Lisaks armastusele muusika, tantsimise ja kultuuri vastu seovad klubikultuuri skeenes regulaarselt osalevaid inimesi üksteisega ka muu sotsiaalne kontekst, ümbritsev keskkond ja toimuvad sündmused (Glass 2012: 697), sarnane maailmavaade ja ühised huvid, aga ka näiteks frustratsioon poliitikas ja ühiskonnas toimuva tõttu. Mia:

Mõnikord [ühendab] ka nagu reaalne frustratsioon, ma ei tea, näiteks EKRE valitsuse vastu pluss ilmselt frustratsioon ühiskonna vastu. Ja siis see kokku tulemine ja see tunne, et okei, siin saame nüüd lõpuks ennast koos

³ Sveta baar, *Facebook*, <https://www.facebook.com/SvetaTallinn> (5.10.2023).

välja elada. Mulle tundub, et see on see, mis ühendab neid inimesi.

Seega on alternatiivne klubikultuur näide positiivsest poliitilisest aktivismist, mis pakub nii selles osalevale üksikindiviidile kui ka kogukonnale elujaatava kogemuse, mis ei ole rõhuv. Sarnaselt ööelu arenguga mujal maailmas (Street 2012: 1) kinnitab ka Tallinna näide, et pidutsemine võib olla poliitiline tegevus, mis inspireerib ühiskondlikku kollektiivset tegevust ja loob aluse sotsiaalsele aktivismile.

Olenemata sellest, milline on inimeste peamine ajend teekonnal klubikultuurini, pakub see keskkond vaba ja avatud platvormi, kus inimesed saavad üksteisega suhelda, uute inimestega tutvuda, tunda ühtekuuluvust teistega ning luua uusi tähendusrikkaid sotsiaalseid sidemeid. Inimeste kuuluvustunnet suurendavad just elavat muusikat esitavad kohad, mis annavad ka võimaluse üksteisega suhelda (Hoeven, Hitters 2019: 266). Nii on Sarasoni (1974: x) järgi kogukondlikkuse üks põhilisi elemente kuuluvustunne. Sellele lisanduvad kogukonna liikmesus, liikme mõjuvõim, integratsioon ning vajaduste täitumine ja jagatud emotsionaalne side (Hyde, Chavis 2007: 181–182). Sellist kogukondlikkust illustreerib Irina kogemus, kelle soov Eestist ära kolida muutus, kui pärast keskkooli näitas juhuslik eestikeelne tuttav talle Sveta baari. Seeläbi avanes tema jaoks varem täiesti tundmatu, kuid inspireeriv maailm oma kogukonnaga. Nagu teistest nii sai ka temast regulaarne klubikultuuris osaleja ja sealse kogukonna liige:

Kui ma olin seitseteist, enne kui ma kohtusin eestlastega, siis ma tahtsin ära kolida. Ma mõtlesin, siin on nii igav, kõige igavam. Kõige igavam riik, kõige igavam linn, meil on nii vaikne. Meil on nii kuidagi rahulik, igav, mina olen noor, mida ma siin teen. Siis kohtusin Tinderis selle kutiga ja ta kutsus mind Svetasse. Ma ei olnud kunagi Svetas käinud, ma ei olnud kunagi nagu pidudel käinud, ma ei teadnud absoluutselt, mis see on ja ma ei kuulanud niisugust muusikat. Ja kui ma jõudsin sinna, ma olin nagu vau. Ma olin nii üllatunud, et siuksed asjad Tallinnas toimuvad. Siis ma palusin, et näita mulle veel selliseid kohti ja ta näitas mulle HALLi. [...] Ja no kuidagi noh, ühest sõbrast sai teine ja kolmas ja kui sa käid klubides iga nädalavahetus, siis sa jääd

inimestele meelde. Lisavad sind Facebookis ja nii edasi.

Sarnaselt Irinaga rõhutasid teisedki uuringuosalised Sveta baari rolli nende isikliku kogukonna tekkel. Paljud intervjuueeritavad tõid välja, et nende igapäevane suhtlusringkond koosneb inimestest, kellega nad on aastate jooksul klubides tutvunud, lisaks pärinevad sealt olulised tööalased kontaktid.

Alternatiivse klubikultuuri väärtusruumid

Klubikultuuris osalevad noored võivad mõjuda elitaarsena, seostades end tugevalt mõne konkreetse muusika ja stiiliga ning eristades end sedasi peavoolu noortest (Allaste 2015: 133). Sellele tendentsile viitas näiteks Vladimir, öeldes, et alternatiivse klubikultuuri kogukond võib kõrvaltvaatajale tunduda elitaarne, kuid pakub tänu oma teatavale kinnisusele selle osalejatele kuuluvustunnet: „See on kogukond, kas see meeldib mulle või mitte. Mõnikord võib see tunduda elitaarne, sest koosneb sõprade sõpradest ja nende sõpradest.”

Kogukondlikkusega kaasnevad ka kindlad väärtused, mis minu intervjuueeritavate sõnul iseloomustavad alternatiivset klubikultuuri esindavaid kohti, sealhulgas Sveta baari. Sealse kogukonna väärtusi kirjeldatakse selliste märksõnadega nagu vabadus, avatus, ühtekuuluvustunne, autentsus ja mitmekesisus, mis on osa nende inimeste identiteedist ja elustiilist.

Ühtekuuluvustundega seostus ka kogukonda kuulumine. Kuigi lõbutsemine ja lõõgastumine on olulised, on alternatiivses klubikultuuris vähemalt sama tähtsad jagatud kogemused ja üksteise toetamine. Selles kontekstis ilmnis olulise aspektina alternatiivse klubikultuuri eriline tähendus LGBTQ+ inimeste jaoks; see pakub neile turvalisemat ja aktsepteerivat ruumi, kus nad saavad olla nemad ise. See tähendus kattub LGBTQ+ (sõbralike) kohtadega üle maailma, mida ühendab eesmärk pakkuda ohutut ja tunnustavat keskkonda ning eristuda hinnanguid andvatest kodu-, töö- või koolikeskkondadest (Pelsy 2021: 13). Sama kinnitas Mia:

[Alternatiiv]klubid on väljund nagu ühes mõttes, sest kui ma hakkasin väljas käima, just geiklubides käima, siis ma sain olla mina ise. Too moment pidin kodus varjama, kes ma

olen, koolis natuke vähem varjama, aga ikkagi ja kui ma astu[si]n klubisse, mis on LGBTQ+, siis ma sain seal olla mina ise.

Teise väärtusena iseloomustas alternatiivseid peokohti väga teadlikult kureeritud muusika-programm. Pea kõik vastajad rõhutasid ühe esimese tunnuseks muusika olulisust, näiteks üksinda tantsimist kui n.-ö. püha tegevust. Seegi aspekt kattub globaalse kogemusega, sest muusika ja sellega seonduv on olnud läbi aegade noortekultuuris olulisel kohal. Ka Y-generatsiooni esindajate jaoks on see oluline elustiili kujundaja, mille järgi arendada identiteeti ja sotsiaalselt võrgustikku (Kruger, Saayman 2015: 369).

Kokkuvõttes väärtustavad alternatiivklubid kultuurilist kogemust ja pakuvad mitmekülgset sisu ja erinevaid kunstivorme – muusikast ja teatrist kuni tantsu ja etenduskunstideni. Sveta baaris said inimesed end väljendada, muusikat nautida, tantsida ja lõõgastuda, kogedes samal ajal vabadust ja tundes end turvaliselt, kartmata kriitikat. Irina:

Kõik, mis mind huvitab praegu, on need üritused ja muusika. Mulle meeldib kõige rohkem, et kui ma olen [alternatiiv]klubis, siis mind ei häiri mitte midagi ja ma võin lihtsalt tantsida. Ehk siis see tunne toob mulle nii palju rõõmu. Ma ei tea, mis veel tooks mulle nii palju positiivseid emotsioone.

Isiklik muusikakogemus jagatud klubiruumis

Juba reivikultuuri algusaastatel Suurbritannias tulid noored kokku, et tantsida muusika järgi, millest keegi teine peale nende ei hoolinud (Brewster, Broughton 2006: 87). Selle uurimuse jaoks läbiviidud intervjuudest ilmselt, et muusika on alternatiivses klubikultuuris osalejaid ühendav tegur, kuid erinevad inimesed tajuvad ja kogevad seda erinevalt. Näiteks kirjeldas Oliver, kuidas kodus ei kuula ta samasugust muusikat nagu klubis ning klubis kõlav muusika ei ole vaid helitaust, vaid kogu kogemuse oluline osa, mis loob vajaliku keskkonna eneseväljenduseks, nagu tantsimine või esinemine. Oliver:

Kodus ei kuula ma sellist muusikat nagu klubis, selle jaoks on vaja kindlalt seisundit. Minu jaoks on muusika osa klubikultuurist, üks osa tervikust. See on pigem vahend, läbi mille ma olen nii-öelda, saan tantsida, plaate mängida või esineda.

Ka Irina, kelle jaoks on muusika tema põhiline hobi, käib klubis eelkõige selleks, et segamatult muusikat kuulata ja selle järgi tantsida. See hoiak tõendab muusika emotsionaalset ja vaimset mõju inimestele, pakkudes neile võimalust tunda ennast vabalt ning end läbi tantsu ja liikumise väljendada. Irina: „Klubis meeldib mulle kõige rohkem, kui saan segamatult muusika järgi tantsida. Ma ei näe midagi, ma ei kuule kedagi, lihtsalt on mina ja muusika.”

Intervjuudest järeldus, et inimesed, kes peavad end Sveta baariga seotud kogukonna osaks, hindavad sellist klubikeskkonda, kus muusikat tõeliselt väärtustatakse ja nauditakse, ja mitte sellist, kus domineerib alkoholi tarbimine või sotsiaalne surve. Seega on muusika tundmine ja hindamine alternatiivses klubikultuuris kõrgel kohal, nagu ütleb Mia: „See, mis paneb sind olema hommikuni klubis, on armastus muusika vastu ja armastus tantsimise vastu.”

Kuigi inimeste jaoks, kes peavad end Sveta baari kogukonna osaks, on muusika klubikultuuris esmane, toob Robin esile vastuolu ideaalse ja reaalse peo vahel. Seal võib muusika roll jääda sageli tagaplaanile ning inimesed keskenduda pigem omavahel suhtlemisele. Ka varasemad uuringud kinnitavad, et pidutsemist ja sõpradega koos purjujoomist seostatakse meeldivate kogemustega, nagu naermine, tantsimine ja kvaliteetse aja veetmine (Ander, Abrahamsson, Bergnehr 2017: 841–842). Selle järgi on muusika funktsioon peo kontekstis olla pigem taustaks sotsiaalsetele tegevustele kui sündmuse keskpunkt. Robin:

Ideaalses maailmas oleks muusika number üks prioriteet peol. Aga reaalsuses minnakse, ostetakse pilet, et saaks olla kuskil ja inimestega koos juua, suitsu teha. Ja muusika kipub jääma kõrvaliseks. Vahepeal käiakse ühte lugu kuulamas.

Minu intervjuud kinnitasid muusika kesksust klubikultuuris osalemisel. Ent isegi kui muusika on alternatiivses klubikultuuris paljudele kõige väärtuslikum osa, võivad selle roll ja tähendus oluliselt erineda, sõltudes klubikultuuris osalejate eelistustest. Küll aga on kõigi jaoks muusika oluline vahend, et tunda end vabalt. See pakub ühelt poolt põhjuse kokku tulla ning teiselt poolt end väljendada.

Integratsioon klubikultuuri kaudu ning eesti- ja venekeelsete inimeste suhtedünaamika

Kuna Tallinna klubide turundustegevus on tavaliselt suunatud peamiselt eesti keele kõnelejatele, on venekeelsetel inimestel Tallinna klubikultuuris infole ja seeläbi üritustele sageli piiratud ligipääs. Oma valdavalt ingliskeelse sotsiaalmeediaga erines Sveta baar keskmisest klubist. Nende teadlikult avatud turundusstrateegia sihtis keelevelikuga rahvusvahelist publikut, meelitades suurema tõenäosusega ligi kõiki, kes inglise keelt oskavad. Avatusele venekeelsete inimeste suhtes viitas ka klubi slaavipärane nimi. Seetõttu iseloomustas Sveta baari ka rahvusvaheline klientuur. Võrreldes teiste Tallinna kultuuri- ja meelelahutusasutustega oli seal lisaks eestikeelsetele rohkem vene emakeelega külastajaid.

Ka Sveta baari alustanud sõpruskonna liikmed esindasid eri rahvusi, kelle hulka kuulusid eestlased, britt, türklane ja venekeelsed eestlased (vestlus autoriga). Ilmselt oli see mitmekesisus üks põhjus, miks Sveta baar mõjus Eestis elavatele välismaalastele ja kohalikele venekeelsetele eestlastele sõbralikuna. Ka uuringus osalejad leidsid, et Sveta baar oli avatud ja sõbralik kogukonno, kus nad tundsid end oodatult ja turvaliselt. See arvamus kattub varasemate uuringutega, mille kohaselt on konkreetsetel paikadel väga oluline roll skeenede ja noortekultuuride kujunemises ja jätkumises (Glass 2012: 711). Ühtlasi oli Sveta baar mitme venekeelse intervjuueeritava jaoks, kes tunnevad end nüüdseks Tallinna peoskeenes koduselt, esimene kokkupuude eestlaste ja Tallinna klubikultuuriga.

Alternatiivse klubikultuuri külalisi tõmbab neisse paikadesse sarnane muusikamaitse, jälgitavad meediakanalid ning ennekõike võimalus aega veeta sarnaste maitse-eelistustega inimestega (Thornton 1995: 15). Ka minu intervjuudest järeldus, et Tallinna alternatiivne klubikultuur koosneb omavahel intensiivselt suhtlevatest inimestest, kellel tekib muusika tõttu automaatselt neid ühendav teema, mis ületab keelebarjääri ning soodustab eri keeletaustaga inimeste tutvumist. Aleksandr:

Noh, sellel [eesti- ja venekeelsete inimeste vahelisel] tutvusel on kindlasti kergem tekkida just klubis, sest rahvahulk on kont-

sentreeritud, palju inimesi on ühes kohas ja siis kuidagi automaatselt arvad või tead, et kui inimene tuleb sinna üritusele, siis sul on temaga mingisugune ühine teema või side olemas. Et kas muusika või üritused või klubikultuur üldiselt. Siis tuleb kergemini see tutvus, kui see kuskil mujal tuleks.

Intervjuudest ilmnes ka Sveta baari siseringi pühendumine klientidele ja kogukonnale, omanikest teenindajateni. Ka see aitas utel venekeelsetel (ja teistel mitte eestikeelsetel) inimestel ületada keelebarjääri ja luua uusi pikaajalisi sidemeid. Minu intervjuueeritavate kogemus kinnitas, et Sveta baaris sagedasti aega veetnud inimesed muutusid ühel hetkel sealses kogukonnas rohkem kui lihtsalt küllastajaks. Näiteks hakkasid nad ise muusikat mängima, tööle baaris või piletimüügis või korraldama sündmuseid. Robin:

Ma sain aru, et ma sain gümnaasiumi kõrvalt käia nädalavahetustel öösiti peol ja samal ajal raha saada selle eest. Ma hakkisin süsteemi ära. Ja siis ma hakkasingi käima niimoodi. Nüüdseks ma olen töötanud siis baaris, baari-abina, turvamehena, garderoobis, piletis jne. Nüüd teen Svetale graafilist disaini selle teleka jaoks, mis neil on see seal leti peal.

Eesti- ja venekeelsete inimeste integratsioon on kompleksne protsess ning võimalus osaleda kultuuris mängib inimeste ühiskonda kaasatusel väga tähtsat rolli. Näiteks ilmnes 2020. aasta Eesti ühiskonna lõimumismonitooringus, et avalikel kultuuri ja spordi suurüritustel osaleti sõltumata rahvusest märgatavalt harvem kui eelnenud aastatel. Osalusaktiivsuse vähenemist põhjustasid 2020. aastal muu hulgas koroonapandeemiast tingitud (kogunemis)piirangud ja majanduslik ebakindlus (Eesti ühiskonna lõimumismonitooring 2020). Sellegipoolest tehakse integratsiooni edendamiseks Eestis regulaarselt tööd nii kohalikul kui ka riiklikul tasandil. Minu intervjuueeritavate tagasiside põhjal mõjuvad senised meetmed sihtrühmale vahel siiski elukaugena. Jagades visioone, kuidas integratsiooni parandada, pakkusid intervjuueeritavad välja noortekeskustest erineva sotsiaalse platvormi loomise, mis soodustaks erineva keelega inimeste suhtlust ja ajaveetmist. Sellised kohad peaksid olema noorte jaoks loomulikud ja atraktiivsed

keskkonnad, mitte vastama poliitilistele või ametlikele standarditele. Oliver:

Peaks looma mingi ruumi, kus inimeste ühised huvid saaksid väljenduda. Ja ma ei oskagi mõelda midagi mingitest noortekeskustest või asjadest, sest ma ei ole elu sees nendes käinud. See inimene, kes käis meil noortekeskuses kooli ajal, tundus imelik. See tundub nagu sihuke veider forsseeritud asi.

Siinkohal selguski intervjuudest, et alternatiivsed klubid, nagu Sveta baar, on integratsiooniks tõhusad paigad, sest pakuvad erineva emakeelega inimestele suhtlusvõimalusi. Samas leidsid asjaosalised, et venekeelsete inimeste integreerumine eestlastega võtab veel aega, sest tegu on keerulise protsessiga, mis peab toimuma orgaaniliselt. Nad leidsid ka, et klubikultuuri potentsiaali integreerijana saaks veelgi rohkem rakendada, rõhutades just Sveta baari positiivset pretsedenti. Nende sõnul võiks suurem hulk ööeluasutusi sarnaselt Svetaga kaasata rohkem kohalikke venekeelseid elanikke, näiteks teadliku turundustegevuse kaudu. Nii ütles Irina:

Aga klubid võiksid minu meelest natuke rohkem sellega [venekeelsete kaasamisega] tegeleda, kuna meil on praegu selline olukord, et meil inimesed istuvad kodus, sest meil oli koroonat, meil on vähe raha. Võiksite kuidagi rohkem neid kutsuda siis klubisse, aga klubid lihtsalt teevad Facebooki sündmuse. Siiski saab väita, et integreerumine on läbi ühiste huvide ning klubikultuuri positiivse ja avatud suhtumise võimalik.

Seega mängib klubikultuur integratsiooni-protsessis olulist rolli, võimaldades inimestel leida ühiseid huve ja vahetada kogemusi ilma keelebarjäärita, sest nagu ilmes mu uurimusest, ei ole venekeelsetel ja venekeelsetes koolides käivatel Eesti noortel integreerumiseks palju võimalusi. Näiteks mainis Irina, et tema eesti keele oskus paranes tänu alternatiivklubides käimisele, samamoodi laienes tema eestlastest koosnev tutvusringkond. Ta sai järk-järgult osaks eestlaste seltskonnast ja kohalikust kogukonnast. Seoses sellega arvasid intervjuueeritavad, et linn võiks toetada alternatiivseid klubisid, mis integratsiooni panustavad. Kostja: „Ma arvan, et linn võiks toetada Svetat ja HALLi loomulikult. Ma arvan, et need kaks kohta on teinud integrat-

siooni heaks võib-olla isegi rohkem kui kõik need poliitilised ettevõtmised.”

Rääkides veel takistustest eesti- ja venekeelsete inimeste integreerumisel, rõhutasid venekeelsed noored väljakutseid haridussüsteemis ning toetasid täielikult eestikeelsele haridusele üleminekut ja koosõppiva kooli loomist. Dimitri: „Mina vabaneksin vene koolidest. Venekeelsetel lastel on raske Eesti koolidesse integreeruda.” See kinnitab levinud arvamust, mille kohaselt on Eesti ühiskonna üks suur probleem ja lõimumise pidur kontaktide vähesus eesti- ja venekeelse elanikkonna vahel (Ossinovski 2023).

Kokkuvõtteks, integratsioon peaks olema loomulik ja orgaaniline, mitte sunnitud protsess. Samamoodi viitasid intervjuueeritavad sotsiaalsete kohtade ja ühiseid huvisid siduvate platvormide olulisusele, mis aitavad kaasa erineva taustaga inimeste lõimumisele ning loovad aluse keelelise ja kultuurilise mitmekesisuse rikastamiseks ühiskonnas.

Kokkuvõte

Oma artiklis otsisin vastust uurimisküsimusele, kuidas alternatiivne klubikultuur eesti- ja venekeelseid inimesi omavahel ja laiemalt ühiskonda integreerib. Selleks uurisin Sveta baari näitel, milline oli sealse eesti- ja venekeelse publiku omavaheliste suhete dünaamika, millised aspektid nende suhete kujunemist mõjutasid ning milline roll oli selles kõiges muusikal. Kitsamalt vaatlesin, kuidas olid eri keelerühmadest pärit intervjuueeritavad jõudnud Sveta baarini ja saanud sealse kogukonna liikmeks ning mil moel vastandusid nad peavoolu kultuurile ja muusikale.

Uurimuses selgus, et alternatiivne klubikultuur võib edukalt toimida eesti- ja venekeelsete inimeste integreerijana, luues avatud ja mitmekesise keskkonna, kus inimesed saavad üksteisega suhelda, tutvuda ning luua tähendusrikkaid sotsiaalseid sidemeid ja saada kogukonna osaks. Alternatiivses klubikultuuris nihkub keelebarjäär tagaplaanile ning esikohale kerkivad ühised huvid, jagatud armastus muusika vastu ning sarnane väärtusruum, mille keskseteks märksõnadeks on vabadus, avatus, ühtekuuluvustunne, autentsus ja mitmekesisus.

Kuigi klubikultuur võib olla integratsiooniks sobilik keskkond, tuleb selle eesmärgi nimel

teha järjepidevat teadlikku tööd esmajoones venekeelse elanikkonnaga, hoides samaaegselt protsesse orgaanilisena, sest just loomulik keskkond on integratsiooniks kõige tõhusam. Sveta baari näitel selgus, et integratsiooniks sobiva keskkonna tekkeks tuleb täita mõned eeldused, näiteks inglise keele kasutus peamise suhtluskeelena, mis näitab koha avatust kõikide inglise keelt kõnelevate inimeste suhtes. Sama oluline on avatus ja kogukondlikkus, mis võimaldab regulaarsetel klubikülastajatel soovi korral panustada sündmuste korraldamisse või klubi-ruumide haldamisse.

Analüüsist selgus, et Sveta baar sobitub ka globaalses plaanis alternatiivse klubikultuuri skeenedega, muu hulgas tänu põhimõttele olla turvalisem ja salliv ruum kõikide inimeste suhtes, sõltumata seksuaalsest sättumusest, keele-

taustast või mõnest muust aspektist. Muusikal oli Sveta baari ja sealse kogukonna jaoks keskne tähtsus. See mängis eesti- ja venekeelsete inimeste integratsioonis olulist rolli ning oli olulisemaid põhjuseid, miks üldse klubi küllastada.

Seni on rahvusvahelise ööelu uurijad keskendunud pigem selle majanduslikele ja kvantitatiivsetele aspektidele. Kuigi globaalselt on uuritud ka ööelu sotsiokultuurilist väärtust ja selle rolli integratsioonis, kaasamises, kogukonna, kuuluvustunde ja sotsiaalse heaolu loomises (Glass 2012; Jiang 2017; Street 2012; Hoeven, Hitters 2019; Allaste 2015; Pelsy 2021; Thornton 1995), on Eestis suuremad uuringud siiski veel ees. Neile aspektidele tasuks tulevastes uuringutes rohkem tähelepanu pöörata ja neid praktilises poliitikakujunduses arvesse võtta.

Allikad

10 poolstruktureeritud süvaintervjuid (oktoober 2022 – jaanuar 2023)

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Club Culture as an Integrator of Estonian- and Russian-Speaking People: The Case of Sveta Baar

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Natalie Mets

In my article I explored the research question of how alternative club culture integrates Estonian- and Russian-speaking people with each other and with society at large. To address this I examined the dynamics of the relationships between Estonian- and Russian-speaking audiences at Sveta Baar, the factors influencing these relationships, and the role of music in this process. More broadly, I investigated how interviewees from different linguistic groups came to Sveta Baar and became part of its community, and how they contrasted with mainstream culture and music.

The research revealed that alternative club culture can successfully serve as a medium for integrating Estonian- and Russian-speaking individuals by creating an open and diverse environment where people can interact, get acquainted and form meaningful social bonds, thus becoming part of a community. In alternative club culture, language barriers become less significant, while shared interests, a common love for music and similar values, centred around freedom, openness, a sense of belonging, authenticity and diversity, take precedence.

While club culture can be a suitable environment for integration, it requires continuous and conscious efforts, particularly on the part of the Russian-speaking population, to keep the processes organic, as natural environments are the most effective for integration. The case of Sveta Baar showed that certain conditions must be met to create an environment conducive to integration, such as the use of English as the primary language of communication, which demonstrates the venue's openness to all English-speaking individuals. Equally important is the openness and sense of community, allowing regular club-goers to contribute to event organization or club management if they wish.

The analysis indicates that Sveta Baar fitted within the global alternative club culture scene, partly due to its commitment to being a safer and more inclusive space for all people, regardless of sexual orientation, linguistic background or other factors. Music played a central role for Sveta Baar and its community, significantly contributing to the integration of Estonian- and Russian-speaking people, and is a primary reason for visiting the club.

So far, international researchers of nightlife have primarily focused on its economic and quantitative aspects. Although the sociocultural value of nightlife and its role in integration, inclusion, community building and fostering a sense of belonging and social well-being have been studied globally (Glass 2012; Jiang 2017; Street 2012; Hoeven, Hitters 2019; Allaste 2015; Pelsy 2021; Thornton 1995), major studies regarding Estonia are as yet to be undertaken. Future research should pay more attention to these aspects and consider them in practical policy-making.

Music and Personal Well-being in the Life of a Rap Musician

David Čelakovský

Abstract

This study evaluates the role of music in the personal well-being of a musician by looking at the example of a selected performer, the Czech rap singer Meiton, who has publicly discussed his mental health issues and their reflection in his music. According to the concept of personal well-being and PERMA model (Seligman 2011), people can improve the quality of their lives through activities that lead to positive emotion, engagement (*flow*), meaning, accomplishment and positive relations. Through qualitative research based on Meiton's song lyrics and interviews with the singer, I used the method of narrative, thematic and phenomenological analysis to explore how music-making helps create personal well-being in his life in relation to the concept of positive psychology. The findings demonstrated the ways in which music-making contributes to different aspects of health, as defined by the PERMA model, and develops his personality. Through making music, Meiton processes the adverse experiences and aspects of his life, which helps him to cope with the pressure of life and reduce his level of anxiety. In this regard, ventilation of emotions, acceptance and attentional deployment have proven to be the key adaptive mechanisms of emotion regulation.

Keywords: case study, well-being, PERMA model, emotion regulation, rap music

1. Introduction

The aim of this case study is to explore the role of music-making for personal well-being in the life of a rap musician. From this, the following research questions are derived: (1) What role does music-making play in Meiton's life story? (2) What is the significance of music-making for Meiton's personal well-being? (3) Which themes relating to personal well-being are explored in Meiton's musical compositions? (4) What emotion regulation strategies has Meiton used over the course of his life, and how do these strategies pertain to personal well-being?

The paper starts with a theoretical overview of positive psychology, the PERMA model, music making and emotion regulation. This is followed by the methodology section and research findings, including Meiton's life story and an analysis of his song lyrics with their connection to well-being. The final part discusses the relevance of the research findings and provides the conclusions.

1.1. Positive psychology and the PERMA model of personal well-being

In its constitutional preamble, the World Health Organization defines health as "a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity" (World Health Organization [WHO] 2005: 1). This

approach suggests that each person should be able to mobilize their personal and psychological resources that can help them to cope with the challenges of life without relying solely on external support (MacDonald et al. 2012). These findings go hand in hand with research in the field of positive psychology. In the area of mental health, it is very common that a person does not suffer from any mental illness but still experiences dissatisfaction and distress. Seligman (2011: 221) writes that mental health is not merely the absence of a mental disorder, but the presence of thriving. The degree of optimal thriving is therefore the primary criterion for measuring personal well-being, which is seen as a central theme of positive psychology.

Seligman (2011) offered a theory of personal well-being which demonstrates that increased levels of thriving are achieved primarily through five elements: Positive Emotion, Engagement, Positive Relations, Meaning, and Accomplishment. The acronym PERMA, which consists of the initial letters of the five elements in English, has been adopted for these individual elements. Each of these elements meets three necessary conditions to be included among the components of personal well-being: (1) it contributes significantly to mental well-being, (2) it is a worthy goal of human endeavour in

its own right, (3) it is defined and measured independently of the other elements.

Positive emotion can take the form of joy, enthusiasm, ecstasy, contentment, etc. The main factors of this component include happiness and life satisfaction as subjective metrics. These emotions can be best utilized during difficult moments in life, as experiences that evoke positive emotions are able to mitigate negative emotions (Seligman 2002: 10–12). The results of expert studies demonstrate that positive emotions can contribute to overall levels of personal well-being (e.g. Berridge, Kringelbach 2011; Lyubomirsky et al. 2005; Robinson, Hippel 2006; Vallerand 2012).

Engagement or flow is defined as a state in which people are so absorbed in an activity that nothing else seems to be important (Csikszentmihalyi 1991: 4). In his research, Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi interviewed thousands of people from all over the world of all age groups and with different lifestyles. He found that the characteristic of the state of *flow* that people mention most often is forgetting all the unpleasant aspects of life (Csikszentmihalyi 1991: 71). According to Seligman (2002: 116), notwithstanding the vast differences in the activities involved in the state of *flow*, there are strikingly similar traits: (1) The task is challenging and requires certain skills. (2) We are focused. (3) There are clear goals. (4) We receive immediate feedback. (5) We are deeply engaged without making a great effort. (6) We feel we have the situation under control. (7) The sense of self fades into the background. (8) Time stops. The state of engagement can be achieved if one correctly recognizes, develops and applies one's personality strengths (Seligman 2002: 119).

Positive relations or social support are a person's belief that he or she is respected and loved by others. This has been recognized as one of the most influential factors affecting personal well-being among people across all ages and cultures (Reis, Gable 2003). The main human strength is the ability to be loved, and loneliness is a very crippling condition. The absence of positive relations has a major impact on personal well-being (Seligman 2011: 20–23). Hicks and King (2009) found in their research, for example, that positive relations contribute significantly to mental well-being and sense of purpose in

life. A number of other studies have reached similar conclusions (e.g. Baumeister, Leary 1995; Berridge, Kringelbach 2011).

Meaning is defined as applying our unique strengths and virtues in service to something larger than ourselves (Seligman 2011: 17). Wang et al. (2007) found in their research that people who perceive their lives as meaningful are less prone to depressive and suicidal thoughts. Similarly, Frankl (1988: 17–18) speaks about the need for meaning in life and its fulfilment. According to him, man is a creature who searches for meaning (*logos*) and one of the tasks of psychotherapy is to help people find meaning. Meaning in life can therefore be extremely important for personal well-being (Byron, Miller-Perrin 2009; Cotton Bronk et al. 2009; Steger et al. 2009).

The last element of the PERMA model relates to *accomplishment*. Seligman (2011: 18–19) explains that achieving success is most often a goal in itself, regardless of whether it brings positive emotions, a sense of meaning or improved interpersonal relations. Accomplishment can be broadened in terms of time horizon to "successful life", where a person strives to achieve his or her personal victory, which can increase social status. The importance of success for personal well-being is demonstrated by the results of other studies (e.g. Avey et al. 2011; Croom 2012; Hassanzadeh, Mahdinejad 2013).

These specific skills, emphasized by positive psychology (concerning questions regarding how to experience more positive emotions, more engagement, more meaning, more accomplishment, and better interpersonal relations), are self-sustaining and promote optimal thriving. They also help to cope with and to prevent anxiety and depression (Seligman 2011: 54).

1.2. The role of musical activities in personal well-being

Approaches to health and personal well-being emphasize the extent to which individuals can influence their own medical condition. As music forms an essential part of people's lives, its importance should be taken into account and it should be considered a universal source of possible treatment with implications for health and personal well-being (MacDonald et al. 2012: 7). Koelsch (2009) explains that the positive influence of musical activities on the psyche often

results from the effect of music on behaviour, perception, emotions, attention, and cognitive processes. The importance of musical activities, in the context of human health, can therefore be considered from many different perspectives.

Ascenso et al. (2017) explored the personal well-being of six professional musicians. Based on interviews and the journal entries of participants, they concluded that participation in musical activities is relevant to all elements of the PERMA model and may influence personal well-being to some extent. Similar results were also presented by Millar and Warwick (2019), who studied the relationship between the personal well-being of young refugees and musical activities by means of participant observation of one-to-one music lessons, group music workshops and semi-structured interviews. Research findings suggest that musical activities can positively influence personal well-being in young people through improved social relationships, self-knowledge, development of emotional expression, a sense of freedom of action, and positive self-identification.

The results of a survey involving 601 professional musicians are also of interest. Respondents completed a self-assessment questionnaire designed to assess the five components of the PERMA model (the PERMA-Profiler questionnaire). Musicians scored significantly higher on positive emotions, relations and meaning compared to the general population (Ascenso et al. 2018). Musical activities can therefore have a positive effect on the individual components of personal well-being as defined by the PERMA model, as demonstrated by research findings from other studies (e.g. Croom 2012; Davidson 2011; DeMarco et al. 2012; Hays 2005; Hays, Minichiello 2005; Hwang, Oh 2013; Lamont 2011; Packer, Ballantyne 2011; Rabinowitch et al. 2013).

1.3. Emotion regulation in relation to musical activities

One aspect where music contributes to well-being is the regulation of emotions. Emotion regulation refers to a heterogeneous set of processes by which individuals may dampen, maintain or intensify emotions according to their goals (Gross, Thompson 2007). The predominant model for emotion regulation is the process model developed by Gross (1998). This modal model constitutes an emotion generation process that

includes four phases: (1) the situation that elicited the emotion, (2) attention to that situation, (3) appraisal of the meaning of the situation given one's current goals, and, finally, (4) an emotional response tendency that includes behavioural, physiological and experiential components. Each step in the emotional generation process is seen as a potential regulatory site. From this assumption, the corresponding emotion regulation categories of situation selection (e.g. avoidance of the situation altogether), situation modification (e.g. changing or avoiding specific stimuli in a situation), attentional deployment (e.g. distraction, rumination, mindfulness), cognitive change (e.g. reappraisal, acceptance), and response modulation (e.g. experiential avoidance, expressive suppression) follow. It is also assumed that strategies used prior to the actual emotional response often lead to more successful emotion regulation than strategies focused on the response (Gross 1998, 2015). In this regard, Aldao and Nolen-Hoeksema (2012) mention more adaptive strategies (e.g. acceptance, problem-solving, reappraisal, mindfulness), as opposed to maladaptive strategies (e.g. expressive suppression, experiential avoidance, behavioural avoidance, rumination). It appears that coping with negative emotions by means of the avoidance strategy is one of the less adaptive ways. Denial and suppression of negative emotions have been associated with a number of health issues, such as the development of chronic diseases or increased mortality in cancer patients (Epping-Jordan et al. 1994). If negative emotions are not suppressed and are talked about, however, then this strategy is likely to have a positive effect on health (Panagopoulou et al. 2006). Pennebaker and Chung (2007) found, for example, that it is healthy for people to deal with their personal traumas in journals or essays. The author of the study believes that expressive writing about emotional states helps people find meaning in events and understand them.

Music making is important for personal well-being, especially in terms of regulating one's own moods (Chin, Rickard 2014) or inducing engagement (de Manzano et al. 2010). For instance, rapping, songwriting and composition helped marginalized people to find their voice and increased social inclusion, intercultural connections, and empowerment (Bartleet et al.

2016; Habron et al. 2013). A number of studies, or even books, have also described the use of rapping for self-regulation, the development of emotional coping strategies, and behaviour change (Hadley, Yancy 2011; Viega 2013). The use of rap in music therapy facilitates the expression of authentic personal emotions, helping to transform them and reduce aggressive states (Short 2013).

2. Materials and Methods

The main research strategy of this case study is biographical narrative inquiry, which examines the life experiences of an individual in an everyday context, and focuses on the meaning the research subject gives to the stories he or she tells (Joeng-Hee 2016). In our case, it is the life story of the rap musician Meiton. I also collected Meiton's published songs in textual form for the purpose of the research and then subjected them to a thematic analysis. Narrative interview and phenomenological research were conducted to obtain relevant information.

2.1. Participant selection and case study subject overview

The identification of a person suitable to achieve the objectives of this study was made by purposeful selection, i.e. cases that can most effectively illuminate the research questions and enhance the understanding of the phenomenon being studied (Sargeant 2012). I approached a Czech musician who performs under the pseudonym Meiton by text message via the social network Instagram and invited him to collaborate on this case study. Meiton, whose real name is Michal, was born in Ostrava in 1993 and has been actively involved in music since the age of fourteen.

Meiton's musical compositions are publicly available and his lyrics suggest that music may serve as a means for him to regulate his own moods and emotions. In his songs, he primarily addresses his mental states and the issues he suffers from. Meiton personally produces all the visual content for his songs. Most of this visual material symbolically expresses the theme of the song or the title of the album (see Figures 1–4 in the appendix 1). Meiton's interest in web

design and graphics has led him to work in the IT sector, with his musical activities complementing his primary career. His songs cannot be classified into one particular musical genre, as they use elements of pop, metal and rap music. However, rap is the most prevalent musical aspect in Meiton's compositions. He has released a total of ten albums and a number of singles. On the music platform Spotify, Meiton's music currently attracts approximately 38,000 listeners per month, and his Instagram profile has around 2,500 followers. These figures indicate a certain level of reach; however, within the context of the Czech music scene, he is not considered a mainstream artist. Nevertheless, the artistic value and quality of his compositions have secured him several notable collaborations with prominent Czech rappers, such as Schyzo and PTK.¹

2.2. Ethical approval and researcher's position

Meiton signed an informed consent. He also approved the final form of the article and provided consent to include all the information contained in the text.

I was already familiar with Meiton's musical output before I began my research work. However, I did not know him personally. My relationship with this kind of music is positive and I consider myself an active listener of his music.

2.3. Data collection process

Narrative interview was used to cover Meiton's life story. The narrative interview is based on the free narration of life situations. It assumes that there are subjective meaning structures to certain events that emerge in free narration, which are less likely to emerge in targeted questioning. The interview itself is then divided into two core phases: the *narration phase* and the *conversation phase*. These phases include stimulation, narration, questioning to clarify ambiguities, and generalising questions (Goodson, Gill 2011: 35–55).

Phenomenological research seeks to describe the essence of a phenomenon by exploring it from the perspective of those who have experienced it (Neubauer 2019). It employs idiographic single case studies (Tellis 1997) and usually involves small numbers of participants to enable in-depth exploration of personal stories.

¹ The above information was obtained from Meiton's profiles on Instagram and Spotify and from an interview with him.

Following this method, I used a semi-structured interview to obtain information regarding the role of music-making in Meiton's personal well-being.

By mutual agreement, the interviews with Meiton were conducted through video calls via the Discord Internet communication platform. Four interviews were conducted during March and April 2022 at weekly intervals, and each session lasted approximately 90 minutes. The interviews were recorded by the computer's internal audio system. These recordings, transcribed into text form, then formed the basis for the analysis.

2.4. Data analysis

The processing and evaluation of the findings of the study were based on a verbatim transcription of the interviews conducted and a verbatim transcription of Meiton's song lyrics.

The first phase of the research was to conduct a *narrative analysis of the life story*, which consists of three successive steps: broadening, burrowing into the specific data, and restorying. Joeng-Hee (2016: 206–207) suggests this as one of the possible approaches to narrative data. (1) Broadening refers to a general description of the social, historical or cultural context of the research subject. In the case of this study, it refers to the environment and social background in which Meiton grew up. (2) In the following phase, I noted the impact of certain life events on Meiton's mental state and his musical production (focusing on specific dates). (3) The last step was to retell the story.

Thematic document analysis is a research strategy based on an analysis of the existing material, which is a source of information relevant to the objectives of the study (Fereday, Muir-Cochrane 2006). The aim of this analysis was to identify certain themes that run throughout Meiton's entire musical career. The first step consisted of repeated readings of Meiton's texts in order to gain insight and make myself closely familiar with their content. I then identified the keywords of each song. This combined approach served as both an indicative objective and a supporting quantitative method to present the analysis. The

Internet-based program Sketch Engine was used for this purpose. In this study, keywords refer to the most frequent nouns and their synonyms that appeared at least twice in a song. If certain words appeared in the lyrics with the same frequency, the words that thematically fit the concept of the song were recorded. Keywords with meanings related to personal well-being were then collected. These terms were used to define the individual themes that Meiton addresses in his songs, which also contribute to answering the stated research questions.

Phenomenological analysis was applied to the interviews, which concerned the importance of music-making for Meiton's personal well-being. The aim of this analysis was to uncover the inner meanings of his experience of music-making in relation to his personal well-being. The various steps of the phenomenological analysis were carried out in accordance with the description provided by Howitt (2019). In the initial phase, I listened repeatedly to the recorded interviews conducted with Meiton in an attempt to shed my own preconceptions and perceive his personal experience of music-making and the relationship it has to his personal well-being. In the second step of the analysis, I focused on Meiton's specific statements characterizing his experience of given phenomena. This was followed by grouping the units of meaning into themes. The interviews were then summarized and the preliminary results were written up in consultation with Meiton himself. In a follow-up interview, Meiton verified the formulated findings, thus commenting on whether the essence of the interviews was indeed captured. The final stage of the analysis involved making minor adjustments and assembling a final report containing a description of Meiton's experience of the roles that music-making plays in his personal well-being.

3. Findings²

Based on the narrative interview that was conducted with Meiton, his life story was assembled and is presented in the following subsection.

² All verbatim quotes provided in the research findings are based on interviews conducted with Meiton in Czech. Meiton had the possibility to check the English wording and approve the English version of the quotations. In addition to the interviews, in the thematic analysis subsection, I also cite lyrics from his songs.

3.1. Meiton's life story

Meiton's life story is closely tied to the Ostrava environment, as he has spent his entire life in this city. He grew up with his younger brother, four years his junior, in a family with both his parents. He describes his childhood as trouble free during kindergarten and primary school. Although he perceived himself as a shy, introverted boy who was withdrawn, he was not diagnosed with any mental illnesses at that time.

In his teenage years, around the age of 15, Meiton was exposed to various addictive substances, primarily alcohol and marijuana. This period of his life had a profoundly adverse effect on his mental state. "I found a bunch of people to go out with, smoke and drink with. Overall, this is one of the things that really took an extreme toll on me mentally." Meiton experienced his first panic attack when he was under the influence of marijuana. Over the following months, the panic attacks became increasingly frequent. "It happened all the time, I felt generally worse in my head. There was that general anxiety you get throughout the day and it was such a depressing time." It was during this time that he sought medical help and began composing his own music, as yet only instrumental.

In the first year of his studies at secondary industrial school, Meiton broke ties with the friends with whom he had been used to taking addictive substances. "I could see that something wasn't right, that I didn't feel comfortable among them because it was very toxic for me." Meiton describes this part of his life as a dark period. During this period of crisis, however, he began to focus more on music. The following quote expresses what music meant to him: "Even then, it was a filter to keep myself occupied, to keep my mind off my misery."

He released these vocal-instrumental songs under the pseudonym Deadline from Devil.³ A total of three albums were released in 2013 (*In Memory of Our Hearts*, *Sedative*, *Forever EP*). Meiton's songs, released when he went under the name Deadline from Devil, mostly tend towards nu-metal, which combines elements of heavy metal with elements taken from hip hop, grunge

and electronic music. During 2014, Meiton's music developed and became increasingly distinctive in style. "I wanted to make the music differently. It was similar genre-wise, but I think I shifted it closer to myself." Thus began a new period in his musical career, in which he performed under the pseudonym My Old Enemy. His first musical album, released in this way, was entitled *Lycanthropy* (2014). In the process of writing songs, Meiton released some of the hatred from his past and the issues that angered him at the time. *Lycanthropy* was followed by another project – *EP Journey Away* (2014).

After finishing high school, Meiton released his album *Placebo* (2015), which leaned towards rap. This shift towards rap, which was not entirely typical of his musical work prior to 2014, became a clear impulse for him to no longer release his songs under the pseudonym My Old Enemy. A new phase of his musical career was consequently launched, and the Meiton nickname now began to serve as an artistic name. After the release of *Placebo*, Meiton became a member of Illegal Music, a music company that unites select performers. Each of these musicians handled the recording of their songs independently in their own studios. However, the songs were released on a single and common platform. Meiton's album *Infusion* (2016) was released under the auspices of this music label. The title of the album represents the infusion of emotions that are put into the music. It is therefore a projection of his own feelings into musical compositions.

Meiton began actively addressing his mental health issues around 2017. He found a psychiatrist who prescribed him medication, specifically antidepressants and an anxiolytic for emergency relief. Group therapy was also recommended, and Meiton participated actively in this. For approximately 45 days, he attended a day centre, which included peer-to-peer discussions between group members, treatment under the guidance of a therapist, and various types of relaxation exercises, such as music therapy.

At the time of starting group therapy, Meiton began working on a new music album called *Alice* (2018). He wrote some songs during therapy and

³ All referenced song titles have been translated from Czech into English. Deadline from the Devil is Meiton's pseudonym, the only case where Meiton himself used English.

some others after it ended, so that the entire album is influenced by this healing process. *Alice* was also the album that marked the point at which Meiton became more aware that he was no longer writing music primarily for himself. "Even after *Infusion*, for example, and then after *Alenka*, an awful lot of people started writing to me saying that my music had saved their lives or helped them get through a dark time."

When the group therapy was over, the therapist offered Meiton additional individual therapy. The singer took advantage of this opportunity and attended individual therapy for approximately two years (up until 2019). This therapy helped him to some extent.

Meiton left Illegal Music by mutual agreement with the other members of the label. In the first half of 2020, he founded his own record label Dead Garden Records s.r.o. Under the umbrella of Dead Garden Records s.r.o., Meiton released a smaller music project entitled *Monsters EP* (2019). The title of the album refers to the inner demons that he needed to get out of his system. The *Monsters EP* was followed by two singles, after which came a two-year hiatus. "I was thinking I was going to stop with this shit and wouldn't do anything else because I just couldn't make music. I was going through a dark period when it came to creativity. I wasn't in the mood to write or make music." Meiton wanted to bring something new to the table with each project, but his lack of inspiration prevented him from releasing more songs during this period. His inability to write a new song was consequently reflected in his personal life. "It frustrated me a lot. I was often out of sorts." Meiton's sudden burst of renewed creativity came towards the end of 2021, when he wrote an entire new album in less than six months and released it under the title *Mirrors* (2022). The album *Mirrors* is Meiton's last musical project to date.

3.2. A thematic analysis of Meiton's lyrics

The themes that Meiton addresses in his songs were selected on the basis of the keywords and the overall concept of the songs; the themes identified also serve to answer the research questions. Based on the keywords of the songs, it is apparent that he addresses his own negative emotions in his lyrics. These keywords include pain, hate, fear, crying, phobias, and depression.

The findings of the subsequent phenomenological analysis demonstrated that he was thus ridding himself of negative psychological states.

The themes identified are: (1) coping with life events, (2) the use of medication, (3) the positive impact of music-making on mental health, (4) fear of performing, (5) memories of growing up.

3.2.1. Coping with life events

Meiton channels his inner states into his songs, adding: "It's sometimes hard to live with mental illness, social phobia and anxiety disorder in my case. Some days I feel like I'm underwater and other people aren't." The specific theme of being underwater is very characteristic of his lyrics. References to the relationship between Meiton and his girlfriend, which indicates that she also plays a key role in his coping with life, are also another typical feature of the texts. "Icarus", for example, was written by Meiton for his girlfriend. At the beginning of the lyrics, he makes mention of his psychological problems and also a "plea for help" as he needs someone to lean on and not to be alone. The song then goes on with words indicating that Meiton found support in his relationship with his girlfriend and expressing his gratitude to her.

Please forgive me, it's not easy to deal with this life and be happy at the same time. I don't even know when it started, the first anxiety attack, life is a theatre. [...] Please catch me when I fall again, you're my light in a dark corridor, stop for a moment. [...] When you're here, I'm not alone and I'd like to thank you, I'm not scared any more ("Icarus", 2014).

The songs "Placebo" and "Compass" help us understand Meiton's mental states. In the first of these, one observes his frustration with his current psychological state. "Tomorrow might be better, but today everything's fucked up and my head is fucked up. I don't want any more promises" ("Placebo", 2015). The other song delivers a similar message. It does not refer, however, to his current state of mind, but to the long-term issues resulting from specific psychiatric diagnoses: "You know, it's not funny any more, I'm drowning, I have to leave, and the only thing left is more empty days. [...] The mental illness, depression, anxiety, feelings that you have within. This will slowly bury you in the ground, I haven't felt well for a long time" ("Compass", 2016).

3.2.2. Taking medication

The theme of medication use is crucial due to Meiton's awareness of the importance of prescribed medication in his life, and how he perceives its help. He describes the help he has received through medication in the song "Life Is Just a Game". He is aware that he would not have been able to function in life, as he does now, without it: "I used to think I could do it on my own. Without help, without pills, I would be able to keep standing, but a few years passed and they are lost in time, and I found out later that I couldn't make it" ("Life Is Just a Game", 2014). The prescribed drugs and therapy often did not have the desired effect on Meiton's psyche, a theme that became typical of many texts. "The meds don't work any more, so you have to fight. And sometimes when it comes, you act like a psychopath" ("Ocean", 2015). "I can't write, I have nightmares and I'm scared. I can't sleep, so I'm looking forward to the morning. They told me medication would help – the meds didn't work, I don't know why, but your eyes are crying" ("Trains", 2019). Meiton is also aware that the long-term use of medication entails a number of adverse side effects. It is clear from some of the texts that, even if the prescribed pills are doing their job, he does not have a positive relationship with medication, as it is a "double-edged weapon" to which one can develop an addiction that interferes and dulls consciousness; for example: "The psychiatrists are busy, so there's no help to be had. It's bad to take medication, drugs actually, I'm high" ("Starring", 2016). "So I'm downing the pills again, I'm downing the small and round pills. They're gonna take your soul and wipe out the light and give you some of that love" ("Angels and Demons", 2022).

3.2.3. The positive impact of music-making on mental health

In the song "Don't Say Anything" (2014), Meiton once again explores the theme of being underwater, followed by lyrics that imply that making music is his own world, a world into which he escapes from the "drowning": "Maybe it's too late to change anything, maybe this is already hell, I really don't know. I don't wanna keep drowning, I don't wanna deal with it, so I write these things, we all have our worlds." He has similar sentiments in the song "Ad Astra" (2022):

"It's that stupid fear that makes me write and get those tracks out, the crap that's inside me, no [...] We're screaming underwater, trying to be free." Specific references to music acting as a filter for Meiton, helping him rid himself of negative mental states, are evidenced by the following lyrics. "And you're smiling, everything's ok, it's gonna be alright. It's just the music – the filter that makes me free." ("Placebo", 2015). "It's embarrassing, so I use music as a filter, fucking albums I'm still writing" ("Chinese Whispers", 2018). Music-making also often brings a sense of happiness or positive emotions to Meiton, as can be observed in several lyrics, such as: "It's not our fault, it's a given. It's probably better than being miserable, so we write the music and all those states are moulded into tones, we're happy for a while" ("I'm Forgetting", 2017). "For me, music is my life, without it I wouldn't be whole. I've always hated silence, is it a gift? I really don't know." ("Trains", 2019). One could also argue that if Meiton is not composing and ridding himself of his emotions by writing, he's not feeling at his best, as demonstrated once again by a number of songs, for example, "I feel like I'm running down a dark corridor all my life with no end in sight. And when I'm not making music, the silence burns me. And when I'm not making hits, I feel helpless" ("Scars", 2022).

3.2.4. Fear of concerts

Throughout his musical career, Meiton has never held a concert where he would perform live in front of people. His fear of performing in public is due to a social phobia he has been diagnosed with. This is a theme he also addresses in his compositions, as can be seen in the following quotations.

For example: "I don't want concerts, I can't stand your faces. You think it's funny – a socio-phobic in front of people" ("Compass", 2016). "I don't want to lecture you, I felt it was obvious I wasn't going to do the gigs, even though I'm eating the pills" ("I'm Lost", 2017). "I guess I can't get over it, it's a no-go, that I should be singing those tracks live, I'm really scared. Collapses, ambulance, me, shaking hands and cold" ("Well", 2019).

3.2.5. Memories of growing up

Meiton often revisits his past in his lyrics. In particular, he recalls the moments he spent with

a group of people with whom he used addictive substances of various types. It was during this “dark period” that he had his first panic attack. As he says: “I go back to the past more because of the bad things I am trying to process.” In the song “Never Again” (2013), for example, Meiton expresses his desire to distance himself from the people who started experimenting with addictive substances: “We are what we do. It’s just me, and I don’t want to be different. I’ll never go back to being one of you. Junk took your dreams, I’m long gone.” There are similar lyrics in other Meiton texts, for example: “The wrecks that stand on the corner used to be my friends. Sometimes I wonder what happened, that now I am here and they are standing aside” (“You’ll Be Their Goal”, 2014). Meiton described in our interview that he did not feel comfortable with the people in the group, for example, because of the frequent taunts about his person. A typical example of a lyric in which he mentions this topic is the song “Found and Lost” (2022): “Memories of bad days, bad childhoods and bad dreams are left [...] The first panic at fifteen, well, I guess, it was a long time ago, but I still remember it clearly. Nobody helped me, they laughed and left me like that when you think you’re really going to die.”

3.3. Phenomenological analysis and the PERMA model of personal well-being

The following section explores Meiton’s experience of the importance of music making to his personal well-being in relation to the PERMA model.

3.3.1. Music-making and positive emotions

Meiton’s musical production is deeply connected with emotions. He generally feels better after finishing a song. He usually projects his negative emotions, such as frustration and stress, into his songs so as to get rid of them. In connection with this regulation of his own moods, one can mention the song “Chill” (2022), in which Meiton deals with his internal struggles. He made the following comments on the process of writing this song: “I woke up in the morning and felt the need to write, to get it out. I wrote it in the morning and the track was done in less than a day. It was something that frustrated me for a really long time.” It is the ability to regulate his own emotions through music-making that helps

Meiton. He also enjoys creating his next piece of art, as it brings him positive emotions, and he adds: “I enjoy making music, but when you hear the end result afterwards, that’s probably what brings you the rush of happiness.” He also experiences pleasant feelings after finishing an album, for example, when he can hold a finished CD in his hand: “When I first saw a pressed CD of *Mirrors*, it was a great feeling, because you hold in your hand two years of work or so, and you don’t realize such things until you physically see it.”

Making music does not always, however, make Meiton feel better, as he says: “It annoys me when I can’t make music.” It is the lack of inspiration that then leads to frustration and stress. Meiton realizes that another unpleasant aspect of music-making that he experiences is other people’s negative comments or their inability to understand and think about the true meaning of the songs released. The positive emotions, however, outweigh the negative ones, and Meiton is aware of the fact that music has definitely given him more than it has taken away; as he says: “Overall, music has made my life better.”

3.3.2. Music-making and engagement (flow)

Meiton’s songwriting very much depends on his current state of mind and source of inspiration. Sometimes he can spend ten minutes writing a song and leave it unfinished because he finds that he simply cannot make music. If, however, he is in an ideal state when composing, he experiences feelings that are consistent with the definition of the state of *flow*. Meiton describes his state as follows: “When the muse is with me, I can’t describe exactly what feelings I experience. I get into a mode where I’m just functioning automatically, and I often don’t realize what it sounds like until it’s completely done.” Meiton perceives himself as completely immersed in the activity, adding: “It’s like tunnel vision, I’m focused on this particular thing and nothing else really exists around me.” When he is in this state of preoccupation with his own activity, songwriting is not a difficult task for him. He also realizes that songwriting moves him forward mentally. “You write something and you think about why you wrote it. You think about it for a long time and you actually realize that something has come to the surface that you didn’t know was

there. You get rid of it somehow and then you process it." Making music therefore positively influences Meiton's personal growth.

3.3.3. Music-making and meaning

Meiton finds many things important in his life, such as his partner, family, friends, and the positive attitude towards music that he has had since childhood. Making music fulfils him and makes him feel that he is accomplished in a certain activity. By means of his musical activities, Meiton found his strengths, which he worked on and developed further. He also adds: "Music is such a big part of my life that I can't imagine what I would do without it. My life would probably be much emptier." Meiton sees a purpose in composing music for many reasons. One of them, for example, is to help other people. "Every time I get a message like that, that my work has helped someone, it really makes me happy." Below are three examples of the messages of this type that he has received.

I've been listening to your work for about five years now and it's incredible how many times your songs have helped me. You are phenomenal and I hope you continue with your work.

Your music has more than helped me. It's taught me how to survive all the moments and I've found that you just have to wait out the rough moments and then you'll be fine again.

I discovered your music a few days ago and I just want to say thank you. I've struggled with mental disorders myself since I was a kid, and your music makes me feel an understanding that you just don't find often. So thank you and I appreciate you as an artist.

3.3.4. Music-making and accomplishment

The greatest success of Meiton's musical career came after the release of *Infusion* (2016), but he never let it affect him much; as he says: "I try to keep my feet on the ground and be humble about it." He has never, however, composed music for success alone, but for his own enjoyment and for other people. He is grateful for the success his music has brought him, especially in terms of increased self-esteem and the feeling that he has accomplished something. Meiton sees the

release, for example, of the album *Mirrors* (2022) as one of his greatest achievements in terms of overcoming a creative crisis. He tries to bring something new and improve his music with every album he releases. He succeeded with the release of *Mirrors*; as he says: "I see it as a success that I finished *Mirrors*". It is this sense of successful performance that interacts with the positive emotions, as constant improvement in musical activities makes Meiton happier. He enjoys tackling things related to music and it fills him with a sense of accomplishment when his work is heading in the right direction.

3.3.5. Music-making and positive relations

Meiton realizes that voluntary isolation deepens his problems, so he needs people around him who can support him. He has created such a community of people through his music, as some of his former fans have become his true friends. He launched a fan site entitled Meiton Squad on the communication platform called Discord. Initially, communication on this server was only through text messages, but over time, Meiton began making video calls and then in-person meetings with people close to him. This created a group of about seven people who started going on holiday together and seeing each other regularly. "I do not view it as a relationship between me and the listener at all, because I see them as true friends. We all really like each other there. Some of us have similar problems, for example, and we're just friends." Through making music, he has also made a number of friends outside of the Meiton Squad, whom he appreciates a great deal. He adds wryly: "I don't make friends like other people do, I guess, as I think about it, but yeah, I met another good friend from Slovakia through music."

Meiton also receives psychological support from other people through text messages that others send him. Here are two such messages:

You'll definitely pull through! I don't really know what to write to you because I feel the same, but I believe you can do it. I believe in you ♡

I don't know if the music helped you. If your life was worse, better, or the same. But your music helped me. Hang on!!

Undeniably, music-making shapes Meiton's relationships with other people. He has made many friends through it and also gained support from some of his fans, for example, when his mental state is less than ideal.

4. Discussion and Conclusion

This case study illustrates the importance of music for personal well-being in the life of a musician in view of the PERMA model of personal well-being. The findings show that music-making is of considerable importance in Meiton's life story and is strongly related to his personal well-being.

The analysis of Meiton's song lyrics demonstrates that the lyrics of most of the published songs correspond to events that he actually experienced himself. These include, for example, memories of adolescence, during which time his mental health problems first became more pronounced in the form of panic attacks (see the lyrics to "Never Again", "You Will Be Their Goal", "Ice Cold", "Lost and Found"). Music also served as Meiton's diary, in which he recorded thoughts and feelings about his mental state (see the lyrics to "Icarus", "Placebo", "Chinese Whispers") and experiences, such as taking medication (see the lyrics to "Life is Just a Game", "Ocean", "Starring", "Angels and Demons"). He also uses his music as a means of communication with his fans, for example, when he writes that he is unable to perform live in front of people at a concert (see the lyrics to "Compass", "I'm Lost", "Well"). Through his music, Meiton processes the negative events that have occurred in his life, which helps him cope with the difficulties of life (see the lyrics of the songs "Don't Say Anything", "Ad Astra", "Chinese Whispers", "I'm Forgetting", "Trains", "Lost and Found").

Meiton practices selected aspects of expressive writing in the context of his musical activities, and this is beneficial for the management of his emotional states. In expressive writing, one should write about fears, dreams, unhealthy ways of living, things one avoids, and one's own experiences (Pennebaker 1997; 2004). The thematic analysis of the songs and the phenomenological analysis related to the PERMA model, in particular, show that writing musical texts is beneficial for Meiton in several ways.

These aspects include (1) the venting of emotions, which reduces the tension and intensity of emotional states. Rather than trying to suppress his negative emotions, Meiton instead embraces them, thus utilizing the adaptive mechanism of emotion regulation as part of cognitive change – i.e. acceptance (2). It also appears from the results of this paper that writing musical lyrics allows Meiton to distance himself from the situation (3), enabling him to explore his feelings and thoughts from a different perspective. Looking back on a written song also makes Meiton more aware of his emotional reactions and behavioural patterns, which may lead to greater self-awareness and self-knowledge (4). Moreover, in Meiton's case, the importance of developing emotional perception (5) is shown, which may have resulted from frequently describing his own experience. Musical creation provides wider possibilities than verbal expression alone for interpreting one's own emotional states. Indeed, the frequent practice of musical activities can refine the ability to be aware of and understand one's emotions (Huron 2006).

The findings of the paper demonstrate that the different roles of music-making in Meiton's life story are also intertwined with his personal well-being. He began to focus more on music-making around the age of fifteen when he was going through a difficult period marked by substance abuse and the development of psychiatric diagnoses. He cut off contact with the so-called friends with whom he was accustomed to taking addictive substances, and music, in his words, served as a way for him to "keep his mind off his misery". In this context, one can talk about avoidance of the situation altogether (severing of ties) and attentional deployment (music-making as a distraction) in relation to emotion regulation. When he states that he "uses music as a filter", he means getting rid of negative mental states, relieving stress and being able to relax. These findings are consistent with research describing the use of rapping for self-regulation, the development of emotional coping strategies (Hadley, Yancy 2011; Viega 2013), and a reduction in aggressive states (Short 2013).

The study also supports the assumption of the beneficial effect of musical activities for different elements of mental health as per the PERMA model, which has been pointed out in previous

research (e.g. Ascenso et al. 2017; Ascenso et al. 2018; Millar, Warwick 2019). These studies do not, however, exclusively address music-making. This research, which takes into account all aspects of the PERMA model of personal well-being in a particular musician with psychological problems and their interconnection in the context of music-making, can further enrich knowledge in the field of positive psychology.

It has been found that music-making brings Meiton many positive emotions, and that these outweigh the negative ones. The positive emotions include, for example, the feeling of happiness, which in his case is particularly associated with the final form of a song/album. It was also determined that Meiton sometimes experiences a state of *flow* during the creative process. Within this state, the ordering of thoughts occurs as one's consciousness is focused on a single goal while being engaged. For Meiton, that goal is the creation of a musical song. This state of engagement then creates the psychological capital that drives him mentally. These findings are consistent with those reported by Seligman (2002; 2011).

The results of this article also demonstrate the meaning that Meiton finds in his music-making. Many people perceive his musical activities to be very important, as they have helped them many times with their own mental health problems. Thus, the above findings support the claim that meaning can be defined as applying our unique strengths and virtues in service to something larger than ourselves (Seligman 2011: 17). Meiton experiences a more successful life as a result of his music-making, gaining confidence and a sense of accomplishment. He has never, however, composed music for success alone. Nevertheless, success has opened up opportunities for him to meet other people, which brings us to the final

element of the PERMA model of personal well-being. Through his music, Meiton has found a number of close friends with whom he feels comfortable and whose presence helps him cope with difficult periods in his life. Another aspect of positive relations is the supportive messages that Meiton receives from his fans. Studies confirm that seeking emotional support from other people is an adaptive strategy that helps people cope with the pressure of emotional and physical stressors (Pakenham et al. 2007).

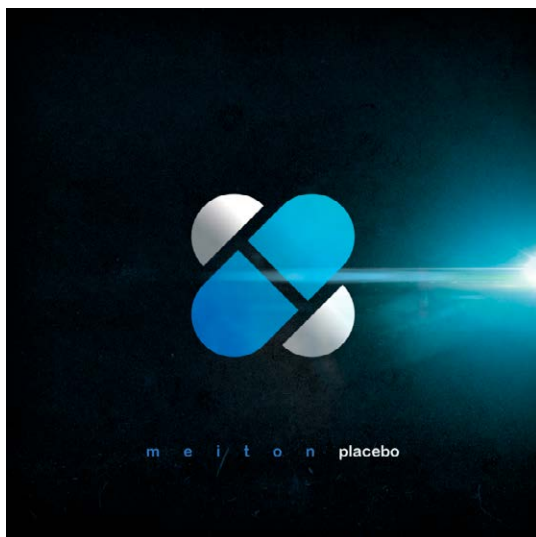
I believe that the contribution of my research lies in its holistic approach, as it offers a case study demonstrating the importance of music-making for all aspects of health and their interconnection. However, further research into the interdependence of the different elements of the PERMA model in relation to participation in musical activities, which should be conducted on a larger research population, is clearly required. Another important aspect of the paper relates to the lack of research conducted in the field of popular music in relation to well-being.

The limitations of this study lie in its focus on a single musician, as the findings cannot be generalized and universally applied. Interest in music is a very subjective and individual matter, and not every person is able to pursue it through active creation. My findings, however, support Seligman's (2002, 2011) assumptions that people can improve the quality of their lives by discovering their own distinctive strengths. It is by developing these that one can achieve personal well-being.

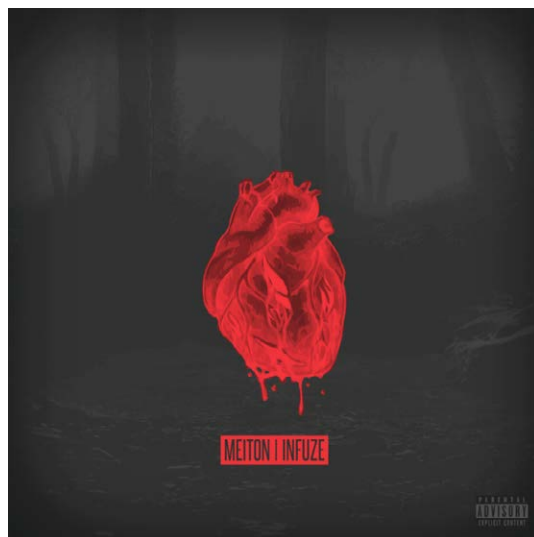
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Appendix 1.

1) The thematic image for Meiton's music album *Placebo* (2015) expresses that music is a kind of help for people. Music, however, cannot completely cure a person.



2) The heart symbol associated with the album *Infusion* (2016) represents the infusion of Meiton's emotions into his music.



3) The album *Alenka* (2018) and its thematic illustration of a rabbit reference Lewis Carroll's fairy tale *Alice in Wonderland*. Meiton often feels like he is "falling down the rabbit hole into the unknown".



4) *Mirrors* (2022) is an album title that reflects Meiton's exploration of self and the understanding that things are not always what they seem.



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Muusika ja isiklik heaolu räppmuusiku elus

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David Čelakovský

Uuringus vaatlen empiirilisel muusikaloomes kasuliku mõju inimese vaimsele tervisele, keskendudes Tšehhi muusikule Meitonile (esmajoones tegev räpis), kes on korduvalt kajastanud oma loomingus ka isiklike psühholoogilisi probleeme. Lähtun Ameerika psühholoogi Martin Seligmani isikliku heaolu kontseptsioonist, PERMA mudelist, mille kohaselt saavad inimesed oma elukvaliteeti parandada tegevustega, mis toetavad positiivseid suhteid, kaasahaaratust (*flow*), tähenduslikkust, saavutust ja positiivseid emotsioone. Sellest lähtuvalt kasutan kvalitatiivses uuringus, mis põhineb intervjuudel Meitoniga ja laulutekstide analüüsil, narratiivset, temaatilist ja fenomenoloogilist analüüsi, et uurida, kuidas muusikaloomine toetab muusiku isiklikku heaolu.

Artikli uurimisküsimused on: 1) Millist rolli mängib muusikaloomine Meitoni biograafias? 2) Milline on muusikaloomise tähendus Meitoni isiklikus heaolus? 3) Milliseid isikliku heaoluga seotud teemasid Meiton oma muusikas käsitleb? 4) Milliseid emotsioonide reguleerimise strateegiaid on ta oma elu jooksul kasutanud ja kuidas seostuvad need isikliku heaoluga?

Tulemused näitavad, kuidas kombineeruvad vaimse tervise teemad muusiku loomingus isikliku elulooga, ning laulutekstidest ilmneb, et muusikukarjäär on tihedalt seotud elulooga. Meitoni huvi muusika vastu täiskasvanueas, mil muusika toimus n.-ö. filtrina, aidates vabaneda ebameeldivatest psühholoogilistest seisunditest. Muusika loomine vähendas ka ärevust, mis on teda noorukieast saadik saatnud. Selles kontekstis on emotsioonide ventileerimine, aktsepteerimine ja muusika kaudu tähelepanu juhtimine olnud peamised emotsioonide reguleerimise mehhanismid. Laulutekstide kirjutamine on mitmel viisil kasulik, aidates mh. emotsioone välja elada, tekitades kognitiivseid muutusi, võimaldades teatud olukordadest eemalduda, end paremini tunda ja emotsionaalset taju arendada.

Naastes PERMA mudeli juurde, on muusikaloomine selle kõigi komponentide puhul asjakohane. Meitoni puhul hõlmab see rõõmu kogemist pärast loo valmimist, *flow'* seisundit muusikaloomise käigus ja tähenduslikkuse tunnet, mida ta teisi aidates kogeb. Positiivne tagasiside fännidelt aitab tõsta Meitoni enesehinnangut, samuti on oluline sõprade vastastikune emotsionaalne tugi kogukonnas, mis on kujunenud Meitoni muusika ümber.

Tõlkinud Brigitta Davidjants

Juhtumiuuring harrastuskoorilauljate meeoleolu- ja ärevusnäitajate muutustest proovi- ja kontserdisituatsiooni võrdluses LGBTQ+ segakoori Vikerlased näitel

Marju Raju
Brigitta Davidjants

Abstract

In Estonia, choral singing is one of the most common hobbies across all age groups. The popularity of choral singing can be explained, amongst other things, by the positive impact of music on emotion regulation and mental well-being, and by the support of a strong group identity, also among vulnerable groups in society. At the same time, choral singing also involves public performances, which can cause discomfort in people with higher anxiety levels. In this case study of the Estonian LGBTQ+ mixed choir *Vikerlased*, the impact of singing on mental well-being was investigated using both qualitative (in-depth and focus group interviews, autoethnography, rehearsal and performance observation) and quantitative research methods (original questionnaire combined with the CAD-7 anxiety assessment tool). This article focuses on the analysis of quantitative data. The results revealed differences in participants' self-perceived anxiety and mood before and after the choir rehearsal and the performance. On average, mood scores increased while anxiety scores decreased, but only for performances was this change statistically significant.

Keywords: mental well-being, vulnerable groups, impact of music, amateur choirs, LGBTQ+

1. Sissejuhatus

Eestis on koorilaul kõigis vanuserühmades levinud harrastus: meie alla 1,5 miljoni suuruse elanikkonnaga rahvastikust harrastas 2022. aastal koorilaulu eri vanuserühmades kokku 35 522 inimest.¹ See teeb koorilaulust kõige populaarsema rahvakultuuri hobitegevuse valdkonna. Käesolev uuring keskendub LGBTQ+ [lesbi, gei, bi, trans, *queer* jt.]² segakoorile Vikerlased, mis on esimene omataoline koor Eestis ja Baltikumis (Eesti LGBT Ühing 2020).

Ühiskonnas haavatava grupina on LGBTQ+ inimesed sageli heteroseksuaalsete inimestega võrreldes vastuvõtlikumad vaimse tervise probleemidele, näiteks on neil kõrgem enesevigastuste ja suitsiidirisk (Harris 2021: 142). Haavatava grupi all mõistame artiklis inimesi, keda võidakse ühiskonnas diskrimineerida, halvustada või kiusata mõne (või mitme) sotsioloogilise või bioloogilise tunnuse ja/või

väärtushinnangu või kultuuripraktika tõttu, mille tulemusel ohustab neid vähemusstress (minority stress) (Meyer 2003: 697). Eesti üldsuse hoiakud LGBTQ+ kogukonna suhtes on viimaste aastate lõikes küll paranenud, ometi peab homoseksuaalsust³ vastuvõetavaks napilt üle poole (56%) 15–74-aastasest elanikkonnast (Turu-uuringute 2023: 14).

Koorilaulu ja laiemalt muusika positiivset mõju inimeste vaimsele heaolule on põhjalikult uuritud ja tõestatud. Sageli on tähelepanu keskmes lauljate enesehinnang (Moss jt. 2018), nagu ka koorilaulus osalemise ja ühislaulmise psühholoogiline, füsioloogiline, sotsiaalne ja kogukondlik tugi inimestele, eriti marginaliseeritud rühmades (Bird 2017: 194). Koos laulmine ja enda identifitseerimine ühtse muusikakollektiivina võimaldab asjaosalistel astuda muusika kaudu avalikkusega turvaliselt dialoogi ning tugevdada lauljatele olulisi sotsiaalseid sõnumeid. Näiteks

¹ Eesti Statistika avalik andmebaas, tabel KU62, https://andmed.stat.ee/et/stat/sotsiaalelu__kultuur__rahvakultuur/KU62/table/tableViewLayout2 (23.02.2024).

² Kuna võrreldes kümne aasta kauguse ajaga määratleb kaasajal üha enam inimesi end ka *queer*'ina, kasutatakse artiklis läbivalt akronüümi LGBTQ+, isegi juhul kui viidatud uuringutes on kasutatud kitsamaid tähekkombinatsioone.

³ Uuringumetoodika ei eristanud küsimuse sõnastuses seksuaalsuse kategooriat detailsemalt.

lirimaal läbi viidud kvalitatiivsest LGBTQ+ inimeste harrastuste ja vaimse heaolu uuringust selgus, et koorilaul on turvaline, võimestab osalejaid ja parandab nende vaimset heaolu (Ceatha jt. 2019: 12). Vaadeldes lähiriikide praktikat, tegutseb näiteks Soomes juba 1952. aastast segakoor Koiton Laulu, mis valib oma repertuaari teadlikult sotsiaalselt valusaid teemasid. Seeläbi toimivad nad ühiskondliku mõjukanali ja õpikogukonnana oma liikmetele, kelle jaoks võib mõne teema olulisus jõuda esmalt teadvusse repertuaari kaudu, suunates neid seejärel omakorda oma käitumist kohandama (Suhonen, Cantell, Weselius ja Kouvo 2022: 22). Seega, grupikuuluvuse tunnuste alusel loodud laulukoorid pakuvad turvalist raamistikku, lastes lisaks muusikalistele eesmärkidele väljendada ka isiklikku ja jagatud identiteeti. Individuaalse heaolu kõrval, mida laulmine pakub, on LGBTQ+ inimesed tihti kasutanud oma koore, kontserte ja festivale avaliku platvormina, et edastada kogukonna jaoks olulisi sõnumeid (Hilder 2023: 7).

Lisaks tuntud tõdemusele, et „muusika teeb tuju paremaks“, on muusika soodsat mõju vaimsele ja füüsilisele tervisele alates 1990. aastatest tõendanud mitmed objektiivseid hindamisinstrumente rakendavad uuringud.⁴ Näiteks viidi Fancourt, Ockelford ja Belai ülevaateartikli (2014: 24) põhjal vahemikus 1993–2013 läbi 63 sellist uuringut, kus muusika soodne mõju vaimsele heaolule leidis kinnitust, ning nüüdseks on nende arv veelgi suurenenud. Selliste uuringute disain pakub uurijaile sageli väljakutseid, sest nõuab korduvate meditsiiniliste protseduuride ja/või psühholoogilise hindamise kombineerimist. Samuti peavad uurijad tagama, et osalejad kogeksid siiski võimalikult loomulikke muusikalisi tegevusi. Kui isetäidetavate subjektiivsete healuskaalade kasutus on muusika mõju hindamisel lihtsam, siis füüsilise tervise objektiivsete markerite mõõtmine tõstatab mitmeid eetilisi küsimusi, sest vajalike indikaatorite jälgimiseks tuleb teha invasiivseid

protseduure, näiteks võtta vereproov, mõõta vererõhku jms., mis võivad asjaosalistel juba iseenesest tekitada ärevust.

Muusika mõju meeleolule on uuritud nii üldpopulatsioonis kui ka haavatavates gruppides. Selle artikli kontekstis toome mõned näited haavatavate gruppidega tehtud muusika ja vaimse heaolu uuringute tulemustest. Fancourt jt. (2016: 7) vähidiagnoosiga patsientide, nende lähedaste ja hooldajate uuringus mõõdeti osalejatel enne ja pärast kooriproovi immuunsüsteemi ja stressiga seotud biomarkereid süljeproovist (kortisool, tsütokiin, neuropeptiidid). Lisaks paluti osalejail hinnata oma meeleolu visuaalsel skaalal, valides oma emotsioonidega sobivad emotikonid. Pärast 70 minuti pikkust osalemist laulukooriproovis näitasid tulemused statistiliselt olulisi muutusi nii immuunsüsteemi biomarkereite optimaalsete väärtuste saavutamisel (stressi vähenemisel neuropeptiidide taseme tõus, kortisooli ja tsütokiinide taseme langus) kui ka positiivset muutust osalejate hinnangutes oma emotsionaalsele seisundile. Segameetodit (küsitlus [n = 100] ja poolstruktureeritud intervjuud [n = 10]) kasutanud LGBTQ+ inimeste muusikaharrastuste uuringust USAs (Soenyun 2019: 43–44), milles vaadeldi LGBTQ+ kogukonnabände,⁵ selgus jällegi, et sellises muusikakollektiivis osalemisel oli statistiliselt oluline positiivne seos inimese psühholoogilise ja psühhosotsiaalse heaoluga.

Koorilauluharrastuse juurde kuuluvad avalikud esinemised, mis võivad tekitada osalejates esinemisärevust. Isegi professionaalsete muusikute hulgas, kelle jaoks esinemised on tavapärased, on hiljutise süsteemse metauuringu (Fernholtz jt. 2019) põhjal esinemisärevust raporteerinud 16,5–60% osalejatest. Suurt variatiivsust tulemustes põhjendavad autorid metodoloogiliste probleemidega (näiteks ärevuse sümptomaatika käsitlestes, esinemissageduse ja -intensiivsuse hinnangutes), mis ei muuda aga tõsiasja, et esinemisärevus on lauljate hulgas üsna levinud. Ent hoolimata ebamugavustundest,

⁴ Käesolev artikkel ei anna kõikehõlmavat ülevaadet muusika ja selle elementide positiivsest mõjust, vaid keskendub ennekõike haavatavates gruppides läbiviidud uuringutele, mis keskenduvad muusika mõjule grupitegevustes, võimalikult tavapärasel kontekstis.

⁵ Uurimisinstrumenti originaalses sõnastuses „LGBT Community Band“ ei täpsustatud, millist instrumenti vastaja mängis või kas bändis osalemine võib tähendada ka soolo- või kooslaulmist. Töö teoreetilises sissejuhatuses puudutatakse mh. LGBT ja neljahäälsete vokaalansamblite (*barbershop quartet*) ajalugu, mistõttu võib eeldada, et valimisse kuulus ka lauljaid.

mida esinemisärevus mõnele osalejale põhjustab, liidab just kontserdisituatsioon oma erakordsuse tõttu kogukonna liikmeid regulaarsete proovidega võrreldes eriti tugevalt. Erinevate psüühikahäiretega patsientidele korraldatud kaheaastases muusikaterapias koorilaulu-programmis „Musical Minds“ vaatlejapositsioonil osalenud teadlane Gary Ansdell tõi välja, et esialgsed pinged „oma asja ajamise“ (isikliku identiteedi) ja „grupiks olemise“ vahel vähenesid ajapikku muusikaliste tegevuste kaudu, kuid eriti tugevalt võis grupikuuluvust tunnetada just esinemissituatsioonis (Ansdell 2010: 46). Siinkohal on haavatavate rühmade uurimine keeruline metodoloogiliselt erinevatel põhjustel, millest üks olulisemaid on usalduse puudumine uurija vastu. Seetõttu on levinud praktika kasutada grupisest uurijapositsiooni, s.t. ka uurija ise on uuritava grupi liige. Uurijapositsioone analüüsivas uuringus rõhutavad Olukoton jt. (2021: 1419, 1423) grupisese uurija puhul, et lisaks usalduse võitmisele mõistab selline uurija ka uuritava grupi kultuuri, norme ja keelt,⁶ nimetades sisepositsioonil olevat uurijat lausa eraldi uurimisinstrumendiks.

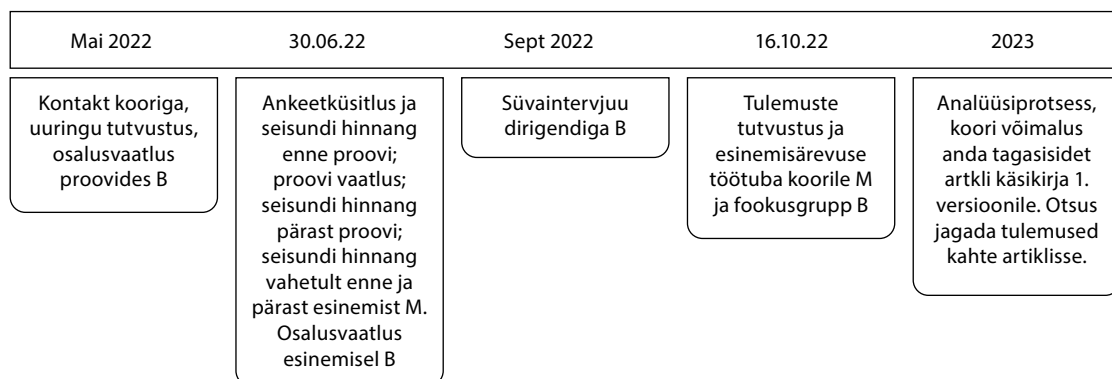
Artiklis käsitletud teemad on osa suuremast juhtumiuuringust, mille eesmärkideks oli (1) tuvastada osalejate motivaatoreid Viker-

laste kooris osalemisel, (2) määratleda koosmusitseerimise olulisust isiklikus LGBTQ+ ja grupiidentiteediloomes ning (3) uurida enesehinnanguliste skaalade abil laulmise mõju proovi ja esinemissituatsiooni võrdluses vaimse heaolu näitajatele. Artikkel vastab eelkõige 3. punktis nimetatud eesmärgile, andes muu hulgas ülevaate uuringu metoodikast. Esimesele kahele uurimisküsimusele annab täpsema vastuse Davidjantsi ja Raju artikkel „Identity and Mental Well-Being: the *Vikerlased* Estonian LGBTQ+ Mixed Choir“ (2025),⁷ mille olulisemate leidude lühikokkuvõte on kirjas ka selle artikli tulemuste peatüki alguses.

2. Metoodika

Juhtumiuuringus kasutati erinevaid metoodikaid, et leida vastused samadele uurimisküsimustele. Kasutati nii kvalitatiivset kui ka kvantitatiivset lähenemist. Uuring koosnes viiest etapist: (1) osalusvaatlus prooviperioodil, (2) vaatlus ja ankeetküsitluse täitmine kontserdipäeval, (3) süvaintervjuu dirigendiga, (4) töötuba ja fookusgrupi intervjuud kooriliikmetega ning (5) tulemuste tagasiside kooriliikmetele. Joonisel 1 on kujutatud uuringu protsessi ja ajaraami.

Joonis 1. Uuringu etapid ja ajajoon. M – Marju Raju; B – Brigitta Davidjants.



⁶ Olukoton jt. (2021) peavad silmas uuritavate emakeelt või dialekti, kuid seda võiks laiendada ka uuritava grupi subkultuurilise sõnavara ja märgisüsteemi tundmisele laiemalt.

⁷ Uuringutulemuste esitamine kahes artiklis tuleneb eelkõige teadusartiklitele seatavatest mahupiirangutest. Paratamatult toob see kaasa ka materjali dubleerimist (nt. metoodika peatükis) ning kontekstiloome probleeme uurimisküsimuste mõistetavaks tegemisel. Autoritena loodame, et sel viisil jõuab info uuringust suurema lugejaskonnani, sh. sihtrühma liikmeteni kahes keeles. Võimaluse korral soovime lugeda artikleid paralleelselt.

2.1. Autorite positsioon ja eetika

Uuringu kontekstis on asjakohane tutvustada autorite positsiooni. Artikli esimene autor on muusikapsühholoog, kes ei määratle end LGBTQ+ kogukonna liikmena, s.t. on koori suhtes kõrvalseisja. Teine autor töötab muusikasotsioloogia vallas, määratledes end ka *queer*-kogukonna liikmena, mistõttu oli tal asjakohane osaleda koori töös. Seega on autorite puhul esindatud psühholoogiline ja sotsioloogiline, sisemine ja välimine uurijapositsioon. Uuringu fookuses olevaid vaimse heaolu küsimusi käsitletakse vastajate subjektiivsete hinnangute põhjal, objektiivset terviseinfot (sh. võimalikke diagnoose) osalejatelt ei küsitud. Uuringule on antud Tartu Ülikooli eetikakomitee luba (No 374/T1).

2.2. Osalejad

Uuringus osalesid segakoori Vikerlased lauljad ja dirigent. Tegu on Tallinnas tegutseva LGBTQ+ kogukonnakooriga, mis loodi 2017. aastal. Kontakt kooriga saadi teise autori kaudu. Uuringu eri etappides osales eri arv koorilauljaid: vaatlus ($n = 19$), ankeetküsitlus ($n = 15$), fookusgrupi intervjuu ($n = 10$).

2.3. Protseduurid ja tehnika

2.3.1. Proovi ja esinemise vaatlus

Andmed koguti juulis 2022 Helsingis toimunud Pride'i festivali ajal, kus koor esines. Vaadeldi esinemisele eelnenud proovi ja samal õhtul toimunud kontserti. Nii proovi kui ka esinemise puhul jälgiti ja loetleti lauljate ($n = 19$) nähtavaid võimalikule ärevusele viitavaid käitumisilminguid. Seda tehti koori kohta tervikuna, s.t. tegevusi võis laulu jooksul teha üks või mitu inimest, samuti võis üks inimene teha teatud tegevusi korduvalt. Vaadeldi ka dirigendi liikumist, tegevust ja ruumis paiknemise muutumist koori suhtes. Vaatleja istus proovi ja esinemise ajal saalis esimeses reas, koorist vaadatuna paremas ääres ning tegi kirjalikke märkmeid paberile. Esinemise vaatlus on tehtud videote põhjal – kuna koori liikmete soovil filmis vaatleja oma telefoniga esinemist, ei saanud ta paralleelselt märkmeid teha ning tegi neid hiljem salvestist üle vaadates. Sealjuures püüdis uurija säilitada prooviga võrreldava vaatlussituatsiooni, s.t. vaatas iga salvestist vaid ühe korra, tehes samal ajal märkmeid

paberile, et tagada võimalikult objektiivne ja võrreldav tulemus. Dirigendi käitumist vaadeldi üldisemalt. Kuna dirigendi töö hõlmab erinevaid liigutusi, ei saa tema puhul kasutada samasugust vaatlusprotokollit nagu koori puhul, kellelt oodatakse esinemisel eelkõige loomulikus asendis paigal seismist või eelnevalt kokkulepitud koreograafilisi liigutusi.

2.3.2. Ankeetküsitlus

Uuringuosalisel täitsid ankeedi paberikandjal koori rietusruumis lava taga. Korraga jagati kätte kogu ankeet ning osalistel oli võimalus tagastada see täidetud osade kaupa või tervikuna pärast kontserdi lõppu. Et vältida vajadust kirjutada ankeedile osaleja nimi ja kaitsta asjaosaliste anonüümsust, olid ühe osaleja ankeedi erinevad leheküljed tähistatud samade piltidega kleepsudega. Esimene ankeedi osa täideti vahetult enne proovi, teine vahetult pärast proovi. Proovi ja esinemise vahele jäi paar tundi vaba aega. Vahetult enne ja pärast esinemist täitsid osalised ankeedi kolmanda ja neljanda osa. Ankeeti sai täita eesti või inglise keeles. Selle esimese osa täitmine võttis vastajatel hinnanguliselt aega 10 minutit ning teise, kolmanda ja neljanda osa täitmine iga kord alla minuti. Esimene autor kandis paberankeetide tulemused Exceli andmebaasi, mida kasutas statistiliseks andmeanalüüsiks.

2.3.3. Süvaintervjuu

Umbes kaks kuud pärast esinemist viis artikli teine autor dirigendiga läbi 60 minuti pikkuse eestikeelse süvaintervjuu. Autor salvestas intervjuu isikliku diktofoniga ja transkribeeris seejärel reaajas kuuldeliselt.

2.3.4. Töötuba ja fookusgrupi intervjuu

Umbes kolm kuud pärast esinemist toimus koori tavapärasel prooviruumis kohtumine kooriliikmetega ($n = 10$), kus dirigent ei osalenud. Kohtumine algas sellega, et esimene autor tegi osalejatele töötoa esinemisärevuse teemal, tutvustades sealsamas ka ankeetküsitluse tulemusi. Töötuba kestis 45 minutit eesti keeles, mida teine autor paralleelselt inglise keelde tõlkis. Pärast töötoa lõppu esimene autor lahkus. Töötoale järgnes fookusgrupi intervjuu, mille viis läbi teine autor. Intervjuu kestis 90 minutit ning toimus paralleelselt eesti ja inglise keeles.

2.3.5. Analüüsi protsess ja koostöö koori liikmetega

Mõlemad autorid tegid esialgse analüüsi enda kogutud andmetele iseseisvalt, misjärel tutvustasid teineteisele tulemusi ja vahetasid esmaseid materjale (transkriptsioonid, statistiline andmebaas). Artikli käsikirja esimene versioon sisaldas kõigis etappides kogutud andmeid/tulemusi ning saadeti tagasisidestamiseks ka kooriliikmetele. Kvalitatiivses analüüsis tsiteeritud lauljad said valida endale sobivad pseudonüümid. Lisaks andsid nad sisulist tagasisidet, mida autorid käsikirja toimetades arvestasid.

2.4. Uuringumaterjalid ja -instrumendid

2.4.1. Repertuaar

Uuringu ajal toimunud kontserdil esitas koor kuus neljahälset eri žanritest, erineva tuntuuse ja raskusastmega laulu.⁸ Kavas esitati teoseid eesti, soome, leedu, inglise ja ukraina keeles (nimekiri on esitatud kontserdil esitatud järjekorras, proovi ajal olid vahetuses esimesed kaks laulu):

1. „Seasons of Love” (1996, Jonathan Larson)
2. „And So It Goes” (1990, Billy Joel)
3. „Legendaarne” (2022, Peeter Konovalov, Tõnu Kõrviits, Heiti Talvix)
4. „Dél Taves” (2001, Džordana Butkutė)
5. „Suvi/Kesä” (1969, Jeff Barry, Kustas Kikerpuu)
6. „Oi u luzi Chervona Kalyna” (Ukraina rahvalaul)

2.4.2. Ankeet

Vastajad täitsid paberkandjal ankeedi (vt. lisa 1), milles enamik küsimusi oli valikvastustega. Ankeetküsitlus koosnes neljast osast. Esimene osa täideti vahetult enne proovi ning selles küsiti (1) vastaja taustaandmeid, (2) varasemat koorilaulu kogemust, (3) motivaatoreid koorilauluga tegelemisel, (4) ärevuse ja meeleolu üldtaset, (5) detailsemaid vaimse heaolu teemalisi küsimusi kahe eelneva nädala kohta, (6) hinnangut oma ärevusele ja meeleolule vahetult enne proovi.

Kahe eelneva nädala ärevusetaseme määramiseks kasutasid autorid ärevuse mõõtmise instrumenti GAD-7 (Spitzer jt. 2006), mille esimene autor tõlkis inglise keelest eesti keelde (koori liikmed, kes eesti keelt ei valda, täitsid ankeedi

originaalkeeles; vt. lisa 1, küsimused 1–7). Kuigi Eestis on ärevuse ja meeleolu diagnostiliseks hindamiseks kasutusel EEK-2 (Aluoja jt. 1999), valiti uuringu tarbeks GAD-7, sest see oli lühem (number 7 viitab küsimuste arvule) ja sobis seetõttu uuringu ülesehitusega paremini ega seganud lauljaid nende põhitegevuses – proovis ja kontserdil laulmises. Samuti soovisid autorid vältida uuringu seostamist diagnoosimisega, samas kui EEK-2 oleks võinud osalejatel just sellega seostuda.⁹

Üldise meeleolu ja vaimset heaolu soodustavate käitumiste uurimiseks kasutati autorite koostatud küsimustikku (vt. lisa 1, küsimused 8–13), mis sisaldas väiteid mõne sündmuse röömuga ootamise, südamest naermise, meelelahutuse tarbimise, looduses viibimise, une ja alkoholi või muude mõnuainete tarbimise kohta. Meeleoluga seotud küsimuste koostamise aluseks oli Zigmond ja Snaithi (1983) koostatud skaala (lisa 1, küsimused 8–10) ning argiteadmise tasandi info vaimse heaolu alustalade kohta, nagu looduses viibimine, une-kvaliteet ja meelemürkidest hoidumine (lisa 1, küsimused 11–13). Vastusevariantide sõnastus meeleoluankeedis ühtlustati GAD-7 vastusevariantidega („üldse mitte”, „mitmel päeval”, „rohkem kui pooltel päevadel” ja „peaaegu iga päev”). Lisaks sisaldas ankeet (osad 2–4) hinnanguid oma hetkemeeleolule ja ärevuse tasemele enne ja pärast proovi ning esinemist. Hindeid sai anda skaalal 0–10, kus 0 juures oli sõnaline vaste „ärevust ei ole üldse” ja „ma ei ole üldse kurb” ning 10 juures „nii närvis, kui ma üldse kunagi olnud olen” ja „nii kurb, kui ma üldse kunagi olnud olen”. Seega tähistas madalam hinne nii ärevuse kui ka meeleolu puhul paremat enesetunnet.

3. Tulemused

Käesolev artikkel annab süsteemse ülevaate ainult vaatluse ja ankeetküsitluse tulemustest. Osalusvaatlusel saadud kogemuse, süvaintervjuu ja fookusgrupi intervjuude¹⁰ leide käsitletakse eraldiseisvas artiklis „Identity and Mental Well-

⁸ Vaata repertuaari detailset sisuanalüüsi Davidjants ja Raju 2025.

⁹ Lisaks psühholoogidele ja psühhiaatritele kasutavad ka Eesti perearstid EEK-2 instrumenti depressiooni esmaseks diagnoosimiseks.

¹⁰ Intervjuude analüüsil kasutati kvalitatiivse sisuanalüüsi meetodit, s.t. autorid kodeerisid intervjuud rida-realt ja kaardistasid tekkinud kategooriad, mis seostati suuremate uurimisküsimustega seotud teemadega.

being: The Case Study of Estonian LGBTQ+ Mixed Choir *Vikerlased*" (Davidjants, Raju 2025). Selle peamiste tulemustena selgus, et Vikerlaste kooris laulmine täitis osalejate jaoks mitut olulist funktsiooni, rõhutades nii individuaalset kui ka grupiidentiteeti, nii kogukonna kui ka muusika rolli LGBTQ+ inimestele toetava keskkonna loomisel.

Kooris osalemine toetas liikmeid neljal peamisel viisil: (1) sotsiaalne kaasatus – koor võimaldas veeta aega sarnaste, mitte-heteronormatiivse identiteediga inimeste seltsis turvalises keskkonnas, kus nende identiteeti austati, (2) institutsionaalne kaasatus – osalejatele oli oluline osaleda laulu- ja tantsupeol, LGBTQ+ Pride'il ja luterliku kiriku üritustel, mis esindasid nende identiteedi erinevaid tahke, (3) osalejate vaimse heaolu hoidmine – koor pakkus turvalist platvormi vaimse tervise teemalisteks aruteludeks, lastes osalistel avaliku LGBTQ+ koorina ka turvalisemalt n.-ö. kapist välja tulla, (4) muusika tähtsus – muusikaliselt keeruliste palade edukas esitamine pakkus liikmetele positiivseid emotsioone, saavutustunnet ja rõõmu, mida nad tõenäoliselt üksinda lauldes ei oleks sel määral kogunud. Kokkuvõttes, esinedes koos teiste LGBTQ+ kooridega kogukonna üritustel (Pride), esindas laulmine Vikerlastes liikmete jaoks n.-ö. pehmet aktivismi. See oli enam kui pelgalt muusikaline tegevus – see oli vahend, mille abil end väljendada, saavutada vaimset heaolu ja toetada oma kogukonda.

3.1. Kooriliikmete vaatlus

Nii proovis kui ka esinemise ajal jälgitud ärevusele viitavaid tegevusi/liigutusi saab liigitada nelja rühma: (1) pea piirkonna (nägu, juuksed) katsumine, (2) prillide ja riiete kohendamine, (3) mootorset rahutust väljendavad, n.-ö. rahutud jäsemed (korduvad liigutused käte või jalgadega), (4) teiste lauljate kaasamine (naermine, lobisemine, naabri patsutamine). Proov ja esinemine toimusid samas ruumis, kus sel päeval oli ligi +30 °C sooja. Seetõttu ei ole vaatlusel arvestatud selliseid tegevusi nagu tuule lehvitamine käe või lehvikuga, vee joomine, lugude vahel korraks istumine. Sageli maandatakse temperatuuri reguleeriva käitumisega ärevust ja vastupidi – mõnikord ongi vaja nina katsuda vaid sügamiseks. Seetõttu tuleb vaatlustulemusi käsitada indikatiivsete ja teatud määral subjektiivsetena.

Kõige valdavamalt katsusid lauljad näopiirkonda, mida tuli ette kogu proovi ja esinemise ajal pidevalt. Samuti esines kõigi laulude ajal prillide ja riiete kohendamist, kuid vähem. Rahutud jäsemed kaasnesid proovi ajal vaid esimese kolme laulu ajal, edaspidi seda nähtu proovis enam ei täheldatud. Siinkohal ilmses erinevus kontserdisituatsioonist, sest esinemisel oli motoorne rahutus vaadeldav kõigi laulude ajal. Teisi inimesi kaasavad käitumisnähtud olid vaadeldavad kogu proovi vältel, v.a. viienda laulu ajal („Suvi”). Nii proovis kui ka esinemisel esines teise laulu ajal esimesega võrreldes vähem ärevusele viitavat käitumist, mis naasis seevastu suuremal määral kolmandas laulus („Legendaarne”). Üldine ärevusilmingute dünaamika oli proovi ja esinemise puhul sarnane: kui esimese laulu ajal oli ärevuse tase n.-ö. mõõdukas, siis teise laulu ajal see vähenes, olles kõige madalam kogu kava esitamise ajal. Proovi ajal tekitas kõige suuremat ärevust neljas („Dél Taves”), esinemise ajal viies laul („Suvi”). Nii proovis kui ka esinemisel naasis viimase laulu ajal („Oi u luzi Chervona Kalyna”) koori keskmine vaadeldav ärevustase umbes esimese laulu tasemele (proovis „And So it Goes”, esinemisel „Seasons of Love”). Võrreldes prooviga oli esinemissituatsioonis ärevuskäitumisnähtusid arviliselt rohkem.

3.2. Dirigendi vaatlus

Proovi alguses ei andnud dirigent ühtki verbaalset korraldust, vaid ootas koori ees seistes, kuni koor on iseseisvalt rivistunud. Proovi ajal kasutas ta nooti ja noodipulti, ent liikus ka üsna palju ringi. Teise laulu („Seasons of Love”) harjutamise ajal kõndis dirigent osa ajast suure liikumisulatusega mööda saali ringi, kolmanda laulu ajal („Legendaarne”) seisatas koorile väga lähedal. Neljanda, leedukeelse loo harjutamise ajal lähenes ta koorile veelgi enam, näides vaatleja positsioonilt füüsiliselt juba peaaegu esimese lauljate reaga samal joonel, s.t. koori sees. Viienda loo („Suvi”) harjutamise ajal eemaldus dirigent taas umbes sama kaugele nagu proovi algul esimese laulu ajal.

Esinedes ei kasutanud dirigent esimese laulu ajal („Seasons of Love”) nooti ja seisis kogu aja koorist maksimaalsel võimalikul kaugusel, umbes esimese publikurea juures. Laulu käigus hakkas dirigent plaksutama, millele järgnes ka

publik, ent mis tekitas koori liikmetes segadust – mõned lauljad plaksutasid, teised mitte. Teise loo ajal („And So It Goes”) tuli dirigent puldi juurde, kuid liikus loo vältel edasi-tagasi, liikudes taas koorist üsna kaugemale. Kolmanda laulu ajal („Legendaarne”) jälgis dirigent nooti, mis hoidis teda seismas puldi juures. Neljanda laulu algul („Dél Taves”) võttis dirigent noodi kätte ja seisatas koorile väga lähedal, laulu teises pooles pani noodi puldile ja liikus koori ees lähemale-kaugemale suure liikumisulatusega. Samuti oli noot dirigendi käes viienda laulu alguses („Suvi”). Poole laulu ajal pani ta noodi puldile ja vahemängu ajal tegi lauljatele naljakaid nägusid. Publik hakkas omal initsiatiivil laulule kaasa plaksutama, kuid ei koor ega dirigent tulnud sellega kaasa. Viimase, ukrainakeelse laulu alguses tõstis dirigent oma puldi lauljatele lähemale. Kogu viimase laulu vältel oli dirigendi liikumisulatus suhteliselt väike.

3.3. Ankeetküsitluse tulemused

Taustainfo. Ankeetküsitlusele (n = 15¹¹) vastanute keskmine vanus oli 36,6 eluaastat, noorim oli 27- ja vanim 55-aastane.¹² Oma soo või seksuaalse identiteedi määramiseks leidusid ankeedis järgmised valikud:¹³ mees (M), naine (N), lesbi (L), gei (G), biseksuaalne (B), trans (T), *queer* (Q), aseksuaalne (A) ja intersooline (I). Samuti said osalejad lisada oma vastuse kohta täpsustusi. Seitse vastajat valisid ühe sümboli, kaheksa vastajat rohkem kui ühe, maksimaalselt valiti neli sümbolit. Nimekirjast ei kasutatud oma identiteediga seoses ainsana I-sümbolit. Selgituste lahtrit kasutas neli vastajat, kes lisasid juba nimekirjas olevate määratluste kordamisele ka uued mõisted: *non-binary*, s.t. mittebinaarne, ja panseksuaalne. Osalejate võimaliku kaudse tuvastamise vältimiseks ei esitata artiklis vastajate kohta detailsemat infot.

Vastajad olid Vikerlaste kooris laulnud keskmiselt kaks aastat. Neist viis oli osalenud alla aasta ja kõige pikema staažiga liige viis aastat. Valdav enamus (13) oli koorilauluga tegelenud ka varasemas elus, alates kooliajast. Viis vastajat

mainis, et lisaks Vikerlaste kooris laulmisele on neil teisi muusikalisi tegevusi – kes laulis mõnes teises kooris või juhtis koori, kes tegi bändi, mängis trummiansambelis või käis tantsutrennis.

Vikerlaste kooris laulmise motivaatorid.

Vastajatel paluti reastada olulisuse alusel seitse erinevat kooris osalemise põhjust, millest kujunes ühine põhjuste pingerida:

1. meeldiv seltskond;
2. koos laulmine;
3. LGBTQ+ identiteedi väljendamine;
4. laulud ja muusika ise;
5. võimalus esineda spetsiaalsetel üritustel (demonstratsioonid, heategevuslikud kontserdid nt. Ukraina heaks, Pride vmt.);
6. esinemised;
7. võimalus esineda laulupeol.

Vastusevariantidega küsimusele, mida vastaja teeks, kui Vikerlaste koor lõpetaks tegevuse, vastas 14 inimest. Neist kuus ütles, et otsiks mõne uue LGBTQ+ koori, neli inimest vastas, et otsiksid lihtsalt mõne muu koori, ning ülejäänud neli ütlesid, et loobuksid tõenäoliselt üldse laulmisest. Üks inimene jättis vastuse valimata, kuid kirjutas avatud kommentaari: „Oleksin väga kurb, muud koori ei otsiks, kuna juba üks veel on ja miski ei saaks Vikerlasi asendada.”

Üldärevuse ja -meeleolu seisundi hinnang.

Vastajad hindasid üldist ärevust, valides kolme ärevustaset kirjeldava väite hulgast ennast kõige rohkem iseloomustava väite: a) olen vähem ärev, kui inimesed tavaliselt on; b) olen sama ärev, kui inimesed tavaliselt on; c) olen keskmiselt ärevam inimene. Vaid üks vastaja mainis, et ta on vähem ärev kui inimesed tavaliselt. Ülejäänud rühmadesse – tavalise ärevusega või keskmiselt ärevamad – kuulus mõlemasse võrdselt seitse inimest. Sama loogika alusel andsid nad hinnangu oma meeleolule: a) olen vähem nukrameelne inimene; b) olen samasugune kui inimesed tavaliselt, mõnikord nukram, mõnikord rõõmsam; c) olen keskmisest nukrameelsem. Üle poolte (n = 8) pidas end meeleolu järgi tavaliseks inimeseks, neli vähem nukraks kui inimesed tavaliselt ja kolm keskmisest

¹¹ Kuna kõik osalised ei vastanud kõigile küsimustele, on vajaduse korral toodud tekstis reaalne vastajate arv (n) jooksvalt.

¹² Kooris osaleb ka alaealisi (keskkoolis käivad noored) lauljaid, keda uuringusse ei kaasatud.

¹³ Kuna tegemist oli sihtrühma uuringuga, olid ankeedis toodud vaid identiteetidele viitavad suurtähed ilma sulgudes selgitustega. Rohkem infot soo- ja seksuaalse identiteetide eestikeelse terminoloogia kohta annab näiteks Kuusik (2024), tutvuda võib ka Eesti LGBT ühingu veebisõnastikuga <https://www.lgbt.ee/sonastik> (14.08.2024).

nukrameelsemaks. Vaadates nende kahe tunnuse koos esinemist, vastas üle poole (n = 8) ärevuse ja meeleolu kohta sama väitega.

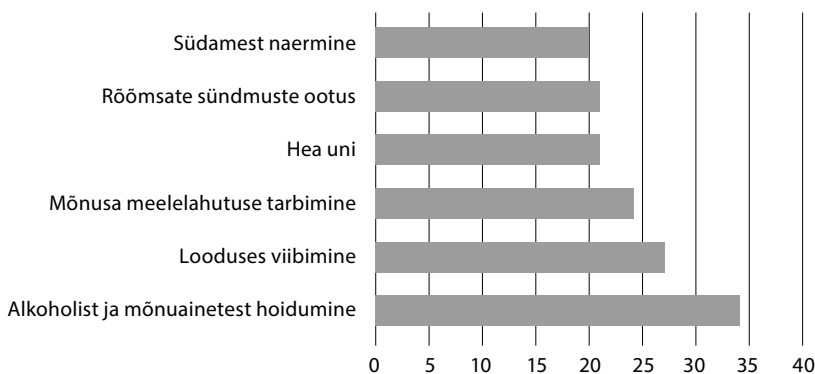
Kahe uuringule eelnenud nädala ärevuse tase ja meeleolu näitajad. Sellele osale ankeedis vastas 14 inimest. Uuringule eelnenud kahe nädalase perioodi ärevuse taset puudutav osa ankeedis (GAD-7) võimaldab skoorida vastaja ärevuse madalaks (*mild*) skooriga 0–9, mõõdukaks (*moderate*) skooriga 10–14 või tõsiseks (*severe*) skooriga rohkem kui 15. Vastanute hulgas (n = 14) oli madala skooriga 10 vastajat, kolm mõõduka skooriga ja üks vastaja tõsisele ärevusele viitava skooriga. Neli inimest, kes said mõõdukale ja tõsisele ärevusele viitava skoori, olid ka ise hinnanud end keskmisest ärevamaks. Ent kolm inimest, kes olid end samuti pidanud keskmisest ärevamaks, skoorisid kahe uuringule eelnenud nädala lõikes madala ärevuse taseme.

Uuringule eelnenud kahe nädalase perioodi meeleolu hindamiseks kasutati skaalat, kus suurem punktisumma tähendas väiksemat meeleolulangust. Alkoholi ja mõnuainete tarvitamise skaalat pöörati omakorda, s.t. valikuvariant „üldse mitte“ sai maksimaalsed skaalapunktid. Seega on tase madal (*mild*) skooriga 11–15, mõõdukas (*moderate*) skooriga 7–10 ja tõsine (*severe*) skooriga vähem kui kuus. Vastanute hulgas (n = 14) oli seitsmel inimesel madal meeleolu langus, kuuel inimesel mõõdukas meeleolu langus ja ühe vastaja meeleolu oli märkimisväärselt/tõsiselt alanenud. Süvenedes

meeleolu puudutavasse küsimustikku, saab koondvastuste põhjal tuua välja erinevate tegevuste „pingerea“, mis kõige enam meeleolu hoidmisesse panustavad (kuna vastusevariant „peaaegu iga päev“ vastas punktisummale 3, on iga komponendi võimalik maksimaalne punktisumma 14 vastaja puhul 42). Kõige suurema osakaaluga oli alkoholi ja teiste mõnuainete kuritarvitamisest hoidumine (34), millele järgnes igapäevaselt vähemalt 20 minuti pikkune looduses viibimine (27) ja mõnusa meelelahutuse (raamat, film, telesaade) tarbimine (24). Pisut vähem näitasid tulemused unekvaliteeti (21), rõõmsate sündmuste ootust (21) ja südamest naermist (20) (vt. joonis 2).

Ärevuse ja meeleolu seisundi muutused proovis ja esinemisel. Vastajad (n = 15) hindasid oma ärevust ja meeleolu neli korda: vahetult enne ja pärast proovi ning vahetult enne ja pärast esinemist. Tulemustest annab ülevaate tabel 1. Enne proovi oli koori keskmine ärevuse hinne 3,9 ja pärast proovi 3,5. Meeleolu puhul olid näitajad enne proovi 2 ja pärast 1,8. Statistiline olulisusanalüüs (t-test) näitas, et enne proovi olid grupi keskmine ärevuse ja kurvameelsuse tase sarnaselt madalad ning statistiliselt olulist muutust neis näitajates pärast proovi ei olnud. Seevastu oli esinedes vaatepilt sootuks teine. Enne esinemist oli koori keskmine ärevuse hinne pisut kõrgem kui enne proovi (4,1) ja meeleolu puhul madalam (1,4), s.t. proovi lõpu ja esinemise vahelisel ajal toimus väike kollektiivne

Meeleolu hoidmise meetmed koori liikmete hulgas



Joonis 2. Meeleolu hoidmise meetmete osatähtsus kooris tervikuna uuringule eelnenud kahe nädala jooksul.

Tabel 1. Kollektiivi (n = 15) keskmised muutused ärevuses ja meeleolus enne ja pärast proovi ning esinemist.
* p = 0.002; **p = 0.02

	enne proovi	pärast proovi	muutus	enne esinemist	pärast esinemist	muutus
grupi keskmine ärevus	3,9 (SD 2,6)	3,5 (SD 2,1)	0,4	4,1 (SD 2,2)	2,4 (SD 2,4)	1,7*
grupi keskmine meeleolu	2 (SD 2,3)	1,8 (SD 1,8)	0,2	1,4 (SD 1,1)	0,9 (SD 1)	0,5**

meeleolutõus, kuid kerkinud oli ka üleüldine ärevuse tase. Pärast esinemist olid keskmine näitaja ärevuse puhul 2,4 ja meeleolu puhul 0,9. Nii ärevuse kui ka meeleolu näitajate muutused on ka statistiliselt olulised (ärevuse puhul p = 0.002, t = 3.453 ja kurvameelsuse puhul p = 0.021, t = 2.481). Seega, esinemise järel langes märkimisväärselt kooriliikmete keskmine ärevuse tase ja tõusis meeleolu.

4. Arutelu ja järeldused

Vikerlaste koori juhtumiuuringus rakendati erinevaid uurimismeetodeid – nii kvalitatiivseid kui ka kvantitatiivseid. Autorite soov kasutada ka kvantitatiivseid mõõtmisi ja ankeetküsitlust on osaliselt ettevaatav. Nii väikese valimi puhul on statistiliselt oluliste tulemuste saamine suuresti juhuslik (ning juhtumiuuringu tulemused ei ole niikuinii üldistatavad), ent kui tulevikus rakendada niisugust lähenemist rohkemate muusikakollektiivide puhul, on lootust, et neist juhtumiuuringute tulemustest kujuneb suuremahulisem statistiline andmebaas. See omakorda võimaldaks uurida muusikaliste tegevuste mõju ärevuse ja meeleoluseisundite muutustele suuremal valimil. Hetkel tuleb siiski statistilisse analüüsi suhtuda valimi väiksuse tõttu reservatsioonidega ning konkreetse juhtumiuuringu tulemustega tutvudes tasub arvesse võtta ka kvalitatiivsed leiud, mida põgusalt tutvustati tulemuste peatüki alguses. Küsimustike ja enesehinnanguskaalade tulemusi analüüsima asudes oli autorite hüpotees, et positiivseid muutusi näeb vaid kirjeldava statistika tasandil, mis valimi mahu tõttu ei ole suure tõenäosusega statistiliselt olulised. Kuna analüüs näitas siiski esinemise puhul statistiliselt olulist muutust, otsustati seda tulemust ka artiklis raporteerida, ning sel juhul tuleb esitada võrdlusandmed ka

proovi kohta (mis olid ootuspäraselt statistiliselt mitteolulised).

Uuringus kasutati ka vaatlust, mille tulemusi analüüsis vaid üks autor. Kuigi vaatlusandmete analüüsil on soovitatav kasutada mitut vaatlejat, seda antud uuringu raames ei tehtud. Teine autor osales seevastu siseuurija positsioonil ega tuvastanud vaatlusandmete analüüsi tulemustes kognitiivseid vastuolusid oma isikliku kogemuse, koori tunnetusliku dünaamika ning ärevuse ja meeleolu vahel. Uuritavate privaatsuse kaitseks ei saa esitada osalejate kohta individuaalseid tulemusi. Mittesekkuva meetodina pakub inimese käitumise detailne jälgimine olulist informatsiooni uuritavate psühholoogiliste seisundite kohta, sest ainult verbaalsetes (sh. ankeedile antud) vastustes on uuritava lihtsam anda sotsiaalselt soovitavaid vastuseid (Bakeman, Quera 2011: 12). Olulise nüansina tuleb märkida, et ärevuse ja meeleolu hinnanguskaalade (võimalus anda punkte skaalal 1–10) verbaalselt sõnastatud äärepunktides esitati väiteid sama emotsiooni kohta nii negatiivselt kui ka positiivselt. Selle metodoloogilise otsuse taga oli uurijate soov vältida rohkemate emotsioonide nimetusi, mida iga vastaja hakkaks veel omakorda individuaalselt mõtestama. Huron (2024: 267) sedastab oma värskes käsitluses kurbusest, et hetkel puudub isegi teadlaste vahel konsensuslikult tunnustatud emotsioonide teooria. Antud juhul ei ole muidugi võimalik hinnata, kas ja kuidas võis see mõjutada enesetunde hinnete andmist/ tulemusi käesolevas uuringus, ent kuna osalejatel ei tekkinud enesehinnanguskaalade täitmisel selliseid küsimusi, võib eeldada, et valitud lähenemine õigustas ennast.

Käesoleva uuringu tulemused näitasid kooriliikmete keskmine ärevuse taseme vähenemist ja positiivse meeleolu suurenemist nii proovis kui ka esinemisel. Samuti tuleb silmas pidada, et uurijad

jälgsid situatsioonilist ärevust ja selle muutusi ega hinnanud positiivsete muutuste kestust. Kuna uuringudisain sisaldas erinevaid andmekogumise viise, saab ärevuse puhul enesehinnangulistel skaaladel põhinevaid tulemusi kinnitada vaatlusandmetega, mis näitasid sarnast keskmise ärevuse dünaamikat nii proovis kui ka esinemisel. Mõlemal juhul oli pärast esimest laulu vaadeldav üldine pingelangus, millele alates kolmandast laulust järgnes taas ärevustaseme tõus, selle kulmineerumine ning langus proovi ja esinemise algtasemele viimase laulu ajal. Samas kui proovis saavutati grupina n.-ö. maksimaalne ärevus umbes poole peal, siis esinemissituatsioonis toimus see alles eelviimase laulu ajal ning oli märkimisväärselt kõrgem proovis jälgitust. Dirigendi käitumine toetas ja peegeldas nii proovis kui ka esinemisel koori üldist seisundit ning näiteks muusikaliselt suuremat väljakutset esitavate laulude ajal lähenes dirigent füüsiliselt koorile. Sellist käitumist võib tõlgendada püüdega vähendada hierarhilist dirigendilaulja suhet ning anda mõista, et rasketes situatsioonides ollakse võrdselt koos. Dirigendi püüd koori meeleolu esinemise ajal laulmisele kaasaplaksutamise ja veelgi mõjutada tõi aga kaasa segaduse, sest proovis ta nii ei toiminud. Teisel korral, kui kaasaplaksutamist algatas publik, ei tulnud ka dirigent sellega kaasa, näidates taas solidaarsust kooriga, kus kõigile ei pruugi spontaanne tegevus olla mugav.

Koori liikmed pidasid kõige olulisemateks faktoriteks koori töös osalemisel meeldivat seltskonda ja koos laulmist. Ankeetküsitluse

tulemused näitavad, et erinevate vaimse heaolu valdkondadega ja selle hoidmise meetoditega on osalised hästi kursis. Samu tulemusi kinnitas ka intervjuude analüüs, kust selgus, et vaimne tervis ei ole kooriliikmete jaoks tabuteema, samuti mõistavad nad ise koorilaulu positiivset mõju endile. Kuigi Vikerlaste lauljate kooristaaž oli erinev, oli enamik neist varemgi kooris laulnud, ent kui tekkis võimalus liituda just LGBTQ+ kooriga, otsustasid nad selle võimaluse kasuks. Uuringu kvalitatiivsete andmete analüüs toob sealjuures välja erinevad tahud koori liikmete identiteediloomes, mida ühine koorilaul võimestab – individuaalne ja jagatud identiteet, olulised institutsioonid ja kaasatus ühiskondlikesse protsessidesse LGBTQ+ kooris osalemise kaudu. LGBTQ+ grupile olulisi sõnumeid kannab ka repertuaarivalik. Laulukoorid, mis koondavad sarnaste kogemustega inimesi, on võimestavad ja tugevdavad ühiskonnas haavatavate gruppide häält. Vikerlaste koori juhtumiuuringu tulemused julgustavad autoreid soovutama koos laulmist teistelegi Eesti ühiskonnas haavatavatele gruppidele. Koos laulmine endaga sarnases olukorras olevate inimestega lisab kunstilistele eesmärkidele ka vaimse heaolu eesmärgi. See pakub turvalist viisi, kuidas suurendada sallivust ja tunnistada ühiskonnas laiemalt erinevaid kogemusi.

Juhtumiuuring kuulub Eesti Teadusagentuuri rahastatud uurimisprojekti PSG838, mis keskendub muusika kaudu subkultuursele identiteediloomele.

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Lisa 1. Ankeet.

1. TAUSTAANDMED

1. Vanus.....
2. Kuidas te eelistate tähistada enda soo või seksuaalsusega seotud identiteeti?
Valige palun kõik Teile sobivad (tehke ring ümber) või täpsustage
M
N
L
G
B
T
Q
A
I
Soovin täpsustada:
3. Kui kaua olete laulnud kooris "Vikerlased"?
4. Kas tegelesite koorilauluga juba enne "Vikerlaste" koori astumist?
Ei
Jah (palun täpsustage kui kaua olete koorilauluga tegelenud)
.....
5. Kas osalete hetkel veel mõnes muusikakollektiivis (laulukoor, tantsurühm, ansambel, orkester, bänd)?
Ei
Jah (palun täpsustage)
6. Palun nummerdage olulisuse järgi "Vikerlaste" kooris osalemise põhjused
..... koos laulmine (tegevus)
..... laulud ja muusika ise
..... esinemised
..... võimalus esineda laulupeol
..... LGBTQ+ identiteediväljendamine
..... seltskond meeldib
..... võimalus esineda spetsiaalsetel üritustel (demonstratsioonid, heategevuslikud kontserdid nt Ukraina heaks, Pride vmt)
7. Kui "Vikerlaste" koor lõpetaks tegevuse, mida teeksite?
1 - Otsiksin lihtsalt mõne muu koori
2 - Otsiksin uue LGBTQ+ inimeste koori
3 - Loobuksin ilmselt laulmisest

KÜSIMUSED ÜLDISE SEISUNDI KOHTA

1. Kui ärevaks inimeseks Te ennast **üldiselt** ise peate?
 - 1 - Olen vähem ärev kui inimesed tavaliselt on
 - 2 - Olen sama ärev kui inimesed tavaliselt on
 - 3 - Olen keskmisest ärevam inimene
2. Kuidas hindate **üldiselt** enda meeleolu?
 - 1 - Olen vähem nukrameelsem kui inimesed tavaliselt on
 - 2 - Olen samasugune kui inimesed tavaliselt on, mõnikord nukram, mõnikord rõõmsam
 - 3 - Olen keskmisest nukrameelsem inimene

Nüüd mõelge palun kahe viimase nädala peale

1. Kas **viimase kahe nädala jooksul** olete tundnud ennast närviliselt, ärevalt?
 - 0 - Üldse mitte
 - 1 - Mitmel päeval
 - 2 - Rohkem kui pooltel päevadest
 - 3 - Peaaegu iga päev
2. Kas viimase kahe nädala jooksul pole Te suutnud lõpetada või hoida kontrolli all oma muretsemist?
 - 0 - Üldse mitte
 - 1 - Mitmel päeval
 - 2 - Rohkem kui pooltel päevadest
 - 3 - Peaaegu iga päev
3. Kas viimase kahe nädala jooksul olete muretsenud liiga palju erinevate asjade pärast?
 - 0 - Üldse mitte
 - 1 - Mitmel päeval
 - 2 - Rohkem kui pooltel päevadest
 - 3 - Peaaegu iga päev
4. Kas viimase kahe nädala jooksul on Teil olnud probleeme lödvestamisega?
 - 0 - Üldse mitte
 - 1 - Mitmel päeval
 - 2 - Rohkem kui pooltel päevadest
 - 3 - Peaaegu iga päev
5. Kas viimase kahe nädala jooksul olete tundnud end nii rahutuna, et on raskeühe koha peal paigal istuda?
 - 0 - Üldse mitte
 - 1 - Mitmel päeval
 - 2 - Rohkem kui pooltel päevadest
 - 3 - Peaaegu iga päev
6. Kas viimase kahe nädala jooksul olete tundnud end ärritunult ja pahaselt, vihastanud?
 - 0 - Üldse mitte
 - 1 - Mitmel päeval
 - 2 - Rohkem kui pooltel päevadest
 - 3 - Peaaegu iga päev

7. Kas viimase kahe nädala jooksul olete tundnud, et Teiega võiks midagi halba juhtuda?
 - 0 - Üldse mitte
 - 1 - Mitmel päeval
 - 2 - Rohkem kui pooltel päevadest
 - 3 - Peaaegu iga päev

8. Kas viimase kahe nädala jooksul olete midagi suure rõõmuga oodanud?
 - 0 - Üldse mitte
 - 1 - Mitmel päeval
 - 2 - Rohkem kui pooltel päevadest
 - 3 - Peaaegu iga päev

9. Kas viimase kahe nädala jooksul olete südamest naernud?
 - 0 - Üldse mitte
 - 1 - Mitmel päeval
 - 2 - Rohkem kui pooltel päevadest
 - 3 - Peaaegu iga päev

10. Kas viimase kahe nädala jooksul olete nautinud mõnd head raamatut, filmi või telesaadet?
 - 0 - Üldse mitte
 - 1 - Mitmel päeval
 - 2 - Rohkem kui pooltel päevadest
 - 3 - Peaaegu iga päev

11. Kas viimase kahe nädala jooksul olete viibinud looduses vähemalt 20 minutit korraga?
 - 0 - Üldse mitte
 - 1 - Mitmel päeval
 - 2 - Rohkem kui pooltel päevadest
 - 3 - Peaaegu iga päev

12. Kas viimase kahe nädala jooksul olete saanud ennast öösel välja magada?
 - 0 - Üldse mitte
 - 1 - Mitmel päeval
 - 2 - Rohkem kui pooltel päevadest
 - 3 - Peaaegu iga päev

13. Kas viimase kahe nädala jooksul olete tarvitanud alkoholi või muid mõnuaineid?
 - 0 - Üldse mitte
 - 1 - Mitmel päeval
 - 2 - Rohkem kui pooltel päevadest
 - 3 - Peaaegu iga päev

2. ENNE PROOVI

1. Kui ärevalt Te ennast praegusel hetkel tunnete? Tõmmake palun sobivale numbrile ring ümber
0 - ärevustei ole üldse
10 - nii närvis kui ma üldse kunagi olnud olen

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

2. Kui kurvalt Te ennast praegusel hetkel tunnete? Tõmmake palun sobivale numbrile ring ümber
0 - ma pole üldse kurb
10 - nii kurb kui ma üldse kunagi olnud olen

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

3. PÄRAST PROOVI

1. Kui ärevalt Te ennast praegusel hetkel tunnete? Tõmmake palun sobivale numbrile ring ümber
0 - ärevustei ole üldse
10 - nii närvis kui ma üldse kunagi olnud olen

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

2. Kui kurvalt Te ennast praegusel hetkel tunnete? Tõmmake palun sobivale numbrile ring ümber
0 - ma pole üldse kurb
10 - nii kurb kui ma üldse kunagi olnud olen

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

4. ENNE ESINEMIST

1. Kui ärevalt Te ennast praegusel hetkel tunnete? Tõmmake palun sobivale numbrile ring ümber
0 - ärevustei ole üldse
10 - nii närvis kui ma üldse kunagi olnud olen

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

2. Kui kurvalt Te ennast praegusel hetkel tunnete? Tõmmake palun sobivale numbrile ring ümber
0 - ma pole üldse kurb
10 - nii kurb kui ma üldse kunagi olnud olen

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

5. PÄRAST ESINEMIST

1. Kui ärevalt Te ennast praegusel hetkel tunnete? Tõmmake palun sobivale numbrile ring ümber
0 - ärevustei ole üldse
10 - nii närvis kui ma üldse kunagi olnud olen

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

2. Kui kurvalt Te ennast praegusel hetkel tunnete? Tõmmake palun sobivale numbrile ring ümber
0 - ma pole üldse kurb
10 - nii kurb kui ma üldse kunagi olnud olen

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

A Case Study of Changes in the Mood and Anxiety Indicators Among Members of the LGBTQ+ Mixed Choir *Vikerlased* in Rehearsal and Concert Situations

Marju Raju, Brigitta Davidjants

The positive impact of choral singing and music more generally on people's mental well-being has been extensively researched and proven. Often, the focus is on the self-esteem of the singers (Moss et al. 2018), as well as on the psychological and physiological benefits and the social and community support people gain from participating in choral and community singing, especially those from marginalised groups (Bird 2017: 194).

Methodology. The case study consisted of participant observation during the rehearsal and performance situations, a questionnaire, an in-depth interview with the conductor, a workshop, focus group interviews with choir members, and feedback of the results to choir members. This article covers only quantitative results from the questionnaire and from observation of the participants.

Choir members. The participants were the singers and the conductor of the LGBTQ+ mixed choir *Vikerlased* based in Tallinn, established in 2017. The average age of respondents to the questionnaire (n=15) was 36.6, the youngest was 27 and the oldest 55. Respondents had been singing in the choir for an average of two years. The majority (13) had been involved in choral singing also in earlier life, since school. The following options were available in the questionnaire to identify their gender or sexual identity: male (M), female (N), lesbian (L), gay (G), bisexual (B), trans (T), queer (Q), asexual (A) and intersex (I). Seven respondents chose one symbol, eight respondents chose more than one, with a maximum of four symbols. The I symbol was the only one in the list not used in connection with their identity. The explanation box was used by four respondents who added new terms to the repetition of definitions already in the list: non-binary and pansexual. In order to avoid any possible implicit identification of the participants, the article does not provide more detailed information about the respondents.

Selected results. Motivation for singing. Respondents were asked to rank seven different reasons for choir participation in order of importance, resulting in a common ranking of reasons: (1) pleasant company, (2) singing together, (3) expression of LGBTQ+ identity, (4) the songs and the music itself, (5) the opportunity to perform at special events (demonstrations, charity concerts, e.g. for Ukraine, Pride, etc.), (6) performances in general, and (7) the opportunity to perform at the Song Celebration.

Observations. The overall dynamics of anxiety indicating behaviours were similar for the rehearsal and the performance: while the level of observable anxiety-related behaviours was moderate during the first song, it decreased during the second song, being the lowest of all in the performance as a whole. During the rehearsal, the fourth song was the "most anxious" in general, while during the performance it was the fifth song that was the "most anxious". During both the rehearsal and the performance, the average observed anxiety level of the choir returned to around the level of the first song during the last song. Compared to the rehearsal, there were numerically more anxiety behaviours in the performance situation.

Self-rating scales. Respondents (n=15) rated their anxiety and mood using a 10-point scale. For both scores, lower results indicate a more desirable situation with a lower anxiety level and raised mood. Before the rehearsal the average anxiety score of the choir was 3.9 and after the rehearsal 3.5 points. For mood, the pre-rehearsal score was 2 and the post-rehearsal score was 1.8. Statistical significance analysis (t-test) revealed that the group mean anxiety and mood scores were similarly low before the rehearsal and that there was no statistically significant change in these scores after the rehearsal. Before the performance, the average anxiety score of the choir was slightly higher than before the rehearsal (4.1) and the mood score was lower (1.4), i.e. there was a small collective increase in mood between the end of the rehearsal and the performance, but there was also an increase in overall anxiety levels. After the performance, the mean scores were 2.4 for anxiety and only 0.9 for mood. Changes in both anxiety and mood scores were also statistically significant ($p=0.002$, $t=3.453$ for anxiety, and $p=0.021$, $t=2.481$ for mood). Thus, after the performance, the average anxiety level of the choir members decreased significantly and mood increased.

Discussion. The choir members considered the most important factors in participating in the choir's work to be pleasant company and singing together. Choir members had a fairly high level of awareness of mental health issues and practised behaviours to prevent mental health problems. These issues are not taboo in the choir, which offers general support to its members in addition to musical activities. An openly LGBTQ+ choir such as *Vikerlased* offers a safe way to increase tolerance and to acknowledge different experiences in Estonian society at large.

Rīga's New Underground Scene in Arnis Balčus' Documentary Art Photographs

Jānis Daugavietis
Arnis Balčus

Abstract

This article aims to show how documentary-style art photography can be used in the sociological study of a relatively closed and transgressive subculture. The example of the article is the current Rīga new underground music scene centred around punk and DIY. The pictures selected as samples are from the book *Scēna* by photographer Arnis Balčus, published in early 2024. The article includes excerpts from sociologist Jānis Daugavietis's conversation with Arnis Balčus about photographing this scene, as well as interpretations of this phenomenon. Alongside a visual-ethnographic analysis of the scene, a close reading of the photographs was carried out by lead author and the young people seen in the close-ups in two of the photographs. The visual codes that can be read in these photographs demonstrate how the Rīga scene is part of the global punk subculture and reveals its connections with similar scenes in nearby foreign countries. Reading the pictures on a micro level, we see both the creativity of the young people and their anxiety. The article demonstrates that documentary art photographs can serve as research data, which can be either a subject of analysis in itself or a tool for formulating new research questions or hypotheses.

Keywords: Rīga's new underground music scene, sociology, photographic method, documentary art photographs as research data, Arnis Balčus

Introduction

"My personal opinion is that photography can be a very important means of collecting ethnographic documents, and that to leave it untapped is not only an unpardonable neglect but also a serious crime in our circumstances." (Buclers 1925: 1) Following the example of this Latvian photographer, photographic industrialist and publisher of a century ago, we have turned our attention to documenting Rīga's so-called new underground scene (often just "scene" or "scēna" in Latvian), including through the use of photography as an art-based research method.

Can photography be used in the process of research in other social sciences, not only as an artefact collected or created for the purpose of adding to the corpus of cultural heritage? Whether photography as research data is a legitimate tool in sociology was questioned by Pierre Bourdieu in the mid-1960s (Bourdieu 1990). Photography has always been used to study the world and, as Howard Becker points out (1974), its invention coincides with the birth of sociology. Both these authors also attest to this in their academic practice, publishing a relatively large number of photographs in their most important works (*Distinction* and *Art Worlds* respectively).

Several photographic methods have been described and used in the disciplines of visual sociology and anthropology (see Harper 2002; Holm 2020; Langmann, Pick 2018a). At the same time, the publication of photographs in academic research is rare, except for selected illustrative purposes. The systematic use of photographs in publications is nowadays mainly restricted to visual methods publications (Holm 2020).

Our initial idea was to base the article on photographs, adding as little text as possible, and not even explaining or commenting on what the photographs show. This would have placed virtually the entire burden of interpretation on the reader. Punk and other close musical subcultures have existed for half a century, so their codes are well-known to both insiders and researchers in the field. Therefore, we wanted to give the reader only visual material, primary rather than secondary research data. However, in the process of writing, listening to the editors' suggestion, the article took the form of a rather traditional research paper, which included only three of the fifteen photographs originally selected. While we can assume that there are people with knowledge of the history of punk rock and other close subcultural genres who

possess the ability to decipher the canonical visual codes of these communities, this is not the same as having expertise in contemporary Latvian underground music.

This led to an adjustment in the original aims and objectives of the paper. Keeping the main aim – to give a photo-ethnographic insight into Rīga's new underground music scene with documentary-style photographs – the article proceeded with a methodological discussion on the use of documentary art photography for sociological research. Without delving into the long-standing issues of the (im)possibility of producing photographs that objectively reflect reality and the influence of the positionality of the photographer and the analyst on the final results of the research, we ask more pragmatic questions. Assuming that documentary art photographs of a relatively closed and marginal community can be useful for sociological research, we ask: in what ways?

The subject of this article is Rīga's new underground music scene, which can be considered to have started in 2019 (Daugavietis 2022). It is a scene grouped around punk and genres close to it (such as hardcore, gothic, indie, extreme metal, etc.) and DIY ideology. This music community, the largest and most active of its kind in Latvian history, has all the main attributes of a scene: shared space, shared places, shared identity, and of course its own music (bands) and fan base (Daugavietis 2023b).

Three photographs of this scene taken by photographer Arnis Balčus in 2023 and published in the book *Scēna* (2024a) are used as research data in this article. They are particularly useful for ethnographic purposes because of the photographer's style: sharp and well-lit, they allow even small details to be seen clearly. In addition, Arnis Balčus is the only professional photographer to have systematically documented this highly spectacular scene. The photographs for this article have been selected to show the visual codes and bricolages that are both typical of this scene in Rīga and at the same time seem to distinguish it from similar scenes in other places and times.

The first objective of the article is to show and interpret the main visual characteristics of the scene through photographs. One of the typical features of this scene seems to be its

focus on DIY modifications of the body, clothing and accessories. Arnis Balčus has publicly stated the following thesis several times: "The body is in most cases the only thing they have power over, and it becomes not only a way of asserting their identity, but also a tool of protest." (ISSP 2023) What else can one see in the photographs, even if they are taken with the aim of artistically selecting and highlighting the most striking, though perhaps not the most typical, cases in the scene? In this article, we use photographs not only to show how visual style relates to specific musical genres and even to other scenes, but also as a means to formulate research questions and hypotheses for further research. This already relates to the second objective of the article – to try to understand in what other ways these photographs can be used for the purposes of research in which they are not merely research data to be used for qualitative or quantitative analysis.

Methodologically, this approach is closest to grounded theory, where "photographs are used as a way of answering or expanding on questions about a particular subject" (Suchar 1997: 34). The premise of the article is that documentary-style photographs (both their taking and their analysis) can help to study and better understand the functioning of a given music scene, even if – as in the case of Arnis Balčus – the photographs mainly capture "backstage" (not the backstage of live venues) or "off stage" (Goffman 1956) moments rather than performing music on an actual stage.

As mentioned above, this is the largest scene of such musical genres in the history of Latvian underground music. Soviet Latvia's cultural policy was very intolerant towards rock music, which is one of the main reasons why the first Latvian punk bands started to appear only in the first half of the 1980s, and in that decade they were few in number (Daugavietis 2018). Even in the post-Soviet years, the Latvian punk scene has never been as big and vibrant as the current one discussed in this article. This applies both to the quantity (of bands, concerts and festivals, and audience) and to various qualities, such as the visual (Daugavietis 2023b). As we know from our fieldwork, it is at the same time distinctly local (centred in Rīga) but also global, as most of the symbolic values it embraces have their origins in international metropolises. It also has regional

links with similar underground scenes in nearby countries (Estonia, Lithuania, Finland). The scene is well documented in Arnis Balčus's photographs and is highly spectacular. These are the reasons why the so-called new underground scene of Rīga has been chosen as the subject of this article.

The paper includes a methodological description of the approach, a theoretical conceptualisation of the scene, a description of the data acquisition and a close reading of selected photographs. Close reading of these photographs is performed by the lead author Jānis Daugavietis, and is based on knowledge gained not only from researching this scene since 2021, but also from being involved in Latvian underground music since the early 1990s and subsequently studying music subcultures at academic level. The reading of the photographs also includes descriptions and commentaries on the images by the persons depicted. This is followed by general conclusions regarding the approach, material and objectives of the paper. The article concludes with a conversation between Jānis Daugavietis and Arnis Balčus about photographing this scene, in which the photographer speaks first-hand about his artistic and exploratory approach to capturing this scene.

The novel feature of the article lies in its use of art-based documentary photographs in sociological research of an academically understudied topic (Latvian underground music). Thus, the convergence of these two research practices and traditions can inspire the study of other relatively closed communities using a similar approach.

Approach

The research data for this article was collected using art-based documentary photography (Becker 2005 [1998]; Langmann, Pick 2018a; Suchar 1997). The rationale for its use in historical research and the social sciences was described in 1940 by the American economist and photographer Roy Stryker and the agricultural historian Paul H. Johnstone: "His [Mathew B. Brady] Civil War photographs convey graphic impressions of important scenes and incidents with a vividness that could never be attained by verbal description alone." (Stryker, Johnstone 2019 [1940]: 324) Our approach is similar: to capture and illustrate the underground scene through

documentary photographs, focusing later in the analysis on deciphering their typical visual codes. The object of the research is the current scene in Rīga centred around the punk genre and DIY aesthetics. Using the photo-elicitation method and close reading, a reflexive approach was used in the selection and analysis of the photographs.

The approach to the analysis of the study should be seen as a two-part process, the first being the taking of the documentary art photographs, and the second being the researchers' work on the qualitative analysis of the selected photographs, involving the subjects of the photographs in the interpretation process.

The first part of the process can be called an art-based research method. It can also be seen as classic social science fieldwork, where the researcher (in this case, the photographer) goes into the field in the natural habitat of the research subject. In this case, Rīga's new underground scene, the fieldwork takes place mainly at concerts and festivals. The photographer most often captures two types of images: groups of people in action (e.g. a crowd of listeners in front of a stage or a group of friends smoking outside a music club) or portraits. The second type is close to the methodology of portraiture which was "first introduced by Sarah Lawrence-Lightfoot (1983) in an effort to blend social science research doctrines with aesthetic inquiry" (Langmann, Pick 2018a: 18). Asking for permission to photograph the "models" results in a photograph with both the relatively active, conscious participation of the subject and the requisites of the natural environment of the object of study. Thus, the strength of this method is described as its ability to "contextualise the depictions of individuals and events and emphasize interpretation of reality from both the researcher's experiences and the subject's portrayal of their experiences" (ibid.).

The second part of the research process is the analysis of the collected research data (in this case, photographs). Our approach is qualitative and we combine it with the photo-elicitation method, where "analysis does not only recognise the participant as a source of data but also as a source of analysis" (Langmann, Pick 2018b: 120), and it is actually a form of interview, where the people in the photos are asked to tell and explain what they see in the images.

The aim of this study is not to draw clear conclusions or to construct a theoretical model of the object under study, so the final interpretation of the photographs has been undertaken in the spirit of a reflexive approach. Visual social scientist Sarah Pink defines it as follows:

Ethnographers themselves are part of the contexts in which photography, video and other digital and analogue media practices are already experienced and understood in particular ways. How individual ethnographers approach the visual in their research and representation is inevitably influenced by a range of factors, including theoretical commitments, disciplinary agendas, personal experience, gendered identities and their visual and digital skills and cultures. (Pink 2013: 47)

The research data for this article consist of three photographs by the photographer Arnis Balčus from his book *Scēna* (2024), selected by the sociologist Jānis Daugavietis. Both authors have been involved in various subcultures for a long time (20–30 years), in different ways and to differing degrees, from direct participation to documentation and research. Our position is therefore characterised on the one hand by a long-standing interest in the subject and a certain amount of insider knowledge; on the other hand, however, we cannot claim that this is an insider approach. Rather, we are in a field that is difficult to define, between outsider/insider positions (Bennett 2003; Breen 2007; Hodkinson 2005), and our view can be called an intersectional “insighter” ethnography (Sharp 2021). As can perhaps be concluded from our conversation (see below, at the end of the article), we can accept Kahn-Harris’s statement (2007: 5) about his position in relation to the extreme metal scene he studies: we are “sympathetic outsiders”.

Scene

“Scene” is a term used both in vernacular (everyday) language and in the social sciences, where it is understood quite similarly. In this case, which outsiders tend to refer to as “Riga’s new underground scene”, the community itself uses the term “scene” for self-identification. Since 2021, a few popular Instagram meme accounts

focusing on this scene have emerged, with the word “scene” in their names. The first were @latvianscenedaily (Latvian Scene Updates); @scenas.shitposting (LV scene memes and stuff) and @dzeltena.scena (The yellow press of the scene). (Daugavietis 2023a)

This article adopts and uses the conceptualisation of the term “scene” by communications scholar Will Straw. The scene consists of three basic elements: performers, support facilities, and fans (Straw 1991). Both broadly and more concretely, the scene is grouped around some shared symbolic values (in the case of music, a genre), and is rooted in a specific geographical space and limited to a specific time. While virtual scenes can be discussed, and do exist (Bennett, Peterson 2004), most often music scenes are strongly tied to a geographical centre, most often a large city or even a metropolitan area.

In the context of the social science tradition, this approach to the scene is in line with the sociology of culture and art, which analyses the symbolic products of culture in a broader context, focusing less on the works of art themselves and other symbolic values than on the surrounding environment. These include Bourdieu’s field theory (Bourdieu 1993), Howard Becker’s notion of “art worlds” (Becker 1982) and Richard Peterson’s cultural production perspective (DiMaggio 2000; Peterson 1976). The scene approach also fits organically into actor network theory (ANT), developed in the 1980s by Bruno Latour, Michel Callon, John Law and Madeleine Akrich (Law 1992). One of the conceptual innovations proposed by ANT in the study of different kinds of social aggregates (they use the metaphor of a “network”) is that networks are made up of all kinds of objects, not only people and the relations between them, and immaterial objects (such as values, ideas, prejudices, dreams), but also material objects (such as planets, buildings, land, water, various mechanical devices) (Latour, Woolgar 1979). These theories and approaches thus add value and legitimacy to the use of photographs in social analysis, not only because they already become the object of the study and part of the object of study, but also because the material things that are immediately visible in photographs (e.g. people, their clothes, accessories) are indicative of the social community under study, whether

we call it a scene, a network, a group, a world or a field.

Another term often used to describe underground or non-mainstream music is “subculture”. Compared to “scene”, it is a more theoretical and empirically difficult concept to grasp. The main objective of researchers using this concept has always been to understand why different subcultures emerge and exist, from the studies of criminologists and sociologists of the Chicago School almost 100 years ago to the different tastes and lifestyles of the postmodern (sub) cultural approach. Simplifying the rich history of music subculture research in the social sciences, it can be argued that to this day there are two quite different interpretations of such phenomena: class oppression and aesthetic preference theses. The first tradition, which has Marxism as one of its philosophical foundations, explains the emergence of youth subcultures in the paradigm of class struggle, and sees them as the symbolic resistance of the youth of an oppressed class (Hall, Jefferson 2006; Hebdige 1988; Shildrick, MacDonald 2006). The second tradition, the postmodern, sees subcultures as basically the taste preferences of young people (and not only young people), which are fluid and changing, and not so closely tied to any particular socio-economic factors or structures (Bennett 1999; Frith 1981; Muggleton 2000; Muggleton, Weinzierl 2003).

Data

Arnis Balčus calls himself a documentary photographer who often creates series dedicated to specific themes and conceptual ideas. These are not only artistic, but also research projects, and one of the ever-present motifs is the preservation of the photographed objects and phenomena (as cultural heritage). To describe Arnis Balčus’s creative path, and in particular this photographic project and its subject, it is appropriate to quote Bourdieu: “Practice freed from the family function is encountered amongst the least integrated subjects and often appears as a form of the expression of deviance. It is most often defined by the refusal of the norms [...]” (1990: vi).

Although Arnis Balčus is the only professional photographer who has systematically documented this scene, the common virtual thesaurus of photographs of this scene is much broader. Two short-run photobooks by Tina Ērenpreisa and one calendar using young people (musicians and fans) from the scene as models have been published in print (2021, 2022, 2023). The rest, photographed with smartphones, digital and analogue cameras, live only a digital or analogue life, mainly in personal social network profiles or home archives. While sharing digital photographs is not uncommon in the scene, temporary cloud storage platforms, research data repositories or sustainable archives are rarely used for this purpose.¹

Arnis Balčus has been photographing Rīga’s new scene since 2021. He uses a digital camera with flash, mainly at public events (concerts, festivals) and in public places. The large body of digital images, comprising many thousands of shots, is stored in a personal archive. Arnis Balčus has also regularly posted photos of the scene (and videos taken with his smartphone) on his social media accounts, most notably on his Instagram account @arnisbalcus. In autumn 2023, the ISSP Gallery in Rīga hosted a two-month-long photo exhibition of Arnis Balčus’ photographs with around 150 photographs, and there have also been several scene-related public events organised by the photographer himself (concerts by scene groups, poetry reading, discussions, etc.) (ISSP 2023). In early 2024, Arnis Balčus published a 240-page A4 photobook, *Scēna*, with around 200 colour photographs.

The photographs selected for publication in this article are those that read as much as possible of the visual categories characteristic of the scene as developed in previous and ongoing research and fieldwork by Jānis Daugavietis using other methods: audio and video documentation, just being around and other types of participatory observations, interviews (semi-structured biographical interviews with key figures in the scene), statistical accumulation and analysis of concert and Instagram data (band followers, scene meme profiles), diary (fieldwork notes), etc. These visual categories have been conceptualised in the spirit

¹ Among the rare exceptions are Katrīna Līva Dalbiņa’s (<https://failiem.lv/k.lllv>, last accessed 7.10.2024) galleries of photographs of scene events, as well as the data collected by Jānis Daugavietis during the scene research fieldwork deposited in the Zenodo repository.

of grounded theory, which shows the DIY work of scenesters with regard to their visual appearance.

First is the clothing, often a combination of styles from different subcultures (e.g. punk, goth, black metal), and frequently torn, dirty and old. Secondly, the accessories that complement the clothes, very often DIY, for example, DIY drawings and patches, badges, pendants, paper clips, buckles, chains, spikes, beer bottle/can parts, ammunition belts. Thirdly, the direct modification of one's physical body (organs, limbs, skin), for example, tattoos, piercings, self-scarring, vein cutting, and moshpit trauma. Fourthly, the excessive use of facial make-up or even complete face painting. Fifthly, paying special attention to one's hair, not only extravagant haircuts and hairstyles, but also by controlling (or not controlling) hair on other parts of the body. Sixth, the (non)display of one's gender and sexual identity, using all the attributes described above.

Ethical Considerations

Although all three photographs included in this article are reprinted from a previously published book, ethical explanations are required here. Informed consent was obtained in two steps for the people in the close-ups in two of the photographs published in the article (Figures 1 and 3). During the production of the manuscript, following the photo-elicitation method, they were asked to comment on and explain what they saw in the photographs. Later a draft of the paper was sent to all twelve people (all of whom are adults – 18 years or older under Latvian law) in the close-ups in photos 1 and 3 after the first round of peer review, asking four questions, explaining that the journal is open access and will be available electronically forever:

Do you agree to the use of these images for this article? Do you need to anonymise your name/nickname more (if it is there at all)? Should controversial cases be softened or deleted altogether in the article (the journal is particularly concerned about conjectures and interpretations of mental problems and self-inflicted wounds)? Maybe there is something else in the article that is questionable and needs to be corrected?

All accepted the use of these photographs; no one wanted more anonymisation or pseudonymisation; no one objected to the issue of mental health and self-harm and our interpretation, but directly emphasized that these topics should not be hidden or censored, because they are serious problems in the scene. Some of them suggested small technical corrections to the article, which we incorporated.

A separate comment is needed on the mental health hypothesis. The fact that some scenesters may have health complications of this nature can be assumed by seeing various details of their visual image and reading their codes. Although it is only a hypothesis, because even a professional specialist (a physician) does not diagnose using only visual methods, mental health problems are one of the constant themes in the scene discourse. Some of the scenesters communicate openly about it not only internally, for example by posting Instagram stories from mental health institutions they have been to, but also in public discussions and even in interviews with national media.² By pointing out this dimension of the scene, we want neither to glorify nor to stigmatise it, but rather point to the need to study it, saying that the scene is perhaps one of the safe places for such young people because it is more tolerant and accepting than other social communities.

One of the young people in the photographs, after reading the manuscript, replied:

In my opinion, self-harm and similar negative manifestations should not be softened – no matter how unpleasant or unacceptable these things may seem to the average reader, they are (unfortunately) part of everyday reality, part of the mutual understanding of the community. To tone it down or delete it would kinda take away some of the super-powerful emotions and choices that plague people in the scene community outside of gigs.

Close Reading of Photographs

Everyone in this photo is my friend. I'm in this picture too, but only partly. On the left you can see my leg, I was sitting next to Lauma, who was wearing my shirt. It was a very fun evening. Before the concert, Vents, who is the

² The references will not be shared here to protect the privacy of those involved.

lead singer of Maxxima, undressed and we painted him with colours of different origins. He was like a mud man with his look, plus he wore a mask, and a bulletbelt. (Raivuha)

Vents also starts with the same words, “All my friends are there [...]”.

This can be called “the core group” of the scene at the moment. Not everyone in it made it into the frame, but if you include them, the group would be no bigger than ~15 young people (their age is around 18–25). We’ve heard some people as young as 23 say they are too old for the scene. Structurally, this group consists of some older friends and some younger couples. Some of them play in bands themselves (Maxxima, Depustūtes), some organise events, release a punk comix zine *Caurums Žogā* (“Hole in the Fence”) (since 2024), or do other creative and DIY activities. Most of them belong to the Latvian-speaking community, and communicate with each other mainly in Latvian, with some English.

The photo was taken in the Old Town (Rīga), on a street a dozen metres from the Depo music club, which is by far the most frequent venue for the scene. This place, which is actually the entrance to another club (where senior dance nights are held), is handy for sitting and chatting on its steps. During the Depo concerts it is always occupied by the “scene” (so-called “Depo kids”). Often, many of the young people never even enter the Depo club itself, especially in summer.

The picture was taken during a concert in the “20 minutes of fame” series. These are Depo concerts where the club invites new bands to play and debut without any special selection; each band is given 20 minutes. Each of these gigs features several bands and the entrance fee is minimal (1 euro if you have previously marked yourself as “going” on the Facebook event). Since these concerts are filled with bands from all different styles, scenes, non-scenes and other cities, the young people of the scene studied in the article do not even go to listen to many of them. This was just another event where only one out of five bands was “their” band. Maxxima debuted. Two of this trio, belonging to the scene’s core group, are not pictured, as they are

most likely getting ready for a performance – getting dressed (more accurately, undressed) and painted.³ Most of the people in the photo were on the Depo stage the previous summer with the noise-impro band-project Adatu Čurātāji (“Needle Pissers”), after which the club owner expressed his displeasure and reluctance to see them there again (maybe that is why the Maxxima members only signed up under completely new pseudonyms and wore their friend’s DIY balaclavas during the performance). On the trash can on the upper right of the photo, you can see the Adatu Čurātāji logo that one of the band members had put on a few months ago.

If it weren’t summer, most of the people in the photo would be wearing classic DIY crust punk patch pants. In terms of visual aesthetics, this punk sub-genre is one of the most visible in the scene. While tattoos, piercings, dreadlocks and heavily worn clothing are also typical of other subcultures, crust is one of the dominant styles in the scene. T-shirts, patches and stickers, as well as other paraphernalia such as the bulletbelt, show that extreme metal (thrash, black, death) is also close to these young people.

The legible logos of bands and events show the use of the scene’s own merch (Pidari, Humanicide, MOFX), but the scene’s contacts with similar underground scenes in neighbouring countries are also apparent. The T-shirt of the Tallinn black/death band Goatsmegma or the sticker of the Vilnius crust/death/grind band Strangulatorius (on the red bottle) were most probably obtained at their concerts in Rīga or by seeing them at a Lithuanian or Estonian underground festival. The second photo shows the patch on the battle hat of the new Tallinn punk band Keskkool.

One of the characteristic and distinctive features of this already quite spectacular scene is the excessive face-painting. In this picture, only two of the girls have relatively intense facial make-up. The predominant facial beautification is colouring with elements of black metal, early punk, gothic and hippie styles. Before getting into the core group, the girl in the top right corner of the picture always came to concerts with a full face of make-up, and in a different style. This is

³ See Balčus’s Instagram video: https://www.instagram.com/reel/Cu6ZMXU5fPZ/?utm_source=ig_web_copy_link&igsh=MzRIODBiNWFIZA== (last access 27.09.2024).

Figure 1. 20 minūtes slavas, Depo [20 minutes of fame, Depo], 19.07.2023 (Balčus 2024a: 66).





Figure 2. 20 minūtes slavas, Depo [20 minutes of fame, Depo], 19.07.2023. (Balčus 2024a: 166)





probably one of the techniques for newcomers to the scene to make their desire to belong to this community particularly clear. Once you have gained this acceptance and recognition from the group, it is no longer rational to put so much effort into the detailed beautification of your face, which can so easily get lost or damaged (in the rain, sweat, moshpit).

The same girl can be seen to have a badly scarred arm. This is one of the signs and symbols that is easy to see and sticks strongly in the visual memory. Some young people in the scene do not hide such scars and perhaps even deliberately show them. There are several young people in the scene with extremely scarred hands. However, only the use of statistical methods would tell us whether their proportion here is higher than in other social groups, communities or society as a whole.

The second picture shows the same day and event, but no longer off stage, but in front of the stage itself – in the moshpit. Maxxima is performing and several of the people from the previous photo are now in the audience. They have not only come to listen and support their friends, but they are doing it ultimately – by moshing. Two of them are wearing “band merch” – plastic bags from the cheap supermarket chain “Maxima”.

One of the big values in this scene is moshpit. The band members interpret a good moshpit during their set as success: “[...] that was and is the main thing I want to achieve when I perform, so that everyone who wants to can have a good moshpit, so that it’s trash but everyone has a good time.” (Vents)

For a part of the audience, whose average age is around early adulthood, it is also a coveted experience. The relatively frequent injuries sustained in the moshpit are neither conscious nor desirable, but at the same time they can be an object of pride.

I am the man on the right with the long hair down and the bloody face. In the middle of the concert, while I was actively running around in the moshpit, a man flew into my forehead and broke my eyebrow. At that moment I didn’t feel anything and didn’t even know that something had happened to me (I could have been a little dizzy), but the other person

couldn’t stop asking me for forgiveness. Of course, I gave a thumbs-up and kept running. I walked out and all my friends were shocked by my bloody face. I kept the ice from the next bar and decided I didn’t want a big scar. So I cycled with Lauma to the medical centre where they put six stitches in me. (Raivuha)

One of the differences between this scene and the Latvian underground music scenes of the past decades is the much higher proportion of girls, both among the musicians and the audience. Here you can see that even in the moshpit about half are girls.

As far as this photo shows, the outfit of the audience is quite eclectic and different from the core group outfit. The classic orthodox punk standard – a punk studded leather jacket and (especially coloured) mohawk – is a rarity in this scene. In the scene, people are often accused of poserism, especially when the only thing you are trying to make stand out is your extravagant appearance.

Kristiāns is one of the central characters in the scene. He attends concerts very regularly and is trying to start his own band; he also makes DIY jewellery accessories and tattoos. He has performed poetry and performances at events organised by Arnis Balčus and is one of the most frequent photo models in the book *Scēna* (Balčus 2024a).

Photo nr 3 was taken at the main scene event, Riga Punk Picnic 2023, held at the open air venue Fukushima, a remote location on Ķīpsala Island in Riga.

It was the last day I had long hair, the next day I cut and dyed the ends red, I’m showing my healed scars there and I’d had a bit to drink. My chin was bloody, because 2 h ago my friend had pierced my dolphin bits (one fell out and had to be re-pierced). I put corpse paint on my face, I was very active doing it at the time, it was my go-to for every punk event. The guitar pick [in the neck] is from the 2022 Calico [authors: scene’s band] concert at the Depo. I made the bone necklace myself out of chicken bones. (Kristiāns)

Since then, his scars and tattoos have grown even more in number.

Figure 3. Kristiāns, Fukušima, 1.06.2023. (Balčus 2024a: 222)



Comments

One of the limitations of this kind of transdisciplinary photographic method and journal publication is the selection of published images, whose reliability as research data is seemingly further undermined by the small sample. By choosing the most striking images (people, images, situations), – a selection that takes place in several stages, starting with what is selected for photographic capture – a distorted picture emerges. Visually, we record and better remember the so-called spectacular subcultures and their most prominent representatives, even though they are a minority. It is a minority not only among all young people but even among their subculture. It is visible in the photographs of Arnis Balčus published here. For example, the completely painted faces, which seem to be one of the most characteristic and distinctive features of Rīga's new scene, are a distinct minority even at the most important scene concerts and festivals.

By photographing and studying this scene with the method of photographic art, Arnis Balčus has one basic explanation and hypothesis about its visual image, which he regularly expresses in public:

The body is the only thing that these young people possess and it becomes not only a means of asserting their identity, but also a tool of protest. Alongside music and art, self-harm, tattooing, gender fluidity, sexual self-determination, and antisocial behaviour are forms of resistance against the feeling of inevitability that one cannot change anything in this world. (Balčus 2024b: 239)

This interpretation is close to the operational hypothesis of Jānis Daugavietis, who explores the scene using social science methods (biographical interviews, participant observation, statistical analysis, netnography, etc.). The study of this scene, including the use of visual methods, provides arguments in favour of the two classic theses of music subculture research: class oppression and aesthetic preference. Although these appear to be quite different interpretations, they should not be seen as contradictory. Firstly, cases can vary: in one, the use of transgressive music and challenging visuals is a protest against a socially subordinated position, such as growing up in a deprived area or in a low-income family;

in the other it is just a middle-upper-class youth playing with different visual identities. Secondly, we can apply the concept of class to youth as a social group. One of the ways in which this “class” can express its anxiety about its future prospects is through the symbolic means of different subcultures.

The photographs show protest and symbolic resistance. In many cases, young people's aesthetic choices (in music, clothing, and behaviour) are so deviant and extreme that they can hardly be explained by aesthetic pursuits and a desire to be different, or by the social oppression thesis. Therefore, subcultures can also be seen as psychological or even psychic deviations from the norm. This is evidenced, for example, by the effects of self-mutilation or obsession with moshpits often seen in photographs. Psychological problems and mental health are an important topic of intra-scene communication, according to knowledge gained through other research methods. When thinking about the theoretical model of the scene, this leads us to include not only places such as music clubs or popular meeting places, but also specific mental health institutions. It should be noted here that these have always been closely linked to the control of dissent, including subcultures such as Soviet hippies (Fürst 2021; Zolneroviča 2025 [in print]).

The tendency of fans of intense and rebellious musical genres (i.e. punk, emo, goth and metal) to transgression is long known and obvious, as are attempts to find a link between the consumption of such music and various forms of psychopathology. When studies have been carried out on the relationship between these two indicators, the most frequent conclusion is that a relationship may exist, but that there is no clear and simple causality between them (see ter Bogt et al. 2021; Hughes et al. 2018; Martínez-Ferrer, Stattin 2019; Varley et al. 2022; Young et al. 2014). Just because there is a higher percentage of depression or self-harm among goths, punks or metalheads, it doesn't mean that this is the result of transgressive music and styles. Such young people are also found in the Riga scene, and often they do not hide their problems. The scene is tolerant and sometimes perhaps even supportive of various unconventional practices, such as self-harm. In a way, integrating into such communities

is also a coping strategy in a potentially hostile society. The various forms of transgression in extreme music are known and accepted (Kahn-Harris 2007), but subcultural researchers (sociologists, anthropologists) do not have the tools to include this aspect in their theories. Psychologists, psychiatrists and public health specialists are responsible for this. Similarly, in the photographic documents of the Rīga scene we see the possible effects of psychopathology, but as a social scientist or photographer we do not have the specific competence to interpret them. At the same time, through photographs and their sociological processing, one can also record and bring to light these kinds of “hidden” histories, but again at the risk of being accused of merely glorifying self-destructive behaviour.

Visual social scientist Sarah Pink (2013) uses the term reflexive awareness. By calling for a reflexive approach, she is not only referring to and discussing the age-old (impossibility of) objectivity, which has been written about, especially in visual sociology, but also accepting that social reality itself and how people perceive it is subjective. The taking, selecting, processing, selecting for publication, publishing, and communicating of documentary photographs is in fact a method driven by subjective factors, producing not only research data, but also a story, hypotheses and even claims. This is not something that should be argued about, but rather reflected in the process of understanding and interpretation.

A second methodological note when using documentary photography as a research method concerns the range of codes needed to decipher visual images (Bourdieu 1993 [1968]). In the case of the codes studied in the article, the thesaurus of codes consists of at least 50–60 years of symbolic values of rock music and its subcultural subgenres (hippies, metal, punk, post-punk, gothic, extreme metal, etc.). Such knowledge can be acquired in various ways, for example through photo-elicitation techniques or through researchers’ prior knowledge, as in this case. It is important to note here that documentary photographs cannot in themselves provide reliably interpretable facts; their analysis is always based on knowledge acquired in other ways.

Howard Becker has made a thought-provoking suggestion: “If we cannot imagine or discover a visual image that embodies our

understanding of a concept, we might take that as a warning that the concept is not explicitly related to its underlying imagery. Looking for an appropriate visual image might help clarify the relationship.” (Becker 1974: 21) While broadly agreeing with this, we also re-emphasise this aspect of the photographic method and the use of photography as research data for acquisition and analysis: it can provide material for new concepts, conceptions, and the generation of hypotheses.

Depending on future research needs and design, we can put forward different hypotheses or research questions based on the analysis of the photographs used in the paper, and apply this to the broader corpus of Arnis Balčus images. If it is a quantitative study, we can ask, for example, whether the gender ratio in the scene is as shown in the photographs, i.e. broadly in line with the age cohort. We can make similar hypotheses about other socio-demographic parameters that appear visually, such as age. Is it as narrow an age group as it looks in the pictures? We could also quantitatively analyse different preferences in musical taste by measuring different kinds of correlations between visual and musical styles, combining them with various other social, political or psychological factors. For example, are the musical tastes of girls and boys in the scene much closer than is traditionally assumed and confirmed in many studies?

In a qualitative approach to research design, the visual images and readings in the pictures would lead us to different kinds of questions, with the hope of answering them with different kinds of methods. For example, this could be an in-depth exploration of the anxiety, transgression and apparent “safe place” in the photographs. Not forgetting the increasing convergence of arts and sciences nowadays, as well as art-based methods and praxis as the starting point of this article, the interpretation of photographs with social science tools can also serve other kinds of purposes and needs, both applied (e.g. systematising and describing cultural heritage) and artistic (e.g. serving as an idea for new photographic art projects).

To summarise the use of documentary art photography in the study of the transgressive underground music scene, three uses should be highlighted. First, photographs can be

seen as legitimate research data, the content of which is available for various kinds of social analysis. Secondly, photographs can be one of the sources of information that help to raise and clarify hypotheses or research questions. Thirdly, photographs can be used as a means of obtaining additional information, for example through the interview process or simply by asking insiders to comment on what they show. A particular characteristic of documentary photographs, especially those of the kind produced by Arnis Balčus, i.e. sharp photographs in which details are well highlighted, is their affective, non-representational dimensions (Rowell 2024).

Jānis Daugavietis Talks to Arnis Balčus About His Photobook *Scēna* (2024)⁴

J. D.: A few years ago, I started to study this scene as well. On the one hand as a sociologist, but also as a historian, and as a melomaniac. I want to research this scene, document it and enjoy it, because I think it is an important social phenomenon and a valuable producer of cultural heritage. There has not been such a large and intense underground music scene in Latvia for at least 30 years. There are some very good bands out there, and even if it is just those bands, I think they should be documented and preserved and supported to some extent.

What is your reasoning, how do you argue that this scene is so valuable that you have to go and put so much effort into photographing, documenting, publishing a book, organising an exhibition and all this other stuff that you've done?

A. B.: Well, it's not terribly far from what you said, but certainly the first impulse was the feeling that this is something so gorgeous and unprecedented that you can't find anything similar in your experience. Then, of course, you start to dig in and study and look and go to events and also to kind of evaluate and see some kind of correlations or some kind of trends.

J. D.: How much do you think the fact that you have not only a Master's degree in Arts, but also a Bachelor's degree in Social Sciences in Communication Studies influences your photo-

graphic style? Does this non-arts academic background influence the way you look at the world, the way you photograph?

A. B.: It would definitely give you a broader perspective, it would allow you to interpret what you do not only in an artistic context but also in various other contexts.

J. D.: When you are photographing something, especially if you have a series or stories in mind, do you also think of photography as research? Do you have any research questions, hypotheses?

A. B.: Classically, definitely not, but in a broader context, I think yes. Usually, the process resembles a typical research project – I have a topic and/or a geographic location within which I gather material (take photographs). Then, I select the images and group them to create my argument or artistic statement. Unlike a classical research project, my result can be more abstract, ambiguous, intuitive, personal, and visually challenging.

J. D.: In your photographic practice, how important do you think the differences in social status are in the scene, obviously between you and the young people you photograph? Because photography is communication, and in communication there are always these power relations that are determined by social status, gender, and often age. How do you experience this, if you experience it, when you take photographs? Maybe young people don't even recognise you as a well-known Latvian photographer, at least at first?

A. B.: Well, even now, no. The moment you pick up a camera, you are already in a position of power, and consequently you are already exploiting something, whether it is a landscape, a situation, people. It depends on how we look at it. Yes, and I'm aware of that, and it's not just when I'm photographing a scene, but in general. With a photographer's camera, you are somehow in a position of power, and at the same time you are perceived as a threat.

The camera, as I always say, is my way of opening some doors that I wouldn't open otherwise. I can get to places where I might not have got to without the camera.

⁴ Excerpts from an audio interview about Arnis Balčus' book *Scēna* (Balčus 2024a).

J. D.: If I were to ask you to do a very general and quick content analysis of your photographs, what are the most frequent themes that appear in this book?

A. B.: First of all, it's portraits, people who have been photographed with them knowing it. Most often I approach the person and ask: "Can I take your picture?" 99% say: "Yes." Of course, there are times when they say no, and then I don't take photos either. Secondly, it's events or situations, shots that I've been looking for and capturing. Then there are close-ups of bodies.

In general, I am a photographer who goes to a concert and sometimes doesn't even get to the stage. That happens. So in my case, it's not even a story about what's primarily happening on stage. As a sociologist, maybe that's why you have such a peculiar feeling about this result in general, how valid it is to talk about the music scene. Music dominates there, but we see it as a kind of secondary thing in these images.

In my creative career I have always been interested in marginal things. Probably also in the context of the scene, I'm interested in what's going on out there, in a corner somewhere, where *končiki* (cigarette butts) are thrown or bottles are tossed, or someone is sitting there or ... What happens on stage is the least interesting to me.

You don't need to show an insane amount of facts to tell the overall story of a scene, just a few. [...] Because in this case, too, through these supposedly only a few people, through these relatively small fragments, you can still construct a larger story of what the scene is. Clearly, there is no way to include everything, it is simply not possible, and there is something that has to be given up.

I think there are also people in or around the scene who consider themselves veterans, from about 25 to 50 plus years old. They probably look at these young people as a kind of milkweed that the wind has now blown in in some concentrated way. They think that when the wind turns again, it will blow them away and then they will go somewhere. Then they, the old ones, who are the real scene, will outlive everyone. In that sense, you could definitely say that my interest and my book is about the fluff that was blown in that moment in such a concentrated way.

The whole book is also certainly a subjective view, despite the fact that the source material is

already at the same time a kind of document of an era. This is both an advantage and sometimes a disadvantage of photography. On the one hand we see it as evidence of something that has happened, as a document, but at the same time it can also be a truly artistic installation. In my case, I'm trying to say that it's both, how it's at the same time a testimony to the times and at the same time it's my artistic setting, which is, of course, subjective.

I teach documentary photography, and then this is like a hobby horse for me. I don't think it's possible to have an "objective view" at all. It's just a myth that there is such a thing. We call something that a majority can agree fits their idea of what it might be, something we call objective. Then we call it objective. If the majority cannot agree, then we say it is subjective.

I think there could be an interesting aspect to the research about the role of photography in shaping the identity of this community. Taking photographs and being photographed is a ritual of belonging to this social group, and it is as important as listening to music. In the past, it was exchanged with cassettes, now with Arnis Balčus's pictures in [Instagram] stories.

Photographs are always interpreted. The book *Scēna* can be seen as documentation of the scene, and then my pictures confirm your observations (existing hypotheses), but equally they are my (relatively new) constructions, actively creating perceptions and meanings. If photography (and sharing it on social networks) has some role to play in shaping the identity of this community, both on an individual and group level, it sounds like an interesting research topic. I'm just thinking about it at the moment, that the images are also reference material for the scene. They show the motifs that many people also repeat because they know that's how they are supposed to look (e.g. they kiss specifically, or take typical poses, etc.). The book shows examples of how you should dress and behave if you want to feel part of the scene. Whether I have done this consciously or unconsciously (i.e. how the construct came about) is irrelevant.

If we look at this book, we can already see that colour is not the only thing. That would probably be the primary thing that anyone would see: how colourful it is, how spectacular the young people look, their faces are sometimes painted

too, the clothes are so different, with patches and descriptions. It's all colourful, of course. That is certainly one fundamental part of the book, but there is another dimension, which is that behind the colourfulness there are some of their everyday problems, mainly emotional and mental. And the way they realise themselves. The body, which is

the only thing they have, becomes their platform through which to project themselves, including their tensions, frustrations and stresses. I like to say that it is their protest against the fact that they have this feeling that they cannot change anything in the world.

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Interviews

We reached out to the 12 young people seen in the two close-up photographs twice online (apart from a few brief conversations with them during the concerts), explaining that the following academic article was being written and would include three photographs of them. In May 2024, through a web survey and open-ended questions, they were asked to anonymously or non-anonymously tell us what was seen in the three photographs chosen for the article. Two responses were received. In September 2024, they were all sent a personal Instagram direct message with a link to the manuscript with four open-ended questions (described in the "Ethical considerations" section). We received more detailed comments from four people.

Riia uus *underground*-skeene Arnis Balčuse dokumentaalfotodel

Jānis Daugavietis, Arnis Balčus

Artikli eesmärk on näidata, kuidas kasutada dokumentaalses stiilis kunstfotograafiat pigem suletud ja transgressiivse subkultuuri sotsioloogiliseks uurimiseks. Autorid keskenduvad Riia uuele *underground*-muusika skeenele, mille keskmes on punk DIY-kultuur (Daugavietis 2022). Esiteks võib selliseid fotosid käsitada uurimisandmetena, et sõnastada uurimisküsimusi või analüüsida neid nagu ükskõik millist muud tüüpi andmeid. Teiseks viitab fotode kasutamine kunstipõhise uurimismeetodina kunsti olulistele eesmärkidele – tõsta esile ja jäädvustada ilusat, erilist ja omapärast. Seetõttu on artiklil ka järgmine kultuuripärandi diskursusest tulenev ülesanne – anda Riia uuest *underground*-muusika skeenest fotoetnograafiline ülevaade.

Artikkel algab lühikese metodoloogilise mõtisklusega fotograafiast, mis pakub sotsioloogiale legitiimseid uurimisandmeid, viidates kultuurisotsioloogia klassikutele Pierre Bourdieu'le ja Howard Beckerile, kes mitte ainult ei kirjutanud fotode kasutamisest teadusuuringutes, vaid ka rakendasid neid oma akadeemilistes uuringutes. Kuigi mitut fotograafia meetodit on visuaalsotsioloogia ja antropoloogia distsipliinides kirjeldatud ja kasutatud aastakümneid, on fotode avaldamine akadeemilistes uurimustes haruldane, välja arvatud valitud illustratiivsetel eesmärkidel (Holm 2020). Artikli teoreetiline osa põhineb muusikaskeenede (Bennett, Peterson 2004; Straw 1991) ja subkultuuride uurimisel (vt. Bennett 1999; Frith 1981; Hall, Jefferson 2006; Hebdige 1988; Muggleton 2000), mis ei ole ei ühtne ega ka järjepidev.

Uurimisandmeteks on kolm fotot, mille on 2023. aastal teinud fotograaf Arnis Balčus (avaldatud 2024. aastal autoriraamatus „Scēna“). Fotograafi stiil on etnograafilisi eesmarke silmas pidades eriti kasulik – teravad ja hästi valgustatud pildid võimaldavad selgelt näha väiksemaidki detaile. Artiklisse valitud fotod toovad esile visuaalsed koodid ja brikolaazid, mis on Riia skeenele tüüpilised, eristades seda samas sarnastest skeenedest teistes paikades ja muudel aegadel. Skeenega seotud visuaalsed kategooriad on välja töötanud Daugavietis oma varasemates ja käsil olevates uuringutes ning välitöödel, kasutades teisi meetodeid: heli- ja videodokumentatsiooni, osalusvaatlust, intervjuusid jne.

Fotode analüüsile eelneb üldisem kommentaar dokumenteeritud ja uuritud skeene ning selle ajaloolise konteksti kohta, näidates selle kohalikke juuri ja pärandit, nagu ka kuuluvust rahvusvahelistesse subkultuuridesse. Seejärel järgneb fotode lähilugemine, pöörates erilist tähelepanu visuaalsetele koodidele ja sümbolitele, mida tõlgendavad ja selgitavad nii artikli esimene autor kui ka noored ise.

Artikli kokkuvõttes arutatakse interdistsiplinaarse fotomeetodi eeliste ja piirangute teemal, rõhutades, et dokumentaalfotod on hea teabeallikas, et sõnastada uurimisküsimusi ja hüpoteese, olemata pelgalt kunstilised objektid või kultuuripärandi säilitajad. Artikli lõpetab katkend sotsioloog Jānis Daugavietise intervjuust fotograaf Arnis Balčusega, milles autorid arutlevad nimetatud skeene pildistamise protsessi ja selle nähtuse tõlgenduste üle.

Tõlkinud Brigitta Davidjants

TÖLKEARTIKKEL

Stravinski kui saatan: Adorno kolm kriitilist pilku¹

Max Paddison

Sissejuhatus

Adorno avaldas „Uue muusika filosoofia“ 1949. aastal,² muusika jaoks otsustaval pöördehetkel 20. sajandi keskel. Selles väga mõjukas raamatus esitas Adorno uue muusika dialektilise käsitluse kahe selle kõige äärmuslikuma esindaja, Schönbergi ja Stravinski kriitika vormis. Järeloomid olid dramaatilised, vallandades võitlushüüu vahetult pärast sõda esile kerkinud noorte heliloojate põlvkonna leeris, keda hakati seostama nii neoklassitsismi eituse kui ka Darmstadt koolkonna polüserialismi omaksvõtuga. Adorno kriitika retseptioon peategelaste endi poolt oli eeldustele mõnes mõttes vastupidine. Schönberg, kes Adornot ei sallinud, tajus seda eeskätt rünnakuna iseenese pihta, mis oli otseses vastuolus üldise arusaamaga Adornost kui Uus-Viini koolkonna juhtivast toetajast. Kuid samal ajal asus Schönberg Stravinski kaitsele, olles häiritud sellest, kuidas Adorno tema pikaajalist vastast kohtles.³ Stravinski teiselt poolt oli vait – vähemasti avalikkuse ees –, mistõttu on raske hinnata, mis määral tema muusika kriitika Adorno sulest võinuks mängida kuigivõrd määravat rolli helilooja enese sensatsioonilises pöördes 1950. aastate alguses, mil ta ise hülgas neoklassitsismi ja pöördus serialismi poole. Üsna loomulikult vallandas see diskussioone. Célestin Deliège on näiteks väitnud:

Avalikult ei ole Stravinski rääkinud T. W. Adorno kriitikast, kuid on väga ebatõenäoline, et see jättis ta ükskõikseks, isegi kui helilooja teadvustas Adorno argumentatsiooni ebajärjekindlust ega nõustunud filosoofilise lähenemisega, mille materialistlikud tendentsid pidid teda häirima ... Tihti on esile toodud, et Stravinski oli väga mõjutatav – vähemalt kuni töö kallale asumiseni – ning ei suutnud põhjendatud väidete suhtes jääda ükskõikseks. Tema hinnangute teravus hoiatas heliloojat, siis kui häirekell tõesti kõlama hakkas. (Deliège 1988: 83)

Kui kõrvale jätta Robert Crafti põlastav ja mitte eriti mõistev artikkel „A Bell for Adorno“ (Craft 1974), siis tuli Stravinski vahetust ümbruskonnast vähe vastukaja. Adornole enesele oli samas täiesti selge tema mõju laiemale sündmuste arengule, kui ta hiljem kirjutas, et „minu Stravinski-tõlgitsust [„Uue muusika filosoofias“] nähakse üldjuhul millenagi, mis mängis rolli neoklassitsismi hääbumises“ (Adorno 1992: 147).

Arusaadav, et suurem osa kriitilisest tähelepanust Adorno Stravinski muusika tõlgituse suhtes on olnud suunatud „Uue muusika filosoofiale“ just seetõttu, et tegemist oli raamatuga, mis tahtmatult langes nii täpselt kokku temas ennustatud ajaloolise hetkega. Mõned kommentaatorid, nagu Carl Dahlhaus ja Peter Bürger, on selles esitatud väiteid kritiseerinud (Dahlhaus 1987; Bürger 1984), projitseerides nad Adorno hilisema Stravinski-tõlgenduse taustale 1960. aastate algul essees „Stravinsky: Ein dialektisches Bild“ („Stravinski: dialektiline portree“; 1962). Neile kahele tõlgendusele lisaksin veel ühe: Adorno varase käsitluse Stravinskist, mis pärineb 1920. aastate lõpust ja 1930-ndate algusest. Vaatlen mõningaid korduvaid teemasid nimetatud töodes üksikhaaval, kasutades Adorno muusikaloolisest filosoofiast tõukuvaid tuumarusaamu, pöörates erilist tähelepanu ironia mõistele. Mulle näib, et vaatamata vastuoludele ja ebajärjekindlatele hoiakutele, kuid samuti kokkulangevustele kolmes kriitilises käsitluses võib näha koondumist, mis aitab aru saada pööraselt raskest ja tihti vääriti mõistetud hermeneutilisest eesmärgist, mille Adorno oli enesele püstitanud.

Tavapärane arusaam on olnud, et Adorno jumalikustas Schönbergi ja demoniseeris Stravinskit. See on kindlasti jäme lihtsustus. Tööpoolest andis ta aga filosoofilise hinnangu nende muusika tõesusele ja ebatõesusele lähtuvalt subjektiivsuse ja objektiivsuse vastasmõjust ning nende võõrandumisele muusikateose raamis-

¹ Varem ilmunud inglise keeles: Max Paddison (2003). Stravinsky as devil: Adorno's three critics. – *The Cambridge Companion to Stravinsky*. Ed. Jonathan Cross, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp. 192–202 – *toim.*

² Adorno 1975 [1949], esmatrükk: *Philosophie der neuen Musik*. Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr (Paul Siebeck), 1949. Inglisekeelne väljaanne 1973. Eesti keeles: *Uue muusika filosoofia*. Tlk. Jaan Ross, Tartu: Tartu Ülikooli Kirjastus, 2020 – *tõlkija*.

³ Schönberg märkis kirjas Ruferile 1949. aastal: „Muide, see on vastik, kuidas ta Stravinskit kohtleb. Ma ei ole kindlasti Stravinski austaja, kuigi mulle meeldib üks või teine tema teos väga – aga nii ei tohiks kirjutada.“ (Tsit. Stuckenschmidt 1977: 508 järgi)

tikus: problemaatiline ja vaieldav ülesanne, mida teiste hulgas on kritiseerinud Jean-François Lyotard oma essees „Adorno as the Devil”, väites, et „subjekti” mõistet ennast ei saa seada kahtluse alla ning et seda on kerge võrdsustada kunsti „väljenduslikkuse” teooriaga (Lyotard 1974 [1973]: 127–128). Schönberg ise ei lasknud end lollitada Adorno ilmselt positiivsest suhtumisest oma loomingusse, selgelt tunnetades tema hinnangulisust pärast sellega tutvumist. Mis puutub Stravinskisse, siis pole miski päris see, mis paistab, kui on tegemist saatanaga. Selle essee juhtmõte on siis Adorno kujutus Stravinskist kui saatanast, mis eriti avaldub korduvates viidetes „Söduri loole”. Peab meele pidama, et Adorno stiil rajaneb ammusel saksa kirjandustraditsioonil, milles kasutatakse äärmusi ning liialduste retoorikat, ironiat ja groteski, selleks et fundamentaalseid tõdesid esile tuua. See ulatub tagasi E. T. A. Hoffmanni juurde ning leiab oma kõige olulisema esindaja Nietzsches ning tunnustatuima 20. sajandi meistri Thomas Mannis (Adorno enese episoodiline ilmutus intellektuaalse maski taha varjunud saatanana „Doktor Faustuses”, kes esitab terveid löike „Uue muusika filosoofia” algsetest visanditest, illustreerib kenasti seda mõtet).⁴ Diaboolset aspekti tuleb Stravinski puhul järelikult käsitada Adorno raamistiku vajaliku osana ning „autentsuse puudumist” tema muusikas kui selle tõe üht külge.

Esimene kriitiline pilk:

Stravinski, stabiliseerumine ning muusika sotsiaalne seisund

Adorno esimene Stravinski-käsitus sisaldub kahes allikas aastaist 1928 ja 1932, mis pole kumbki pühendatud ainult Stravinskile. 1928. aastal valminud, kuid alles postuumselt avaldatud artiklis „Die stabilisierte Musik” („Stabiliseerunud muusika”) väidab Adorno, et 1920. aastate lõpuks oli muusika „saavutanud stabiilsuse”, mõeldes sellega, et muusika oli juba taandunud eesrindlikult positsioonilt, mille muusikaline avangard oli saavutanud enne 1914. aastat, nagu seda esindas Uus-Viini koolkond (Adorno 1984 [1928]). Ta tuvastab kaks juhtivat tendentsi – neoklassitsismi

ja folklorismi –, mida iseloomustab seisakuni jõudmine. Samas, kuigi ta seostab Stravinskit nii neoklassitsismi kui ka folklorismiga ning väidab, et need heliloojad „stabiliseerunud muusika” kategooriast on reaktsioonilised, ei mõista ta Stravinskit sel ajal jäägitult nendes kategooriates. Kui „Kuningas Oidipust” peetakse omal kombel neoklassitsismi väljapaistvaimaks saavutuseks – teoseks, milles kasutatakse maske, pöörduakse äärmuslikul viisil tagasi vanade vormide ja stiilide juurde ning milles hämmastab ka ironia puudumine –, peab Adorno vajalikuks eraldi esile tõsta „Lugu rebasest, kukest, kassist ja oinast” ning „Söduri lugu” kui „autentseid” teoseid.

Neid teemasid arendatakse edasi teises ülalnimetatud artiklis, olulises essees „Zur gesellschaftlichen Lage der Musik” („Muusika sotsiaalsest seisundist”) 1932. aastast.⁵ Kuivõrd „stabiliseerunud muusika” mõiste ise on kõrvale jäetud, tõenäoliselt selle tahumatuse tõttu oma ajajärgu muusika peamiste suundumuste kirjeldamise vahendina, võetakse selle asemel kasutusele kogum komplitseeritumaid dialektilisi mõisteid. Adorno räägib nüüd „tarbemuusika” ja „avangardi” teineteisele vastanduvatest kategooriatest. Ajalooliselt on muusika enesega seotud ühiskondlike funktsioonide kadumise käigus saanud autonoomseks ning omandanud selle asemel uue, tarbefunktsiooni. See juhib meid kunstmuusika võõrandumise ja fetišeerumise poole ning tõukab emma-kumma, kas turujõududega sulandumise suunas kuni selleni välja, et muusika ainsaks sihiks saab tarbeväärtuse omandamine, või kriitilise eneseanalüüsi poole, kus muusika suhtes oma traditsioonilise materjaliga teadvustab end tunnetuse vormina ning tarbeväärtust eitavana. „Assimileerunud” muusika tunnustab oma kaubalist funktsiooni, varjab võõrandumist ja muutub turujõudude toel meelelahutuseks; „kriitiline” muusika eitab end kaubana, ei varja võõrandumist ning on Adorno sõnusti materjali suhtes „autentne” ja „tõene”. Nagu olen täheldanud mujal (vt. Paddison 1993: 102–105), eristab Adorno selles teist liiki muusikas, mida iseloomustab kriitilisus ja „autentsus”, nelja erinevat kategooriat. Ning varsti näeme, et Adorno seostab Stravinskit neljast „autentse muusika” liigist kahega. Samas on esimene liik

⁴ Vt. Mann 1968: 231–237 [ik.]. Eesti keeles 1987: 217–223 – tõlkija.

⁵ Adorno 1984 [1932]. Inglise keeles 1978.

selgelt mitte-stravinskilik. See viitab muusikale, mis kristalliseerib ühiskondlikke vastuolusid immanentselt, oma struktuuri sees, ning puhtalt suhtes oma traditsioonilise materjaliga. Enamgi veel, sellisena ei tarvitse muusika tingimata olla teadlik ühiskondlikust ja poliitilisest kontekstist, kuhu ta kuulub. Adorno arvates esindab seda Schönberg.

Teist liiki muusika tunnistab võõrandumist, püüdes aga sealjuures pöörduda mineviku stiilide ja vormitüüpide poole, lootuses et need aitavad taasluua kaotsi läinud harmoonia-, kõiksuse- ja kogukondlikkuse-tunnetust. Adorno nimetab seda „objektivismiks“ ning läheb tagasi oma 1928. aasta artikli juurde stabiliseerunud muusikast, väites, et kapitalistlikes ühiskondades väljendub „objektiivsus“ neoklassitsismi kujul, samal ajal kui Kagu-Euroopa eelkapitalistlikes, agraarsetes ühiskondades nagu ka fašistliku režiimiga maadel tugineb muusika folkloorsele materjalile (Adorno 1984 [1928]: 725). Adorno jaoks kehastab seda liiki Stravinski selle mõlemas vormis. Samuti nagu kolmandat liiki, mida Adorno nimetab „sürrealistlikuks“ muusikaks. Ta väidab, et see muusika on sotsiaalselt teadlik ning ammutab materjali nii süvamuusikast kui ka tarbe- või populaarmuusikast, nagu katked, klišeed ja kultuurilised jäägid, ning kasutab montaažitehnikaid, rõhutamaks tänapäevaajastu muusikalise materjali fragmentaarset iseloomu ning osutamaks ühiskondlikule killustumisele. Eriti „Söduri loo“ ajajärgul esindab Stravinski muusika ka seda liiki, nagu ka Weill koostöös Brechtiga loodud muusikas.

Lõpuks neljas liik: see tunnistab sotsiaalset võõrandumist ja püüab sellega sekkumise ja kokkuleppe abil midagi ette võtta, kuid nagu Adorno sedastab, toob tegevuse käigus ohvriks muusikalise vormi terviklikkuse. Olles kriitiline selle kui tarbemuusika (*Gebrauchsmusik*) suhtes, mis tema sõnutsi on suunatud ainuüksi vaid turule, näeb Adorno teatud väärtusi neoklassitsismist välja arenenud ühismuusikas (*Gemeinschaftsmusik*), mida esindavad tema meelest Eisler ja teatud määral Hindemith. Stravinski selle liigiga ei seostu.

Siin saame näha, et Adorno on oma esimeses kriitilises pilgus Stravinski suhtes üsna positiivselt meelestatud, vähemalt nende teoste osas, mis langevad tema „autentse muusika“ kategooriasse. Stravinskit vaadeldakse aga osana tüpoloogias. Vaevalt on tegu dialektilise kriitikaga, kuigi see tuvastab hiljem käsitlust leidvaid muusika elemente. On ometi selge, et tolleaegne teoreetiline lähenemine võimaldab „autentses muusikas“ näha paljusust. See on ka heas kooskõlas omaaegse Weimari vabariigi eksperimentaalse kultuurilise ja poliitilise keskkonna paljutahulisuse ja sallivusega, millegagi, mida Adorno tüpология näib peegeldavat, olgugi et see selgelt kaldus Schönbergi poole.

Nähes Stravinskit „sürrealistliku“ heliloojana, peab Adorno montaaži kasutamist, fragmentide (sh. populaarmuusika elementide) kõrvutamist üheks Brechti võõritusefekti näiteks enne selle mõiste kujunemist (*Verfremdungseffekt avant la lettre*; kindlasti on tõsi, et „Söduri lugu“ on Weillile mõju avaldanud). Siin keskendub ta ka ühele oma 1920-ndate aastate tekstide olulisele teemale – ironiale. „Söduri lugu“ nähakse 20. sajandi alguse muusikas märgilisena. Samas kritiseerib Adorno hiljuti valminud „Kuningas Oidipust“, et teoses domineerib stilistiline montaaž ja puudub ironia. Järelikult võib Adorno järgi ironia sel ajal tagada kunstiteose ehituses kriitilise eneserefleksiooni jaoks vajaliku taseme. Ironia – tegelikult kavatselule vastupidine ütlus – tähistab puuduvat või kaugenenud subjektiivsust. Väline kapituleerumine „objektiivsuse“ ees, selle ees, „kuidas asjad tegelikult on“, on üksnes näiv. Seega osutab ironia subjekti elujõulisusele, tähistades paika, kus see peaks asetsema.

Teine kriitiline pilk: Stravinski, Schönberg ja „Uue muusika filosoofia“

Adorno teine kriitiline pilk Stravinskile 1949. aastal ilmunud „Uue muusika filosoofias“ erineb põhimõtteliselt esimesest selles mõttes, et siin on ta eesmärgiks Schönbergi ja Stravinskit äärmustena vastandada, kasutades Walter Benjaminilt⁶ õpitud dialektilist meetodit, kuigi tema lähenemine on erinevalt Benjaminist väga

⁶ „Uue muusika filosoofia“ alguses tsiteerib Adorno Walter Benjamini olulist mõtet raamatust „Ursprung des deutschen Trauerspiels“: „Ajalooline filosoofia kui teadus algest on vorm, mis vastastikuste ekstreemsuste, arengu näivate ekstsesside alusel lubab tekkida mõttemallil, mida selliste vastanduste mõtestatud kõrvutamise võimaluse abil saab tõlgendada kui tähendust omavat tervikut.“ (Adorno 2020: 11)

poleemiline. Võtmeteemadeks on taandumine müüti ja arhailisusse ning isikustamise kodanliku printsibi lagunemine taandumisena eelkodanlikku, modernismieelsesesse raamistikku. Indiviidi kui subjekti ohverdamine ning samastamine kollektiivsusega, „selle, mis on olemas” näiv „objektiivsus” iseloomustab Adorno jaoks Stravinski muusikat. Tema muusika kinnistab fragmenteerituse normina ning šoki- ja võõrandumisseisundi asjastamise millegi – subjektiivsuse poolt kogemiseks liiga valusa – peamiselt staatilises korduses ja permutatsioonis. Nagu Adorno kirjutab: „[Muusika] registreerib oma enese materjalise elu desintegratsiooni ja ühes sellega subjekti teadvuse võõrandatud olekut.” (Adorno 2020: 174)

Adorno mõtlemine „Uue muusika filosoofias” on ka tugevasti mõjustatud psühhoanalüütilisest terminoloogiast (eriti Otto Fenicheli „The Psychoanalytic Theory of Neurosis” („Neuroosi psühhoanalüütilisest teooriast”), New York 1945), kui ta väidab, et Stravinski muusika püüab „esteetilise teadvuse abil skisofreenilisi ilminguid alla suruda” (Adorno 2020: 165).

Adorno leiab, et Stravinski muusikat iseloomustab grotesk ja subjekti mõttetu ohvriks toomine: rituaalne uri „Kevadpühitsuses” allub passiivselt ohverdusena hõimu huvide kaitseks. Stravinski sümpaatia groteski, individuaalse identiteedi tasalülitamise, kinnistatud rollide ja maskide juurde tagasipöördumise vastu, mis kõik panustavad väljenduslikkuse ja subjektiivsuse allasurumisele, sunnib meid märkama, kui olulist rolli Adorno omistab traagilise klouni isiksusele, mis avaldub kontrastsel kujul Stravinski „Petruška” ja Schönbergi „Kuu-Pierrot’-s”. Adorno sisendab, et Pierrot’ puhul „on kõik häälestatud, lähtudes üksildasest, enesesse tagasi pöörduvast subjektiivsusest” (*ibid.*: 138), mis end peegeldab. Ta rõhutab, et „Kuu-Pierrot’” kogu viimane osa on tagasitee, koju pöördumine, ja et kogu teos on tegelikult enese avastamise teekond. Subjekt väljub oma piiridest ja saavutab omamoodi vabanemise. Hirme ja kannatusi ette nähes hoiab Pierrot subjektina samal ajal alal võimet neid peegeldada ja kogeda, ületab nad, ning teostab teose lõpuosas „O alter Duft aus Märchenzeit” („Oo vana hõng muinasjutuajast”) hõrendatud atmosfääris teisenduse. Stravinski balletis „Petruška” on aga sündmuste käik ja selle tulemus sootuks teistsugune, isegi kui

peategelane Petruška ise ilmutabki teatud subjektiivsuse märke. „Kuu-Pierrot’-s” väljendab muusika ise Pierrot’ kannatusi, konflikti ja lõpus teisenemist, ent Stravinski teoses asub muusika Adorno väitel hoopiski nende rolli, kes Petruškat piinavad ja naeruvääristavad. Subjekt on ohvriks toodud, samal ajal kui muusika ise ei samasta end hävitatuga, vaid pigem nendega, kes teda vaenavad. Muusika on subjekti kannatuste suhtes – kes on pealegi kõigest nukk – kas ükskõikne või parodeerib teda õelalt. Ta kujutab rahvamassi, kes suhtub kõigesse nagu sisemist tühjust peitvasse meelelahutusse. (*Ibid.*) Adorno märgib, et kogu orkester on balletis pandud kõlama nagu tohutu leierkast ja pigem sarnaneb kellelegi, kes sukeldub mürasse, vabastamaks end teadvuse ikkest. Isegi Petruška „surematus” on oma olemuses lõpuks piinatud hing, kes on mõistetud naasma ja oma vaenajaid kummitama. Nagu Adorno analüüsist selgub, asub Stravinski muusika objekti rolli, kollektiivsuse, mis surub subjekti halastamatult oma haardesse. Stravinski subjekt ilmutab ainult humaansuse kõige pateetilisemaid räbalaid, mis avalduvad narritavas sentimentaalsuses. „Autentsust” Stravinski mõttes saab seega vaadelda reaalsuse halastamatu peegeldusena lootusetu lunastusele, kus on ainsaks väljapääsuks kannatuste vältimine repressioonide ja kannatuste mehaanika hingetu mimeesi abil kannatava subjekti eemal olles. „Autentsus saavutatakse salaja subjektiivse pooluse eitamise kaudu,” kinnitab Adorno (*ibid.*: 153); vaid objekt on alles.

Õpetlik on siin taas pöörduda ironia mõiste juurde, mis oli niivõrd tähtis Adorno esimese kriitilise pilgu juures. Võib näha, et „Uue muusika filosoofias” on ironia mõiste asendatud mõistega **grotesk**. Näiteks väidab Adorno oma Petruška-kommentaaries, et „„Petruška” ilmnes individuaalsiooni element groteski vormis ja leidis viimase poolt kohtumõistmist” (*ibid.*: 152). Ta oletab, et kaasaja kunstis on groteski eesmärgiks teha see ühiskonnale vastuvõetavaks: kodanlus on valmis kunstiga tegelema, siis kui „vorm muudab [selle] vastuvõetavaks”, kui „kunst oma kujundite kaudu suudab kodanlast veenda, et [s]eda ei pea tõsiselt võtma” (*ibid.*). 1940-ndatel ja kindlasti Teise maailmasõja lõpuaastatel sai Adorno näha individuaalsuse haihtumist mitte ainult koodina kunstiteose monaadilises, suletud maailmas; nüüd Auschwitz-i-järgses

maailmas oli see reaalsus. Sel ajal ei tähistanud ekstreemsed jubedused tema jaoks mitte ainult lüürilise poesia kui kõige tugevama individuaalse väljendusvormi lõppu, vaid samuti ironia, huumori ja groteski kui võimalike psühholoogiliste abivahendite kasutamise lõppu šokkide vastu pärismaailmas.

Olen taandanud Adorno „Uue muusika filosoofias” ilmneva Stravinski-retseptiooni tuumani, mis puudutab subjektiga toime pandut, kuivõrd Adorno ise pidas seda oma tõlgendustes keskseks. Vastandades äärmusi teineteisele nii teravalt ning demonstreerides oma väärtushinnanguid nii selgelt ja hukkamõistuga, rakendab Adorno dialektikat sel moel, et äärmused näivad olevat kinnistatud ning et nad ei avalda vastastikku teineteisele mõju. Selles on midagi omast poliitilise pamfleti poleemikale, mille eesmärk on meile retooriliselt mõju avaldada, praegusel juhul autoritaarsusest autonoomia ja vabaduse poole. Tõsiasi, et Adorno alustas oma Schönbergi-essée kirjutamist 1941. aastal, Teise maailmasõja süngel ajajärgul, olles ise langenud poliitilise sallimatuse ohvriks, on tähendusrikas. Stravinski-essée valmis hiljem ega olnud osa algsest kontseptsioonist, milleks oli „dialektiline vaade” Schönbergile. Adornol ei saanud olla teadmata Stravinski flirtimine Itaalia fašismiga 1920-ndate lõpus ja 1930-ndate alguses, mis tähendas, et vaatamata hilisemale *ad hominem* süüdistuse tõrjumisele näeb ta Stravinskit olulisel määral müüti ja arhailisusse taandumise ning ajaloolise vastutuse eituse teenistuses, mis olid nii olemuslikud fašistide psühhootilises reaktsioonis tänapäeva maailma keerukusele ja ebamäärasusele.

Kolmas kriitiline pilk: Stravinski kui dialektilise analüüsi objekt

Kolmandas vaates, mis ilmneb tema essees „Stravinski: dialektiline portree” (1962⁷), pöördub Adorno tagasi oma varasema „Uue muusika filosoofias” väljendatud kriitika juurde. Kõrvale lükanud oma arvustajad, kes pole tema filosoofilisest tõlgendusest õigesti aru saanud, pakub ta eneskriitiliselt välja:

Minu kriitikud õhutavad mind endale abikätt ulatama; isegi otsene tekstipõhine kriitika

võinuks leida hävitavamaid argumente mu Stravinski-peatükile. Kui on tõsi, et tema muusika väljendab objektiivselt ebaõiget teadvust või ideoloogiat, siis võiksid teadlikud lugejad väita, et see on midagi enam kui lihtsalt identne asjastatud teadvusega. Ta ulatuvat sellest kaugemale, vaadeldes seda sõnatult ja vaikides lubades tal enesel kõnelda. Aja vaim on Stravinski kunsti tugevalt sisse kirjutatud domineeriva žestiga „comment c'est”. Põhjalikum kriitika peaks kaaluma, kas see žest ei paku suuremat osa tõest kui muusika, mis püüab vormida implitsiitset tõde, mida aja vaim eitab ning mille ajalugu on muutnud küsitavaks. (Adorno 1992: 148–149)

Selles olulises lõigus ei ütle Adorno oma kriitikutele mitte ainult seda, mida nood võinuksid üsna õigustatult tema enese varasemas kriitikas puudevana esile tuua, vaid sisuliselt esitab ta oma kolmanda kriitilise pilgu kavandi. Samuti tunnistab Adorno, et tema varasem arusaam Stravinski olemuselt staatilisest, arengut välistavast temporaalsusest kõrvuti Schönbergi orgaanilis-arengulise mudeli mõõdupuuga oli kohatu ja eksitav:

Vastandudes Stravinski muusika staatilisele ideaalile, selle immanentsele ajatusele, ja kõrvutades seda dünaamilise, rõhutatult temporaalse, seesmiselt areneva muusikaga, olen sellele suvaliselt rakendanud välist normi, normi, mille see eemale tõukas. Lühidalt, olen rikkunud mu enese poolt kõrgelt lugupeetud kriitika põhimõtet. (*ibid.*: 150)

Nõnda siis pöördub Adorno kolmandas kriitilises pilgus sellise põikleava eneskriitika kaudu tagasi mõnede esimese kriitilise pilgu jutupunktide juurde ning väldib teise pilgu poleemilist iseloomu. Eriti just Bürger peab kaht tõlgendust – „Uue muusika filosoofiat” ja esseed „Stravinski: dialektiline portree” – teineteisega ühitamatuks ja peab neist viimast ülemaks:

Kui poleemiline tõlgendus kulgeb globaliseerival moel, vaadeldes neoklassitsismi ühtse liikumisena, siis [hilisem] tõlgendus püüab seda diferentseerida. See jätab avatuks vähemalt võimaluse näha neoklassikalistes teostes

⁷ Segadus ilmumisaastaga, mis on artikli autori järgi kord 1961, kord 1962 – *tõlkija*.

rohkemat kui ainult langust reaktsioonilise mõtlemise pooldajate leer. (Bürger 1984: 119)

Kuid Adorno kinnitab endiselt, et Stravinski muusika sisaldab „*quelque chose qui ne va pas*” (midagi sobimatut). Vaatamata eneskriitikalike teise pilgu suhtes, mis puudutas kohatuid väärtusi, jääb probleemiks arengut vältiv temporaalne kulgemine Stravinski puhul. Adorno kirjutab: „Muusika kui temporaalne kunst on seotud järgnevuse mõistega ning sellest tulenevalt pöördumatu nagu aeg ise. Kord alanud, pühendab ta end edasiminekuks, muutumisele millekski uueks, arengule” (Adorno 1992: 150–151). Sel viisil osutab muusika enesest kaugemale ning vaidleb vastu müüdi lõputule kordamisele. Stravinski kordused ja teisendused eitavad temporaalsust ning muusikaliste sündmuste progressiooni. Nad seisnevad omamoodi „aja märgistamises” ning see sisaldab muidugi subjekti identsuse seisukohast implikatsioone. Just see aspekt Adorno kriitikas ärritas väga Dahlhausi, kes kaebles Adorno dogmatismi üle, mis vaatles ainsa võimaliku temporaalse progressioonina arengut (Dahlhaus 1987). Jonathan Cross jagab seda arvamust, arutledes:

Adorno seisukohast tulenev järeldus – et suvaline muusika, mis ei ilmuta „päralejõudmisele” viitavaid arengulisi tunnuseid, on ohtlik, sest sarnaselt kultuuritööstuse toodetega peab ta enesele allutama individuaalse subjekti vabaduse, tingima individuaalse identsuse lahustumise – ei näiks nüüd tänapäeva vaatenurgast üldiselt kehtivana. (Cross 1998: 234)

Eitades Stravinski puhul modernistlikke, temporaalse järgnevuse ja subjekti lagunemise märke, on Adorno Crossi meelest sisuliselt „teinud temast postmodernisti” (*ibid.*: 234–235). Kuid nagu nägime, asetab Adorno oma esimeses kriitilises pilgus Stravinski loomingu kindlalt modernistide kategooriasse kui „autentse” muusika, mis vastustab ja eitab muusika tarbeväärtust ning kultuuritööstuse mõju. Stravinski muusikat iseloomustatakse kui „objektivistlikku” ning mõnede, Adorno meelest selgelt nii tüüpiliste kui ka väga märgiliste teoste najal (eriti „Söduri lugu”, aga ka teised, nagu „Ragtime” ja „Lugu rebasest, kukest, kassist ja oinast”) kui „surrealistlikku”. Väidan, et kuna Adorno ei lakka Stravinskit määratlemast „autentse

modernistina” (kõik ilmingud osutavad vastu-pidisele!), tunnistab ta nii „objektivismi” ja „surrealismi” radikaalset iseloomu kui ka nende problemaatilist olemust. See tähendab, et kui subjektiivsuse ja väljenduslikkuse eitamine, irooniline mäng varem kasutatud materjali ümberasustatud fragmentidega, arengulise progressiooni ja temporaalse järjepidevuse eitamine montaaži osiste kõrvutamise huvides on kõik modernismi siseselt oluliste tendentside määratlejad, kaasnevad nendega samal ajal riskid muutuda identseteks maailmaga, kust nad pärit on. Nad riskivad kriitilise jõu kaotamisega oma tagasilanguses müütilisse minevikku, kaugenedes reaalsest maailmast, või siis multikaid meenutavasse jäljendusse vastuvõetamatu reaalsuse eest kaitset otsides. Mulle tundub, et Adorno on teises kriitilises pilgus, „Uue muusika filosoofias” enesele püstitanud raske ülesande: uurida sellise noateral tasakaalu hoidmise filosoofilisi implikatsioone. Nõnda muutub Adorno esitatud küsimus Stravinski muusika „autentsuse” kriteeriumiks: mil määral suudab helilooja säilitada oma vaadet lõplikku tühjusesse ja mõtte puudumisse? Teisest kriitilisest pilgust tulenev järeldus – nüüdseks selgelt eksistentsialistlik ning teatud määral sarnane Adorno hilisema Heideggeri kriitikaga raamatus „Jargon der Eigentlichkeit” („Autentsuse žargoon”; 1964) – on, et Stravinski muusika pörkub selle tunnistamisest tagasi ning taandareneb subjektiivsuse barbaarse lämmatamise abil ning kaitsevahendina surma vastu arhailisusse ja müüti „surma vältimise ja igavese kuvandina” (Adorno 2020: 208).

Selles kontekstis on taas õpetlik pöörduda iroonia teema juurde. Kolmandas pilgus Stravins-kile ei kujuta Adorno iroonia eesmärki mitte kui puuduva eneserefleksiooni aseainet, vaid kui klounaadi ideed (mida võib täheldada ka „Uue muusika filosoofias”). Essees „Stravinski: dialektiline portree” kirjutab Adorno: „Tegemist on mimikri või klounaadi elemendiga – kogu aeg pingsa tööga end koormates millegi kallal, mis on tühi, visalt tegutsedes millegagi ilma igasuguse tulemuseta” (Adorno 1992: 152). Kuid see oli muidugi ka teise kriitilise pilgu tuum. Olulise nihke Adorno suhtumises Stravinskisse, mis avaldub kolmandas pilgus, moodustab just klounaadi eespool nimetatud aspekti tõlgenduse muutumine. Sellel näib olevat irooniline suhe

puuduvasse subjektiivsusesse, tähenduse puudumise tähendusetusse, kuid millele nüüd talumatu määramatusena lisandub eeldatav lõputu regressi mõõde: ülim iroonia seisneb võib-olla selles, et pole enam kannatavat subjekti, pole tähendust, pettekujutema ja müüdi puudumisel pole seda kunagi olnudki. Minu arvates peitub selle tõlgendusliku nihke võti tõsiasjas, et teise ja kolmanda kriitilise pilgu vahel avastas Adorno enese jaoks Samuel Beckett'i looming.

Stravinski, Schönberg, Beckett: koondumine Adorno hilises kriitikas

Adorno huvi Beckett'i vastu ulatub tagasi 1950. aastate keskpaika, ning tema näidendites ja romaanides hakkas Adorno nägema inimliku eksistentsi ülmat *reductio ad absurdum*'it, Walter Benjamini „dialektikat seisakus“. Ta imetles Beckett'i töid paljuski ning sai temaga ka isiklikult tuttavaks, arutledes Beckettiga tema tööde üle, eriti 1958. aasta sügisel Pariisis.⁸ Sellest lähtus Adorno mahukas essee Beckettist, „Versuch, das „Endspiel“ zu verstehen“ („Katse mõista „Lõppmängu““), mille Adorno avaldas 1961 – aasta enne kolmandat kriitilist pilku. Kahe essee vaheline sarnasus on rabav ning 1962. aastal teisenenud arusaam Stravinskist on kahtlemata mõjustatud Beckett'i lugemisest. Tõepoolest, Beckett'i tõlgendamise kaudu hakkab Adorno nägema lepitust Stravinski ja Schönbergi vahel, vastandina „Uue muusika filosoofia“ poleemilisusele. Beckettit silmas pidades kirjutab ta: „Beckett löikub kõige kaas-aegsemate suundumustega muusikas muu hulgas sellega, et ta Lääne inimesena ühitab jooni Stravinski radikaalsest ajaloolisusest, lagunenu järjepidevuse ängistavat staatikat Schönbergi koolkonna eesrindlike ekspressiivsete ja konstruktiivsete tehnikatega.“ (Adorno 1991 [1961]: 268) Beckett'i mõju kolmandas kriitilises pilgus saab eriti ilmseks Adorno edasises „Sõduri loo“ tõlgenduses, hinnangut, mida võib kohati raskusteta laiendada Beckett'i näidendile „Lõppmäng“. Ta kirjeldab seda teost nüüd kui „muusikat, mis on tehtud rusudest, kus subjektist ei ole jäänud muud peale tema kõntide ja piinava teadmise, et sellel pole lõppu“ (Adorno 1992:

173). See tähendab, ta tunnistab nüüd, et miski subjektist näib siiski säilinud olevat, olgugi et kahvatul kujul. Ning teiselt poolt, mida ta kirjutab „Lõppmängu“ kohta, seda võib vägagi edukalt rakendada ka Stravinski muusikale: „Selle mõistmine saab tähendada ainult tema mõistetamatusse mõistmist, konkreetset selle tähenduse rekonstrueerimist, et tal tähendust pole“ (Adorno 1991 [1961]: 243). Kuid selle mõtte täielikku tähendust, mis 1960. aastatel on tunginud kõigisse Adorno kirjutistesse ning saab suuresti aluseks tema viimasele tööle, lõpetamata „Esteetilisele teooriale“ (mille ta kavatses pühendada Beckett'ile), on lihtne eirata. Saaksin seda ehk veel kord ümbersõnastatult rõhutada: „tähendusetus“ – ja tõepoolest vastupanu tõlgendamisele – muutub avangardses teoses ise struktuuri loovaks põhimõtteks, esitledes end vormi probleemina, mis nõuab tõlgendamist ja arusaamist, kuid samal ajal keeldub lubamast oma vormisse kätketud vastuolude leevendamist (vt. Paddison 1996: 51). Põhimõtet, mida Adorno on varem rakendanud Schönbergile, rakendab ta nüüd Stravinskile. Ometigi, tunnetanud võimust, et Stravinskit võib ka sel kombel mõista, otsekui „positiivset negatiivsust“, jäävad alles kahtlused helilooja järjekindluse suhtes selle praktika teostamisel.

Adorno lõplik otsus Stravinski muusika osas on, et samastumine objektiga ning subjektiivsuse eitamine sunnib helilooja absoluutset negatiivsust „esitama, justkui see oleks tõene“ (Adorno 1992: 174). Maitse triumf ja tehniline meisterlikkus veenavad meid selle kehtivuses ning juhivad tähelepanu kõrvale nagu mustkunstiski: nii nagu sõdur „Sõduri looski“ taipab, et „kui saatan ei valetaks, siis lakkaks ta olemast tema ise“ (*ibid.*). Adorno jaoks on Stravinski muusika valeteadvus tõene, kuivõrd see ütleb meile, missugune maailm on, samal ajal veendes meid oma lihvitud maneeridega, et teistmoodi olla ei saakski. See on muidugi nii ainult siis, kui ta valetab, et saatan räägib tõtt – mis näib kehtivat Adorno kohta sama palju kui Stravinski kohta. Sest nagu Adorno on öelnud psühhoanalüüsi kohta, „miski pole tõsi, välja arvatud liialdused“ (Adorno 1974 [1951]: 49).

Tõlkinud Jaan Ross

⁸ Ilmselt oli Beckett'il etteheiteid tema „Lõppmängu“ tõlgendusele (vt. Knowlson 1996: 478–479).

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Artemi Troitski. *Back in the USSR: roki ajalugu raudse eesriide taga.* Tõlkinud Kasper Jassa, Tartu: Kullapuu Grupp, 2023, 312 lk.

Aimar Ventsel

Artemi Troitski on teatud põlvkonna, Nõukogude Liidus sündinud ja kasvanud muusikafännide seas midagi kultusisiku laadset. Ta ise väidab, et ta oli Nõukogude Liidu ainus rokiajakirjanik, ja teatud reservatsioonidega võib seda ka niimoodi võtta. Troitski oli Nõukogude Liidus üks väheseid või võib olla ainukene muusikaajakirjanik, kes kirjutas peamiselt rokkmuusikast, kajastas selle žanri tegemisi nii kodu- kui välismaal ning võitles välja lehe- ja raadioetri ruumi artistidele, kes muidu poleks seda saanud. Laiemalt tunduks sai Artemi Troitski 1980ndate aastate lõpul, kui tal oli Kesktelevisioonis (seega üle terve Nõukogude Liidu näidatavas telekanalis) oma saade pealkirjaga „Programma A”. See oli üks vähestest muusikasaadetest, kus näidati pigem alternatiivse kallakuga muusika, enamasti rokkmuusika videoid ja kontserte, kusjuures kajastust leidsid nii Nõukogude Liidu territooriumil tegutsenud kui ka välismaised – enamasti uued – tegijad. Mina näiteks nägin selles saates esimest korda Jakuudi šamaaniroki ansambleid, ma isegi ei teadnud, et midagi sellist üldse eksisteerib.

Nõukogude Liidu kokkuvarisemise ajaks oli Troitski omalaadne fenomen: mees, kes tundis kõiki, keda kutsuti igale muusikasündmusele, kes käis enamikul muusikafestivalidel ja kel oli tolaaegses muusikaseltskonnas oma-moodi, ainulaadselt privilegeeritud staatus. Troitski oli ka üks esimestest, kes hakkas suhtlema Nõukogude Liitu avastama saabunud Lääne muusikaajakirjanike ning artistidega. 1980. aastate keskel oli Nõukogude Liidus sula-periood, Mihhail Gorbatšovi algatatud perestroika ehk uutmine, raudne eesriie avanes järjest rohkem ning müütilist ning tundmatut Kurjuse Impeeriumi tuli kaema järjest kasvav tulv läänlasi. Nii juhtuski, et Troitskile tehti ettepanek, millest ta ei saanud keelduda – kirjutada raamat Nõukogude muusikast. Raamat ilmus 1988. aastal inglise keeles ning seda on nüüdseks tõlgitud päris mitmesse keelde. Troitski jätkas pärast raamatu ilmumist aga elu Venemaal, kus ta kuni 2014. aastani kuulus Venemaa kultuurilisse

koorekihti, olles niihästi kõrgepalgaline DJ, televisioonisaadete juht, ajakirjanik kui ka muidu meediastaar. 2014. aastal aga hakkas ta järsult kritiseerima Ukraina poolsaare Krimmi okupeerimist Venemaa poolt ja kolis kogu oma perega Tallinnasse, kus elab siiaani.

Troitski tunnistab juba raamatu alguses, et tegemist on tema isikliku vaatega Nõukogude rokile – selles mõttes on „Back in the USSR” aus raamat. Kuna Troitski on pärit Moskvast, siis on arusaadavatel põhjustel ka rõhk Moskva muusikal ja üleüldse on raamat väga Moskva-keskne. See on tegelikult ka arusaadav. Moskva ongi siiaani väga Moskva-keskne, pidades kõike väljaspool linna toimuvat teisejärguliseks. Peale selle tuleb arvestada omaaegseid olusid: Nõukogude Liit oli suur riik, ja ehkki Troitskil oli privileeg ning võimalus palju ringi liikuda, oli pidev rändamine logistiliselt keerukas. Veel keerukam oli informatsiooni liikumine, mida autor ka raamatus mitu korda tunnistab. Just selle tõttu ongi raamatus rõhk peamiselt Venemaa ja venekeelsele muusikal, see lihtsalt jõudis kergemini Troitskini, aga oli talle ka kergemini mõistetav. Nõukogude Liidu kohta võibki väita, et Nõukogude rokkmuusika keskusteks olid Moskva ja Leningrad, sealt tuli enamik tooni andnud artiste.

Artemi Troitski annab raamatus ülevaate rokkmuusika ajaloost terve Nõukogude Liidu eksistentsi kestel. Siin tuleb jälle aru saada Nõukogude kontekstist. Troitski loeb rokkmuusika hulka ka subkultuurid ja muusikastiilid, mis polnud otseselt sellega seotud, ent olid kuidagi taunitud või suisa keelatud. Nii algab raamat 1950ndate *stiljaga*’dega, kes kuulasid pigem džässmuusikat. *Stiljaga*’sid on eesti keeles nimetatud ka lõngusteks, ehkki need subkultuurid ja stiilid kerkisid Nõukogude ajal erinevates regioonides esile erinevate nimede all ja eri aegadel. Samamoodi räägitakse raamatus mõnevõrra eksperimentaalsest elektroonilisest muusikast, kasvõi Sven Grünbergi loomingu. Tervet raamatut läbib Vene alternatiivsetes

ringkondades kogu Nõukogude perioodil käibel olnud arusaam, et kõik vähegi süsteemivastane on rokk ja et rokk on oma olemuselt Nõukogude süsteemi vastu. Sellest tõukub probleem, et tüüpiliselt Nõukogude rokifännile ei leia n.-ö. ametlikku muusika, peale Alla Pugatšova, Troitski silmis armu. See on ka tõsiasi, et roki-publiku jaoks polnud legaalne rokk ehk vokaal-instrumentaalansamblid „õige” muusika. Sellist roki ja ametliku popmuusika vastandamist on raamatus päris palju.

Hoolimata Moskva-kesksusest on raamatus päris palju juttu ka Eestist, Balti riikidele on isegi terve peatükk pühendatud. See pole eestikeelse tõlke jaoks lisatud „kohustuslik” kiitus, vaid nii on kirjas ka originaalis. Eestist ja teistest Balti liiduvabariikidest rääkides kasutab Troitski mõnevõrra kulunud väljendit, et sinne regioon oli teistele Nõukogude Liidu elanikele „Lääs”. Tegelikult vastab see tõele, ma olen ka ise nii Venemaal, Gruusias kui Kasahstanis isegi liiga palju kuulnud lugusid sellest, kuidas Tallinna või Riia külastamine oli omaaegsele Nõukogude Liidu siseturistile kultuurišokk. Troitski jutu järgi olid ENSV-s loodud roki arenemiseks „normaalsed olud” ning Eesti rokielu erines Venemaa omast stiililise mitmekesisuse poolest – alates Apelsini kantrirokist kuni Ruja sümfooniateni (lk. 66–67). Lisaks mängiti ENSV-s raadios ja teles muusikat, mis poleks mujal NSVL-is eetriaega saanud. Selle põhjuseks peab Troitski ENSV võimude vajadust vähendada Soome raadiost ja televiisorist tuleva värske Lääne muusika mõju (lk. 67). Ka kirjeldab Troitski oma tundeid seoses Tartu Levimuusika-päevadel või Tallinna Pedagoogilise Instituudi kontsertidel kuulnud muusikaga kui ka sealse atmosfääriga.

Troitski toob ära mõningaid huvitavaid selgitusi Nõukogude (loe: Vene) roki mõistmiseks. Näiteks kirjutab ta mitmes kohas, et venelastele on tekst märksa olulisem kui loo ülesehitus või mängustiil. Sellepärast areneski Venemaal Nõukogude ajal n.-ö. *bard*'i-rokk (lk. 66) ehk aeglane ja muusikaliselt üksluine ballaadiroki

stiil, mille suurnimed on Mašina Vremeni, Akvarium ja DDT. Hiljem, nullindatel, hakati seda stiili nimetama ka „Vene rokiks” (*russskii rok*). Ka tasub lugeda Troitski kirjeldust Nõukogude Vene roki allakäigu põhjustest 1990ndate alguses – muusikaliselt oli see žanr vananenud ja krüptiliste laulutekstide aeg oli lihtsalt läbi.

Lugedes seda raamatut Nõukogude ajal üles kasvanud inimesena, saan ma sellest aru. Mul on aga küsimus, kui mõistetavad on sellised terminid nagu „komsomol”, „täitevkomitee” või ka „tusovka” – ja mitte ainult need – nooremale lugejale. Tegelikult oleks raamat vajanud väljaandmist kommenteeritud teosena. Lisaks praegu käibelt kadunud väljenditele oleks pidanud nooremate lugejate jaoks kommenteerima kogu Nõukogude kultuuritööstuse olemust. Troitski räägib õigusega, kuidas Venemaal loobiti rokkmuusikale ja rokkmuusikutele Nõukogude ajal kaikaid kodaraisse või pandi piiranguid peale, ent vajaks seletamist, kuidas oli neilesamadele artistidele võimalik korraldada festivale Moskvast (lk. 181–184) või Tbilisis (lk. 83–89).

Raamatu lõpus on Nõukogude rokiga seotud valitud ning kommenteeritud disko- ja filmograafia. Ma olen kuulnud mõningat kriitikat, et mingid albumid on sealt välja jäänud või et mingid plaadiformaadid on kirjas valesi. Hea on aga see, et lisatud on kõikide albumite ja filmide venekeelsed nimed. Kui lugejal tekib tahtmine muusikat ja filme internetist leida (soovitan otsida Youtube'ist), siis see lihtsustab kõvasti asja.

„Back in the USSR” on lõbus lugemine. Ehkki Troitski pühendub liiga palju Moskva ja Leningradi artistidele ning üritab selle seltskonna muusikat näidata kui Nõukogude Liidu rokki (ja ta pole sellise lähenemisega ainus), on tema kirjeldused väga humoorikad. Kes teema vastu huvi tunneb, peaks raamatu läbi lugema. Vanema lugeja jaoks on siin tegemist nostalgilise lektüüriaga, mis paneb plaadiriulist otsima ammu tolmunud plaate, nooremal inimesel on aga palju avastamisrõõmu.

Friedrich Nietzsche. *Wagneri juhtum. Nietzsche contra Wagner*. Tõlkinud Jaan Undusk, Loomingu Raamatukogu 4–5, Tallinn: Kultuurileht, 2024, 96 lk.

Aare Tool

Friedrich Nietzsche esseed Richard Wagnerist, milles kunagine andunud jünger ebajumalale kibedusega selja pöörab, näivad kuuluvat pigem Nietzsche pärandi marginaalisse: „Wagneri juhtum” (1888) ja „Nietzsche contra Wagner” (1889) pole ju muud kui arveteõiendamise, milles Nietzsche küll sarjab 1883. aastal surnud Wagnerit, aga tegelikult heitleb seejuures ikkagi ennekõike omaenda deemonitega. Nietzsche nimelt süüdistab Wagnerit dekadentsis, sellal kui tema enda muud tekstid on (vaatamata nendesse kätketud „röömsale teadusele”) saanud tähenduse just tolle 19. sajandi lõpu meeleolu võrdkujuna, mille kohta sõna „dekadents” tundub olevat igati asjakohane.

Jaan Unduski Nietzsche-tõlge on valminud osana Eesti Teaduste Akadeemia Uneri ja Tuglase Kirjanduskeskuse uurimisprojektist „Tsiliviliseeritud rahvuse teke: dekadents kui üleminek 1905–1940”. Seoses selle projektiga toimus 2023. aasta maikuu ka konverents „Dekadents eesti kultuuris: tõlge ja tõlgendus”, mis päädis Nietzsche tõlkijate vestlusringiga. Kui uskuda, et Nietzsche tekstid on filosoofia, siis muidugi eeldavad nad nagu igasugune filosoofiaalane lektüür tõlketäpsust. Meelde on jäänud näiteks arutelu selle üle, kas öelda „sealpool head ja kurja” või „teispool head ja kurja”. Kui valida „teispool”, siis peaks see justkui tähendama, et leidub religioosne „teispoolus”, mida jumalahukajast Nietzsche muidugi vaevalt silmas pidas. Nietzsche ei huvitanud kuigivõrd süsteem, olgu matemaatiline, tunnetuslik või ühiskondlik, vaid pigem sõnailu ning erudeeritud ütlemis- ja mõtlemisrõõm kui selline. Kõigi nende meeolehärmiks, kes otsivad Nietzsche tekstidest täpsust, on Nietzsche krooniliselt ebajärjekindel ja iseendaga konfliktis.

Veel enne kui asuda lugema Nietzsche Wagneri-kriitikat ja tõlkija Jaan Unduski saate-esseed „Armuvaenu vägi ehk Wagnerist vaevatud Nietzsche”, võiks tausta huvides soovitada

tutvuda Joachim Köhleri raamatuga „Friedrich Nietzsche ja Cosima Wagner. Alistumise kool” (eesti keeles 1997), mis algselt ilmus kõneka pealkirjaga sarjas „Armastajapaarid”. Köhleri (paraku allikaviideteta) raamatut on küll kirjeldatud kui mõnes osas oletuslikku, aga omal ladusal moel juhatab see siiski Nietzsche ja Wagneri keeruka suhte olemusele lähemale. Kui väita, et muusikal ja eriti Wagneril oli Nietzsche filosoofilises maailmapildis olulisem koht kui ühelgi teisel 19. sajandi filosoofil, siis oleks sellega öeldud veel üsna vähe. Mõju, mida Wagner avaldas Nietzschele – suurele isemõttelejale, kes kirjutas „kõigile ja ei kellelegi” –, ulatus selleni, et Nietzsche sai Wagneri õuelaulik, kelle suhet Wagneriga „patusesse koosellu” asunud Cosimaga võis ehk kirjeldada kui „inimlikku, liiginimlikku”. Nietzsche, kelle kohta pilkamisi öeldi, et ta mängib klaverit „professori kohta liiga hästi”, oli Wagneril vaja kui akadeemilist suuhoodrit, aga üksnes nii kaua, kuni Nietzsche tõsiseltvõetavust teadusringkonnas hakkasid kahjustama tema kiidukõned Wagnerile.

Wagneri pettunud jüngrist sai tema äge vastane. Kujutlused dekadentsist on ikka käinud käsikäes kartusega „haiglasliku” ees, nii ka Nietzschele, kelle vaimuteravus oli jõudmas lõpliku tuhmumise künnisele: „Ma olen kaugel sellest, et armulikult pealt vaadata, kuidas see dekadent meie tervist rikub – ja lisaks ka muusikat! Kas on Wagner üldse inimene? Kas pole ta pigem haigus? Ta teeb haigeks kõik, mille külge ta puutub, – ta on muusika haigeks teinud” (lk. 16). Nietzsche, kes ise oli varem võtnud Wagneri eest seistes ette kibedaid sulerünnakuid, pööras nüüd oma kirjasõna wagnerlaste vastu. Wagneri looming oli Nietzsche arvates sestpeale oht muusikale ja „tulevikuta muusika”, iroonilise vastandina mõistele „tulevikumuusika” ehk *Zukunftsmusik*. Kuulajat teatraalselt raputades teeb Wagneri muusikadraama just seda, mida ei tohiks: „Kellele ta nõnda mõjub? Sellele,

kellele õilis kunstnik ei peaks eales mõjuma, – massile! Ebaküpseile! Blaseerunuile! Haiglastele! Idiootidele! Wagneriaanidele!...” (lk. 51).

Taotlus mõjuda „massidele”, mida Nietzsche Wagnerile omistab, on jäänud hambusse ka hilisematel Wagneri kriitikutel. Theodor W. Adorno, kelles Wagner tekitas tolle antisemitismi tõttu enam kui vastuolulisi tundeid, kirjeldab Wagneri juhtmotiivide tehnikat tema silmis ühe rängema kunstilise allakäigu sümptomi, kaubastumise või kaubataolisuse vaatevinklist: Wagneri muusikadraamades alatas teisenedes korduvad juhtmotiivid on justkui „reklaamid”, mis 20. sajandi massikultuuri ennetades aitavad mõttelaiskadel kodanlastel muusikat meeles pidada (Adorno 1952 [1938]: 34). Adorno Wagneri-käsitluses elab seega edasi Nietzsche kujutus Wagnerist kui allakäinust, sedapuhku küll vaadelduna läbi massidega manipuleerimist pelgava marksiliku prisma.

Jaan Unduski huvitavast saatesõnast võib muu hulgas lugeda, kuidas Wagner ja Nietzsche, kaks pahuksisse läinud dekadenti, rakendati 1930. aastatel hitlerliku Saksamaa ideoloogia teenistusse hoopis kui „ürgse saksa kultuuri lipulaevad” (lk. 77) ja mängiti malakana välja „mandunud” kultuuri veel uuemate ilmingute vastu. Mis puudutab küll essees nimetatud Hitleri Wagneri-vaimustust, siis olgu lisatud, et niisama entusiastlikult külastas mitte just eriti isikupärase muusikamaitsega diktaator ka Franz Lehári ülipopulaarse opereti „Lõbus lesk”

etendusi. Nietzsche pähe pugedes saab oletada, et parandamatu idealistina võis ta näha end koos Wagneriga osalisena teatavas mõttesõprusest kantud ühisloomingus, ehkki nende ligi kolmekümneaastast vanusevahet arvestades oli teatav ebasümmeetria sellesse suhtesse paratamatult sisse kirjutatud: „Wagner oli teda silitanud kui oma truud koera. Lemmikloomi armastatakse ikka, aga klaveriklahvidele neid ei lasta” (lk. 91–92).

Dekadentsi kohta ütlevad Nietzsche Wagneri-esseed siiski vähem, kui võiks eeldada – või kui, siis ainult selle allakäigu kohta, millega Nietzsche ise tundis end silmitsi seisvat. Dekadents pole pelgalt pettumuseks ümber pööratud vasikavaimustus, Nietzsche tekstid on aga suuresti just niisugune inversioon, kus Wagneri enda vahel üsna kitsarinnalised kirjutised (sh. kurikuulus „Juutus muusikas”, 1869) temale postuumselt kahurikuulina tagasi lennutatakse („Kas Wagner oli üldse sakslane? Mõneti on põhjust küsida. Raske on temas leida mingeid vähegi saksalikke jooni”; märkus lk. 32). Unduski silmapaistvalt ladusa tõlke tekstimõnule vaatamata on Nietzsche verbaalselt virtuoosne paskvill mõneti kurioosne lugemine. Õigupoolest on see just niisugune üllitis, mida praegusajal on hakatud nimetama eneseabi õpikuks: Nietzsche pihtimus sellest, kuidas ta oma elu kõige halvema harjumuse vaevaga seljatas ja „Wagnerist lahti sai”.

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Wagner, Richard 1869. *Das Judenthum in der Musik*. Leipzig: Weber.

Muusikateadusliku elu kroonikat 2023/2024

Koostanud Äli-Ann Klooren, Eesti Muusikateaduse Seltsi sekretär

Eesti Muusikateaduse Selts

Hooaeg 2023/2024 oli EMTSile 32. tegevusaasta. Seisuga 30. september 2024, mil lõpeb seltsi majandusaasta, kuulub seltsi 98 liiget.

2024. aastal jätkavad EMTSi juhatuses esimees Kerri Kotta, aseesinaine Brigitta Davidjants ning liikmed Anu Kõlar, Anita Maasalu ja Anu Schaper; revisjonikomisjoni esimees on Eerik Jõks, liikmed Raili Sule ja Heidi Heinmaa.

Sel hooajal korraldas EMTS kaks muusikateaduslikku üritust: Leichter päeva ja Tartu päeva. Leichter päev toimus 13. novembril Eesti Muusika- ja Teatriakadeemia auditooriumis. Dmitri Kartofelev ja Liisi Raudväli TalTechist Küberneetika Instituudist tegid ettekande teemal „Inimloomingu fraktaalset geomeetriast“ ning EMTA lektori Anu Veenre ettekande teemaks oli „Ühisautorsusest eesti kunstmuusikas Malera Kasuku näitel“. Samuti tutvustati EMTSi aastaraamatu Res Musica 15. numbrit. Tartu päev „Pärtlased 120“ toimus 20. aprillil Eesti Kirjandusmuuseumis. Päeva esimene pool oli pühendatud Žanna Pärtlasele ja seal astusid ettekannetega üles sünnipäevalaps ise („Seto leelo viisitüpoloogia: teoreetilised lähenemised ja koostamise põhimõtted“), Janika Oras („Kelle terts on suurem? Seto vanema laulmisstiili taaselustamine“) ja Andreas Kalkun („Hermann Julius Schmalz ja seto laulupärimus“). Päeva teine pool oli pühendatud Margus Pärtlasele, kelle ettekande teemaks oli „Kompositsioonilised strateegiad Eduard Tubina sonaadis sooloviilile“, lisaks tegid ettekanded ka Katrin Aller („Haridusmaastike tõmbetuuled“) ja Mart Humal („Elleri 3. sonaadi II osa struktuurist“). Pärtlaste ettekandepaneelide vahel tutvustas Anu Schaper oma väitekirja Johann Valentin Mederist.

Uued väljaanded

Res Musica 15. numbriga koostajaks on Marju Raju. Kogumikus on mitu muusikaajaloo-teemalist artiklit: Risto Paju läheneb füüsiliste tõendite abil vanemale muusikaelule ning kolm autorit – Tõnu Tannberg, Meeta Morozov ja Anu Veenre – keskenduvad oma artiklites muusikaloo eri tahkudele Nõukogude perioodi aastakümnetel. Kolm artiklit

tõukusid 2022. aasta kevadel toimunud kursusest „Kuidas kõnetab Adorno meid täna“, tekstide autoriteks Toomas Siitan, Kristel Pappel ja Aare Tool. Toonase kursuse lõpetas 2022. aasta Tartu päeval toimunud vestlusring „Kelle südames on koht Adornole?“, pühendatud Jaan Rossi 65. sünnipäevale; Res Musica 15. numbris ilmus selle üleskirjutus-kokkuvõte. Jubilate-rubriigis on avaldatud Jane Ginsborgi „In celebration of Jaan Ross: Perspectives on ESCOM and *Musicae Scientiæ*“ ja Irina Belobrovitseva artikkel „Täies vastavuses Murphy seadusele: Jaan Ross ilukirjanduse tõlkijana“.

Alates eelmisest numbrist on Res Musica *open access* ajakiri, s.t. artiklite täistekstid võib leida kodulehelt www.resmusica.ee kohe pärast numbrilise ilmumist. Samuti on artiklid nüüdsest varustatud DOI-numbriga. Siiski saab tellida ka Res Musica pabereksemplare, kas kodulehelt, saates meili aadressil resmusica@eamt.com, või EMTA veebipoest (eamt.ee/shop, tootekategooria „publikatsioonid“). Sealt võib EMTA teiste väljaannete kõrval leida info ka kõigi EMTA muusikateaduse osakonna varasemate publikatsioonide kohta. Muusikateaduslikke väljaandeid saab osta ka EMTA valvelauast.

Nende muusikateadlaste publikatsioonid, kes osalevad Eesti ametlikes teadusprojektides ja/või töötavad õppejõududena kõrgkoolides, saab internetist kergesti kätte kas Eesti Teadusinfosüsteemist (www.etis.ee) või vastavate kõrgkoolide aastaaruannetest.

AUTORID / AUTHORS

ARNIS BALČUS on läti dokumentaalfotograaf, kes keskendub oma loomingus läti identiteedi, ajaloo ja ühiskonna uurimisele. Ta on õppinud Westminsteri Ülikoolis Londonis ja Läti Ülikoolis Riias. Alates 1994. aastast on tema loomingut eksponeeritud näitustel Riias, Londonis, Berliinis, Kopenhaagenis, Oslos ja mujal. Ta on avaldanud mitu fotoraamatut, viimati *Scēna* (2024), mille teemaks on noorte alternatiivne subkultuur Riias. Alates 2011. aastast on Arnis Balčus ajakirja Foto Kvartāls peatoimetaja.

ARNIS BALČUS is a Latvian documentary photographer whose work focuses on exploring Latvian identity, history, and society. He studied at the University of Westminster in London and the University of Latvia in Riga. Since 1994 his work has been exhibited in Riga, London, Berlin, Copenhagen, Oslo and elsewhere. He has published several photobooks, most recently *Scēna* (2024), which is about youth alternative subculture in Riga. Arnis Balčus has been the editor-in-chief of Foto Kvartāls magazine since 2011.

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DAVID ČELAKOVSKÝ oli muusikateaduse õpingute ajal Palacký Ülikoolis Olomoucis (Tšehhi Vabariik) eriti huvitatud popmuusikast. Praegu õpib ta samas ülikoolis psühholoogiat, keskendudes oma uuringutes binauraalsete rütmide rollile unekvaliteedi parandamisel. Tema teadustöö peamine fookus on nende kahe valdkonna interdistsiplinaarsel puutealal, eriti muusika mõjul inimeste tervisele ja heaolule.

DAVID ČELAKOVSKÝ was particularly interested in popular music during his musicological studies at Palacký University Olomouc, Czech Republic. Currently, he is pursuing psychology at the same university, where his research centres on the role of binaural rhythms in improving sleep quality. His primary research focus lies at the interdisciplinary intersection of these two fields, with a particular emphasis on music's impact on human health and well-being.

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JĀNIS DAUGAVIETIS on Läti Ülikooli kirjanduse, folkloori ja kunsti instituudi teadur. Ta omandas doktorikraadi Läti Ülikoolis rakendussotsioloogia alal ja on alates 2002. aastast osalenud paljudes uurimisprojektides. Tema teadustöö keskmes on amatöörkunstid, kultuuripoliitika, muusikasotsioloogia ja digihumanitaaria. 1990ndatel tegutses ta Läti *underground* muusikaskeenel, tehes korraldustööd, mängides, produtseerides ja salvestades muusikat ning avaldades veebiajakirju.

JĀNIS DAUGAVIETIS is a researcher at the Institute of Literature, Folklore and Art at the University of Latvia. He obtained his PhD from the University of Latvia in Applied Sociology, and since 2002 has worked in many different research projects. His main research interests are amateur arts, cultural policy, sociology of music and digital humanities. Throughout the 1990s he was active in the Latvian underground music scene, organising, playing, producing and recording music, as well as publishing zines.

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BRIGITTA DAVIDJANTS on Eesti Muusika- ja Teatriakadeemia teadur, kes on peamiselt keskendunud Eesti popkultuurile. Põhiliselt huvitab teda küsimus, kuidas toimus subkultuuriline organiseerumine üleminekul hilissotsialismist postkommunistlikusse ühiskonda. Ta pöörab erilist tähelepanu topelt-marginaliseeritud identiteetidele – neile, mis asuvad peavoolukultuurist väljaspool ja on ka oma subkultuuris perifeersed selliste faktorite tõttu nagu näiteks sugu, etniline kuuluvus või sooline esindatus. Viimastes projektides on ta uurinud seoseid subkultuurilise ideoloogia ja subkultuurilise kuuluvuse positiivse mõju vahel Eesti noorte vaimsele tervisele 21. sajandil, samuti „vana“ muusikat puudutavat põlvkondlikku mälu. Oma doktoriväitekirjas uuris ta Armeenia rahvusideoloogiate konstruktsioone.

BRIGITTA DAVIDJANTS is a researcher at the Estonian Academy of Music and Theatre who has focused primarily on Estonian pop culture. Her main research interest is how subcultural organisation occurred during the transition from late socialism to a post-communist society. She places particular emphasis on doubly marginalised identities – those outside mainstream culture and also peripheral within

their subculture due to factors such as gender, ethnicity, or gender representation. Her recent project explores the relationship between subcultural ideologisation and the positive impact of subcultural belonging on mental health among Estonian youth in the 21st century, as well as generational memory about “old” music. In her doctoral dissertation she researched the construction of Armenian national ideologies.

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JAANA DAVIDJANTS on Tallinna Ülikooli Balti filmi, meedia ja kunstide instituudi külalisteadur. Tal on magistrikraad politoloogias Goldsmithsi Ülikoolist Londonis. Tema doktoritöö käsitleb sotsiaalmeediapõhist jutustamist konfliktidest ja sõjast. Hetkel on ta seotud uurimisprojektiga „Trust And Visuality: Everyday Digital Practices” (TRAVIS), mille fookuses on laiemad visuaalse kommunikatsiooni ja usaldusega seotud teemad.

JAANA DAVIDJANTS is a visiting researcher at the Baltic Film, Media and Arts School of Tallinn University in Estonia. She holds an MA degree in political science from Goldsmiths, University of London. Her PhD research concerned social media-based storytelling of conflict and war. Davidjants is currently working on the topic of digital visual trust as part of the “Trust and Visuality: Everyday Digital Practices” (TRAVIS) research project.

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POLINA HOLITSYNA is a doctoral researcher at the University of Tartu, Department of Ethnology, and the University of Turku, Department of Folkloristics. She holds a Master’s degree in Folkloristics and Applied Heritage Studies (University of Tartu). Her research focuses on subcultural studies, with a particular interest in extreme metal scenes in Finland, Estonia and Ukraine. Her doctoral dissertation topic is “Authenticity and Metal-Lore in Subcultural Dynamics and Boundary-Setting of the Extreme Metal Scenes in Finland, Estonia and Ukraine”.

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NATALIE METS on üle kümne aasta osalenud erinevat laadi ja eri alade projektides, töötades sellistes valdkondades nagu kultuur, ööelu, tehnoloogia ja haridus. Pärast kõrgkooli lõpetamist veetis ta aasta New Yorgis, töötades muusikaagentuuris Brooklynis. Mets on kohaliku kogukonnaraadio IDA Raadio üks asutajaid. 2021. aasta kohalikel valimistel kandideeris Mets Sotsiaaldemokraatliku Erakonna nimekirjas Tallinna ööelunõunikuks ning on selles ametis töötanud alates sama aasta detsembrist. 2024 lõpetas Mets magistriõpingud sotsioloogias, mille raames ta uuris klubikultuuri võimekust integreerida eesti ja vene keelt kõnelevaid inimesi.

NATALIE METS has participated in projects of various scale and nature for over ten years, working in fields such as culture, nightlife, technology, and education. After completing her higher education she spent a year in New York, working for a music agency in Brooklyn. Mets has also worked at several music festivals. She is one of the founders of the local community radio, IDA Raadio. In the 2021 local government elections, Mets was the Social Democratic Party’s candidate for Tallinn’s Night Mayor, a position she has held since December of the same year. In 2024, Natalie completed her Master’s studies in sociology, where she researched the capacity of club culture to integrate Estonian- and Russian-speaking people.

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MARJU RAJU, PhD, on Eesti Muusika- ja Teatriakadeemia muusikapsühholoogia teadur ning uurimiseetika nõustaja. Ta on ka Eesti Noorte Teaduste Akadeemia asutajaliige. Praegu osaleb Raju mitme uurimisrühma töös. Koos Brigitta Davidjantsiga uurib ta ühiskonnas marginaliseeritud rühmade vaimse heaolu ja muusikaharrastuste seoseid ning Allan Vurma töörühmas lauljate tekstiselguse küsimusi. Marju Raju on avaldanud artikleid rahvusvahelistes teadusajakirjades ning kirjutab tihti muusikapsühholoogiat populariseerivatel teemadel meedias. 2023. a. pälvis ta Eesti Teadusagentuuri teaduse populariseerija tiitli.

MARJU RAJU, PhD, is a researcher of music psychology and an advisor on research ethics integrity at the Estonian Academy of Music and Theatre. She is also a founding member of the Estonian Young Academy of Sciences. Raju is currently involved in the work of several research groups. Together with Brigitta Davidjants, she is working on the links between the mental well-being and musical activities of marginalised groups in society, and in Allan Vurma's research group she is investigating issues of sung text intelligibility among singers. Marju Raju has published a number of articles in international scientific journals and frequently writes on different topics popularising music psychology in the media. In 2023 she was awarded the title of Populariser of Science by the Estonian Research Council.

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KERLI KIRCH SCHNEIDER, PhD, on visuaalse osaluskommunikatsiooni dotsent Tallinna Ülikooli Balti filmi, meedia ja kunstide instituudis, kus ta lõpetas äsja järel doktorantuuri, juhtides uurimust naiselikkuse konstruktsioonist Eesti popmuusikas. Ta omandas doktorikraadi kommunikatsiooni valdkonnas Miami Ülikoolis. Tema teadustöö hõlmab meedia- ja kultuuriuuringuid, visuaalkommunikatsiooni, (postsotsialistlikke) soouuringuid ja multimeedia uuringuid.

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KATRIN TIIDENBERG is Professor of Participatory Culture at the Baltic Film, Media and Arts School of Tallinn University, Estonia. She is the author and editor of several books on social media, digital visual cultures and digital research methods, including most recently *Tumblr* (2021, co-authored by Natalie Ann Hendry and Crystal Abidin). She is currently the lead researcher in an international research project on visual digital trust (TRAVIS) as well as working on participatory well-being in the newly-founded Estonian Centre of Excellence of Well-Being Sciences ESTWELL. Her research interests span social media, digital cultures, networked visibility, internet governance, and self-care. More info at: <https://katrin-tiidenberg.com/>.

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