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ANALYSING CONTRASTING REPRESENTATIONS OF
FOLKLORE IN THE CZECH REPUBLIC THROUGH THE
LENS OF PARTICIPATORY MOVEMENTS OF
TRADITIONAL MUSIC

Master's Thesis

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Budapest and Prague, 2021

Hereby I declare that I worked out this thesis independently, using only the listed resources and literature, and I did not present it to obtain another academic degree.

Prague, 07. 07. 2021

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ABSTRACT:

This paper combines theoretical questions with empirical research to bring to light the vitality of folk processes in the urban modern world. The fieldwork focuses on participatory forms of traditional music. With the help of the interviews I conducted, this paper seeks (to explain) the participants' motivations for their enactment of folklore. We analyse the musicians' motivations, as well as the functions their practice of folklore fulfils, while putting the emphasis on the living dynamic and transformative creative processes of tradition. We concentrate more on the functions and forms of their enactment of folklore rather than on the aesthetic material or folklore itself. What needs do participatory forms of folklore express, especially in our urban modern world?

KEYWORDS:

Folklore, ethnomusicology, anthropology of music, tradition, authenticity

ABSTRAKT:

Analýza kontrastních reprezentací folklóru v České Republice v perspektivě participativního hnutí v lidové hudbě.

Tato diplomová práce se skládá z teoretických otázek a empirického výzkumu, které se zaměřují na vitalitu folklóru v urbanizovaném moderním světě. Práce se zabývá dnešními formami zapojení folklórní hudby. Za pomoci rozhovorů jsem se snažila osvětlit motivace, kterou respondenti k jejich působení ve folklóru využívají. Společně jsme analyzovali hlavní podněty hudebníků a význam a charakter jejich naplnění ve folklóru s důrazem na proměnu dynamiky života lidí a kreativních procesů tradic. Výzkum se spíše než na estetický materiál folklóru zaměřuje na funkce a podoby stimulů respondentů. Proč stále existuje potřeba folklóru v dnešním urbanizovaném moderním světě?

KLÍČOVÁ SLOVA:

Folklor, etnomuzikologie, hudební antropologie, tradice, autenticita

FRENCH SUMMARY

Ce mémoire propose de remettre en question les études folkloristiques traditionnelles qui auraient tendance à considérer que le folklore est en voie de disparition. Bien que les idées aient évolué depuis les débuts de la discipline et sa proche association avec le nationalisme romantique du XIX^{ème} siècle, on associe encore de nos jours le folklore à des milieux surtout ruraux et paysans, en voie d'extinction et menacé par la modernisation. À l'aide d'entretiens conduits auprès de neuf musiciens du champ d'étude, nous questionnons ici la persistance et la vitalité des processus traditionnels dans un contexte urbain et moderne, à travers l'étude des mouvements de musique participative, qui est définie par Thomas Turino (2008) comme ouverte à tous ceux qui souhaiteraient s'y joindre, plus spontanée car peu ou pas planifiée, et qui est jouée pour son propre plaisir (et non pour une audience extérieure). Les entretiens mettent en lumière les raisons et les motivations des participants vis-à-vis de leur pratique et de leur passion pour la musique traditionnelle. Trois notions générales ont émergé de cette question de recherche, et ont servi à structurer notre seconde partie empirique. La première s'articule sur la dimension nationale, régionale ou locale de la pratique du folklore, motivée par exemple par une certaine fierté culturelle, et la mobilisation d'un passé sûrement idéalisé. La deuxième s'intéresse à la fonction sociale primordiale du folklore, sur la volonté des participants de recréer une communauté aux fortes valeurs partagées, exprimant une certaine conception du monde. La troisième, quant à elle, discute de la motivation esthétique plus intrinsèque à l'expression du folklore, un pur plaisir des qualités musicales qui lui sont propres, auxquelles s'ajoute la dimension participative. Nous abordons des sujets tels que le difficile terme d'authenticité et sa définition pour les participants, ou des questions concernant l'innovation dans la tradition. Ainsi, tout au long de cette recherche, nous exposons les dynamiques de la musique traditionnelle dans un contexte urbain et moderne, ce qui aboutit, selon nous, à rompre avec les restes de l'idéologie nationale romantique et à démontrer la vivacité de la musique traditionnelle, considérant sa pratique, surtout au travers de ses formes participatives comme une expérience vivante et spontanée, ce que nous définissons en conclusion comme la 'véritable' authenticité.

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PART 1: HISTORICAL AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

INTRODUCTION

What images appear in our heads when we think about folklore? When I came to the Czech Republic, I began to discover a way of presenting folklore that challenged my pre-conceptions, which were, I have to admit, quite negative in the sense that I saw folklore as something rather conservative, unchanged and that had to remain untouched – in order to preserve its supposed ‘authenticity’.

Indeed, I attended events where people from various different generations – yet with a surprisingly important proportion of young adults – were dancing and playing traditional music together, in casual outfits, just for their pleasure, and teaching the tunes, the lyrics or the steps to anybody interested. And not only was this participatory approach a radically different approach to my conception of heritage preservation (transforming it into something dynamic and bottom-up – instead of institutional and top down), but it is an approach that goes beyond the national theme that usually encapsulates folklore. Especially in music, how could one possibly strictly separate influences from neighbouring countries, minorities of a given country, or merely from the personal interpretation of an artist? All this creates a very intricate vision of folklore, where every element is closely intertwined to the others, making it impossible to speak about ‘authentic national folklore’, and thus expressing the need to reconsider the static and conservative definition of folklore we inherited from Romantic ideology and turn it into something more fluid, dynamic and participatory, that can transform.

Generally speaking, the participatory approach is a tendency that is becoming increasingly popular internationally, and that is also supported by official heritage institutions such as UNESCO¹. An aspect that will further have to be considered (maybe through an internship) relates to the characteristics and particularities of those participatory movements from the point of view of official institutions. The impact of participation concerning the preservation of heritage – both on the community and its heritage would be an interesting question. The participatory movements of traditional music have emerged in many European countries since the early 1970s. They can be considered as part of the general youth movement of the times, as part of the rebellion against the official culture and the emergence of contra-cultures and

¹ Dan Bernfeld, *Un nouvel enjeu : la participation. Aspects du mouvement participatif en Afrique, en Asie, aux Etats-Unis d’Amérique et en Europe*, Unesco 1983.

alternative life-styles², and can also be inscribed within the general folk revival that took place in particular in Europe and in North America. In Central Europe, the Hungarian model of the *Táncház* (dancing house) movement was a significant inspiration for neighbouring countries: Tanečný Dom in Slovakia, Dom Tanca in Poland... The *Táncház* movement was officially born in Budapest in the early 1970s. It consists in the recreation or revival (in a living way) of Hungarian traditional dances accompanied by live music, with an educational purpose, to spread and teach the tradition further, in its ‘original’ form and function. Indeed, dancing is taught (by observation and imitation) at the *Táncház* at the beginning of the event, but one can also ask the ‘instructor’ or anybody else around for the steps during the event. The same process occurs for music: songs are taught, and jamming usually follows the ‘official’ dancing concert. The “*Táncház* method: a Hungarian model for the transmission of intangible cultural heritage” was inscribed in 2011 on UNESCO’s Register of Good Safeguarding Practices. The *balfolk* movement is very similar to the ‘dancing houses’ movement regarding the participatory aspect and the overall progression of dancing and musical activities throughout the evening. It is a general term used to characterise a movement that started in the 1970s in France when traditional dances (mostly from different regions of France, but also from Flanders, Wallonia or Sweden for example) were rediscovered and re-danced accompanied by traditional music played live, for the participants to enjoy above all. They are also typically started by a workshop, open to all, to learn a new dance or new steps.

Those participatory (revival) movements of folk music were mostly initiated by a generation born after the Second World War, and who had always lived in an urban context. Simply put, this youth became interested in the preservation of folk forms that were being institutionalised and transformed into cultural heritage in museums and other official institutions. Helped by increased revenues, they could also travel to the countryside to experience the ‘living folk culture’ they were so much interested in, and advocated for this experience of folk culture in the urban context³. As a response to the untouched and fixed form of folklore, they encouraged a participatory approach and contributed to the folk revival and the creation of dancing houses and *balfolk* events. Indeed, they organise events where everybody can participate, whatever their level or experience.

² Stuart Hall and Tony Jefferson, *Resistance through Rituals: Youth Subcultures in Post-War Britain*, The Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies, University of Birmingham 1976.

³ Mary Taylor, *19th and 20th century historical and institutional precedents of the Hungarian Dance Movement*, The Institute of Ethnology of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences and the Hungarian Heritage House 2004.

Thus, this research project intends to be a case study based on fieldwork among those participatory movements of traditional music in an urban context such as Prague. Through interviews and participatory observation, I will examine who the participants and the organisers are, question their motivations and learn more about their musical background, describe their costumes – or their lack of costumes, listen to what kind of music they are playing, and with what instruments.

Throughout this research project, I draw inspiration from Thomas Turino's work and his distinction between the participatory form and the presentational form of a given folk music performance. Even though we must keep in mind that those are two 'ideal types' of performance, we can draw some lines of definition. The presentational form would be presented for a public, or in other words for an external human audience with a clear divide between the performers and this audience. It would rather be presented in an organised effort, with a lot of pre-planning and/or rehearsing. In a word, it is conceived as a product while the participatory form rather performs as a process. Unlike the presentational folk music performance, which tends to be closed, i.e., known to the performers in advance, the participatory form evolves rather within predictable structures (it is more cyclical and repetitive) which allows it to be open to everybody who would like to join, thus blurring the division between the audience and the artist. In this way it is more spontaneous and most importantly performed for one's own pleasure first⁴.

Throughout this research project, I also aim to examine the links between those two forms, as people in participatory movements often have a link with the presentational form through professional groups or ensembles since they are an important source of income. In the same way, it could be interesting to take a closer look at the creative processes behind the staged products of the presentational groups and to follow for example a professional ensemble in their rehearsals. Indeed, those two forms are once again ideal types in the Weberian sense, and the study of their relationship, juxtaposition, interplay and cooperation would be as interesting as a strict comparison between them.

Thus, another question of this research project is to picture the representation that participatory movements put forward in comparison to the image given by the presentational form (i.e., mostly professional groups performing onstage), which they also often display for

⁴ Thomas Turino, *Music as Social Life: the Politics of Participation*, Chicago and London: the University of Chicago Press 2008.

tourists, leading to threats of touristification, commodification, over-commercialisation, theatricification, objectification, or de-contextualisation.

Against the economic, commercial and touristic aspect that folk music can endorse, the participatory movements oppose and try to recreate another function of folk music – the social one, considered as its ‘original’ one. Indeed, participatory movements are (consciously or not) recreating a sense of community. Those movements are truly a very special world, a kind of microcosm with special links and important interactions. Also, they put forward and teach important values such as solidarity, respect, self-respect and humility. Another question raised by this research project concerns this social function of folk music, and to consider what those participatory movements express, and, especially in the urban context, what needs they answer and “why such needs came to be felt, in terms of changing societies in changing historical situations”.⁵

Actually, folklore enacted in one’s everyday life and not really conscious or aware of itself as the object of folklore is considered to have disappeared with modernisation. To take the words of Joseph Grim Feinberg, “it could be said that folklore comes into existence through a process of self-destruction: real folklore is not yet recognised as folklore, but when folklore becomes recognised as folklore, it ceases to be the real thing. When folklore enters public awareness it arouses suspicion that the real thing is gone or will soon be gone”.⁶ Here two important notions/perspectives come into play in order to conduct ethnographic research on folk music in the present day: the concept of authenticity and the idea of modernity. These perspectives will be developed in the two following sections.

⁵ Eric Hobsbawm, *Mass Producing Traditions: Europe, 1870-1914*, in Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger (eds.), *The Invention of Tradition*, Cambridge University Press 1983, 307.

⁶ Joseph Grim Feinberg, *The Paradox of Authenticity: Folklore Performance in Post-Communist Slovakia*, University of Wisconsin Press 2018, 73.

The ‘Authenticity Paradox’

Authenticity is a very contradictory notion in itself. Joseph Grim Feinberg speaks about the ‘authenticity paradox’ and Ahmed Skounti about the ‘authentic illusion’ to express the irrelevancy of using it as a definition marker, especially when applied to folklore or Intangible Cultural Heritage [ICH]. Indeed, any mention of the word was completely avoided in the 2003 Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage, which emphasises instead the fact that ICH is being “constantly recreated by communities and groups in response to their environment, their interaction with nature and their history, and provides them with a sense of identity and continuity”. I will continue in this sense by quoting Henry Spiller: “what qualifies music as traditional is not how old it is, but rather how well it teaches, reinforces, and creates the social values of its producers and consumers. Traditional music is not something that is stuck in the past; it grows and changes, just as the people who listen to it grow and change, just as the values they share with those close to them change (albeit a bit more slowly). Truly traditional music, then, exploits new resources, acknowledges new requirements, and responds to new situations. It provides a place for people to try out new approaches to their existing values, to experiment with new ideas, and to synthesize the new with the old.”⁷ We will adopt these conception against the fixed notion of authenticity, which is also extensively used for commercial purposes.

Under official attention, the practices are transformed, and this is the “irony of UNESCO’s interest in ICH”⁸. Folklore, especially since the recent and massive wave of ‘heritagisation’ now has full consciousness of itself, is aware of itself as the object of great solicitude (for economic, touristic, political, representative, identification, recognition or other aims), thus altering practices compared to when they were “left to their own fate, transformed or left to disappear”: “their survival depends on sacrificing something of what contributes to their supposed authenticity”⁹.

Our widespread notion of authenticity is conceived as something ancient and static inscribing itself in the 19th century romantic discourse of this vanishing vision of folklore. On the

⁷ Henry Spiller, *Focus: Gamelan Music of Indonesia*, Routledge 2008, 4.

⁸ Helaine Silverman, *Heritage and Authenticity*, in: Emma Waterton, Steve Watson (eds.), *The Palgrave Handbook of Heritage Research*, Palgrave MacMillan 2015, 75.

⁹ Ahmed Skounti, *The Authentic Illusion: Humanity’s Intangible Cultural Heritage, The Moroccan Experience*, in: Laurajane Smith, Natsuko Akagawa (eds.), *Intangible Heritage*, Routledge, London 2008, 76.

contrary, the participatory movements encourage its creative transformation. For example, some of them also advocate the incorporation of folk culture in everyday life, bringing folklore down the stage. For example, by not necessarily wearing a folk dress to perform, or to wear it for daily activities – in other words to stop sacralising it as something untouchable and preserving it as immaculate and only for performances directed towards external audiences. Interesting questions in this sense would concern the discourse of the participants and the organisers regarding the participatory movements they are taking part in: especially in our modern urban context, do they endorse a discourse of authenticity or accuracy? Of the idea of going ‘back to the sources’? How do they view the ‘other camp’, i.e., presentational groups or performances and vice versa?

This paragraph only intended to be an extremely brief overview of the authenticity paradox/ authentic illusion and to question a concept often applied to ICH as a required characteristic. However, I will not focus on this concept and angle during the research in order to avoid getting lost in theoretical paradoxes. During the fieldwork that will follow, I will rather ask the musicians, as well as the dancers and the listeners about their definition of authenticity concerning their performance: do they consider and define it as authentic?

FOLK MUSIC AND MODERNITY

Now, this section will try to portray how folk music was transformed by processes of modernisation. First, there are a few points that need to be clarified regarding conceptions of folklore and folklore studies. The dominant stereotyped vision of folklore that still largely influences the field nowadays came into being with the Romantic ideology of the 19th century. Indeed, the Romantic movement essentially promoted a “cult of the noble savage whom civilisation threatened to destroy”¹⁰, and the remnants of this ideology led to a dilemma to accept the very existence of ‘authentic’ folk music in our modern world.

In this way, it is true that processes of modernisation are generally viewed negatively, and this is part of the official discourse about heritage. For example, the ICH UNESCO website also exposes the threats faced by intangible cultural heritage, and blames processes of modernisation for the loss of community and individual integration, among many others. We often hear a discourse idealising folklore: disappearing under the impulse of negative modernisation forces, standardized by mass medias threatening traditions with extinction, thus “combining the romance of a primitive people and the charm of an endangered species”¹¹. This widely held survivalist belief considers that folklore studies only deal with a faded past. Folklorists were believed to have to go and ‘save’ folk music or dance in remote villages, where the last bearers of ‘primitive culture’ would pass it on with their last breaths. To take the words of Antonio Gramsci, we generally see folklore as a picturesque element, instead of as conceptions of world and life.

The objective here is not to depict modernisation as a negative force endangering folklore. On the contrary, my whole research project stems from the idea that folk music is not something old and static from the past but rather something connecting, intermingling, overlapping. Indeed, it grows and changes, alongside changing contexts. And because it always responds to new situations, folk music will rather be defined here as being continuously transformed and as a merging of different influences in a world in flux. However, “the notion that folklore is constantly being recreated is negated by the widely held survivalist belief that ‘the golden age of folklore occurred in the past’, and that ‘the oldest, original version of an item of folklore

¹⁰ Hugh Trevor-Roper, *The Highland Tradition of Scotland*, in Eric Hobsbawm, Terence Ranger (eds.), *The Invention of Tradition*, Cambridge University Press 1983, 25.

¹¹ Hugh Trevor-Roper, *The Highland Tradition of Scotland*, 25.

was the best, fullest or most complete one.’ ”¹²

The case study I will further develop through field work and empirical analysis will especially focus on folk music in the urban context of our modern world. At first sight, this would be in opposition to our primary conservative definition of folklore based on the idea that folk music is and can only be rural. This essay wants to serve as another introductory aspect for my case study: analysing the most significant processes of transformations of folk music through modernity. By processes of modernisation, I mean here three general characteristics or sub-processes which will also be my sub-chapters: urbanisation, nation-making and commodification.

Urbanisation

First, the rapid urbanisation that came about with modernisation changed the way we consider isolation – and the isolation of the community was thought to be necessary for the preservation of one’s heritage. Indeed, we cannot think of societies as closed totalities or immutable ensembles. Such societies (with absolutely no outside contact, completely closed on themselves and their ‘pure’ identity, populated by individuals sharing exactly the same representations and values, unable to act upon themselves or on the relationships they nurture between themselves or with nature) actually never existed.¹³

However, everything accelerated in the last decades: the world in which we live in is highly mobile and connected. Influences from geographically far-flung places of the world are now more rapidly and easily accessible, with the help of improved technical conditions of transport and communication, thus making impossible and irrelevant the idealised commonplace speech of a ‘pure’ identity of a preserved community.

Urbanisation and the growing ubiquity of human mobility deeply affected rural communities and weakened their heritage transmission. For example, more and more people started moving to the city, especially for work opportunities. But, although the city and its inherent division of labour generates the necessity to be dependent on the complementary activity of others, it also creates a structure of the highest impersonality, as practically everything is produced for

¹² Stephen Stern, *Ethnic Folklore and the Folklore of Ethnicity*, Western Folklore, Vol. 36, No.1, Studies in Folklore and Ethnicity, January 1977, 12.

¹³ Maurice Godelier, *Au fondement des Sociétés Humaines : ce que nous apprend l’Anthropologie*, Editions Albin Michel 2007, 26.

the market and the money economy rather than for the community. To take the words of Georg Simmel, the city establishes a sphere of indifference, where individuals have of course a high degree of personal freedom because they are not under narrow group cohesion or supervision, but where they would experience a higher degree of loneliness because of the common metropolitan *blasé* attitude¹⁴.

Another characteristic of modernity that will have to be further analysed is the structural transformation of the public sphere, following the work of Jürgen Habermas. Indeed, the public and the private sphere increasingly distinguished themselves from each other, giving the private – and the individual – more and more space at the expense of the collective and its shared values.

Thus, the way folk music is transmitted changed with modernisation. But as folk music was also spreading and evolving (indeed, free arrangements are made, modern components are integrated such as experimental sonorities), some people equated that evolution from an isolated to a cosmopolitan context with the loss of folk music's specific traits. What was formerly mainly an oral phenomenon, knowledge transmitted from generation to generation within the community became more and more written. Indeed, the documentation work and collecting initiated at the time of Romanticism established (albeit unwittingly) a 'correct version' of folk music. The objects of technological innovation – that can be considered as harbingers of modernity - enabled the actors of the burgeoning field of ethnomusicology to record what they were witnessing. Thanks to their huge work and to technologies, many tunes that could have been lost are archived or still living and being spread. However, the very fact of making records or publishing collections created a fixed version and *de facto* a correct interpretation of the tune. (For example, in terms of style, musicians often try to imitate what they hear on the record (in the same way as they would imitate their teacher or their uncle), but on a much wider-reaching scale of communication, converging with the idea of a uniform global culture destroying local traditions.) On the contrary, the folk music I would like to focus on while conducting field work within participatory movements of traditional music is spontaneous, creative, not so much rehearsed or planned, with a lot of improvisation and 'looseness' (with wide tunings and timings, loose beginnings and endings...) In this way, the folk music of the participatory movements at the heart of my research is conceived more as a process than as a fixed product¹⁵. My case study will attempt to analyse those (participatory)

¹⁴ Georg Simmel, *The Metropolis and Mental Life*, 1903.

¹⁵ Thomas Turino, *Music as Social Life: The Politics of Participation*, Chicago and London: the University of Chicago Press 2008.

forms of folk music in the urban context, and show that they recreate the ‘original’ function of folk music: its social dimension. Nevertheless, thinking in terms of original function, oral transmission, ruralness or isolation to define folk music is not relevant or applicable to our modern urbanised world¹⁶. In fact, it is precisely what contributes to maintaining this dominant conservative definition of folk music we hold and the numerous pointless attempts to isolate the ‘pure’ form of ‘truly authentic’ folk music.

Nation-building

The birth and rise of nation states can be considered as another important characteristic of historical modernity. Indeed, during the long 19th century, many nations became aware of the political and cultural oppression they had undergone over the past centuries. In the case of the Czech lands, this ‘national awakening’ took place in the context of the hegemony of the Austrian empire. Before the Czech nation emerged as an independent state, folk music helped to assert its distinctive character. After centuries of German domination, it contributed to expressing specific characteristics of the nation considered to be ‘objective’, thus demonstrating the fact that the Czech nation existed in its own right, even at a time when it was not yet independent. This claim was extensively cited by the ‘awakeners’, who consciously used folk music as a tool for cohesion and in order to shape the nation’s image.¹⁷ Thus, those nations “striving towards nationalism” needed their national folk song collections. Indeed, national folk song collections often appear at historically ‘critical’ moments, when nations need to define or redefine themselves. To do so, music is made national, and “used to claim the pre-existence of the modern nation”. Thus, when the existence of the nation is contested, and needs to be strengthened from within, common musical traditions are usually put forward, alongside local dialects and regional traditions, to demonstrate the ancient origins of the nation and establish continuity with the past¹⁸. The central aspect of the construction of the nation, its people and its folklore will be further developed in a subsequent historical chapter.

The National Revival (or *Národní obrození*) grew very vigorously in Czechoslovakia from the 1830s onwards. Folk song collecting coincides exactly with this impetus. For example, the

¹⁶ Philip Bohlman, *The Study of Folk Music in the Modern World*, Indiana University Press 1988, 139.

¹⁷ Philip Bohlman, *The Music of European Nationalism: Cultural Identity and Modern History*, ABC-CLIO Inc., Santa Barbara, California 2004, chapter 3.

¹⁸ Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger, *The Invention of Tradition*, Cambridge University Press 1983.

representative of Romanticism Karel Jaromír Erben carried out major collections in two volumes, in 1842 and 1845, entitled *Písňe národní v Čechách* (National Songs in Bohemia), as well as the Czech Folk Songs and Nursery Rhymes (*Prostonárodní české písňe a říkadla*) in 1863, towards the end of his life. The other well-known collector František Sušil published in 1835 his *Moravské národní písňe* (Moravian National Songs), consisting of more than 2,000 songs.

Likewise, the joint work of Leoš Janáček and František Bartoš led to the creation of the *Bouquet of Moravian Folk Songs* in 1890 (*Kytice z národních písni moravských*) and the collection of the *Newly Collected Moravian Folk Songs* (*Národní písňe moravské v nově nasbírané*) in 1901. It is similarly worth mentioning the collection made by Otakar Hostinský in 1906, entitled *Česká světská píseň lidová*, even though the list could be extended on indefinitely.

Thus, we can say that folk music was discovered for the purpose of nation making, and extensively used in this way. Philip Bohlman goes so far as to say that “folk musics are creations of the modern nationalistic imagination, and yet various groups stand ready to argue the reality and ancient roots of such musics”¹⁹. Indeed, before folk music was rediscovered and accompanied by the major collecting impulse, it was not conscious of itself being the object of folklore and was merely enacted in everyday lives. Modernisation, with the help of technological innovations and new invented concepts transformed folklore into an object of study and a powerful tool for the construction of identity. To take the words of Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, “the possession of heritage—as opposed to the way of life that heritage safeguards—is an instrument of modernization and mark of modernity”²⁰. In other words, having a heritage is a characteristic of modernity and is different from that heritage. Under the banner of ‘safeguarding’ a recently discovered intangible heritage, the object being safeguarded was transformed. Once again, this is what can be considered as the authenticity paradox and has been the subject of extensive literature that was briefly reviewed in an earlier section.

To sum up, this paragraph intended to show how a modern invention, i.e., the secular nation-state, distorted folk music and manipulated it for its nationalistic purposes. In order to do so, it

¹⁹ Philip Bohlman, *The Study of Folk Music in the Modern World*, Indiana University Press 1988, 127.

²⁰ Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, *World Heritage and Cultural Economics*, in Karp, Ivan, Kratz, Corinne, Szwaja, Lynn, Ybarra-Frausto, Tomas (eds.), *Museum Frictions: Public Cultures/ Global Transformations* 2006, 19.

put forward the unity of a big ensemble, or an imagined community²¹, sometimes at the expense of some particular local characteristics. Indeed, local differences can easily be ignored to foster the unity of the political nation as a whole, as various levels – the local, regional and national – can be blended together. Sometimes the emphasis is also placed on regional characteristics and their distinctiveness: in the Czech lands we can cite the example of the Slovácko or the Chodsko regions. Yet, the “national awakeners” (*národní buditelé*) were always convinced about the nation – region hierarchy. The regional specifics and identity were accepted but only as subordinated to/part of the national unit. Throughout this period, technology was at the service of the revival – especially through printing and publishing, and in the spreading of folk music. As emphasised by Peter Judson, “clearly several elements of modernity had helped to produce the nationalist movements, including the rise of literacy, constitutional rule, infrastructural improvements, and mass politics”, while the process of nationalism was viewed as a “necessary component of a society’s achievement of modernity”²².

Commodification

To analyse the present form of folklore in the urban world, the concepts of commodification and institutionalisation (as essential parts of modernisation) need to be stressed here. Indeed, like everything else in our money economy, folk music acquired a monetary value. In his book *La Société du Spectacle*, Guy Debord radically criticises commodities and their domination upon our lives, and considers them as a particular form of the alienation coming from our consumption society: “all that once was directly lived has become mere representation”²³, or in other words “a crisis of representation which theorists find to be characteristic of postmodernity”²⁴. Applied to folk music, this means that often, it is not played for one’s pleasure anymore, but rather and solely for an audience and for profit. And once again, this is what the participatory movements oppose while promoting a fun way of playing, open to everybody willing to join in. Also, this is why those movements advocate the incorporation of folklore in everyday life: for its social aspect and the important values it

²¹ Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origins and Spread of Nationalism*, Verso, London 1983.

²² Pieter M. Judson, *Constructing Nationalities in East Central Europe*, Berghahn Books 2005, 4.

²³ Guy Debord, *La Société du Spectacle*, Editions Buchet-Chastel, Paris 1967, thesis 1, chapter 1.

²⁴ Gerald E. Warshaver, *On Postmodern Folklore*, in “Western Folklore”, Vol. 50, No. 3, pp. 219-229, 1991, 224.

teaches and also in order to become extremely familiar with the internal structure of folk music and absorb its language, to acquire “folk dance [and music] as a mother tongue”,²⁵ against the culture industry of our modern world. Culture industry is a concept developed by Max Horkheimer and Theodor Adorno to express a culture that does not arise spontaneously from the masses themselves, but is imposed on them from the top²⁶. It transforms culture into something created artificially and operates like an industry, i.e., motivated mostly by profit and producing standardised goods. It is also important to mention here the outcomes of technological innovations on the instruments of folk music: instruments that were previously handmade and personalised started to be mass produced and reproduced. Following the point of view of Walter Benjamin in his 1935 book *The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction*, the musical instrument thus loses its uniqueness and more importantly its aura. However, new instruments made their appearance (influenced by the diversity of the world becoming more accessible) and became included in the traditional repertoire (such as the accordion or the clarinet). And the *Moravské dechové kapely* (Moravian brass bands) helped folklore to survive – even if they are considered to be an inauthentic version of folklore.

To frame my case study in already existing theories, it is useful to bring up approaches from Media Studies and the works of Henry Jenkins on participatory culture. Here, it is conceived as an opposing concept to consumer culture. Broadly speaking, it increases opportunities for individuals (not designated as passive consumers or purely receptive audiences any longer, but as active participants or producers) and encourages them to carry out more creative and meaningful actions, especially thanks to the means provided by the technologies (the internet and the social medias)²⁷. Jenkins defines participatory culture with five basic points: relatively low barriers to artistic expression and civic engagement, strong support for creating and sharing one's creations with others, some type of informal mentorship whereby what is known by the most experienced is passed along to novices and as a place where members believe that their contributions matter and feel some degree of social connection with one another (at the least they care what other people think about what they have created)²⁸. And, in order to

²⁵ Mary Taylor, *Does Folk Dancing Make Hungarians? Táncház, Folk Dance as Mother Tongue, and Folk National Cultivation*, Hungarian Studies September 2008.

²⁶ Max Horkheimer and Theodor Adorno, *The Dialectics of Enlightenment*, 1947, and trans. Herder and Herder, New York, 1972.

²⁷ Henry Jenkins, Danah Boyd, Mizuko Ito, *Participatory Culture in a Networked Era: a Conversation on Youth, Learning, Commerce and Politics*, Cambridge 2015.

²⁸ Henry Jenkins, *Confronting the Challenges of Participatory Culture: Media Education for the 21st century (Part one)*.

exemplify the theory, the modest amount of empirical data I have collected while attending participatory events showed me that most of those happenings were introduced by small dance workshops or initiation sessions before the beginning of the actual evening, while accompanied by live music. Then, all members, amateurs and regulars, can contribute – or not, but it is important for the organisers to make sure that everybody present feels that they can join if they feel like it.

On the contrary, commodification has developed and promoted a whole industry where folk music is rather played for profit, for an external audience or for tourists, depriving it of its communal, entertaining and social function. Indeed, many musicians from folk group ensembles are paid by external people for what they are doing, and this consists in the most important part of their revenue. Indeed, their activity in participatory movements (to which they are often linked) is still mostly remains for their own pleasure, as a non-commercial activity. However, the professionalization of the musicians (as well as the link between their involvement in presentational and participatory forms of folk music and dance) is an important aspect that will have to be further investigated throughout this research.

Professionalization can occur as a direct consequence of the institutionalisation of folk music. For example, some conservatories have a folk or traditional music section. The collections and recordings of folk music developed methods to learn the ‘correct’ way of playing. Virtuosity plays an important role here, becoming an institutionalised requirement, instead of being a result, pushed to its extreme, of the absorption of the language of folk music.

To take the words of Valdimar Tr. Hafstein, “Folklorization threatens intangible heritage with objectification and, once objectified, with commodification, exoticizing heritage for consumption by outsiders and alienating it from the practicing community, or at least transforming the community’s relation to its practices”²⁹. Indeed, the audience may be completely external to what the performer is doing. Folklore has acquired an interesting tourism value: folklore patterns are being used for advertising commercial products, folklore is exposed as a showcase item for tourists willing to discover the ‘authentic traditional performance’ of a given place. From the point of view of the community and participatory movements, this is self-contradictory and only considered as a performative heritage, displayed for tourists and an income. Indeed, how could we possibly advertise supposedly living folklore on stage, and in impeccable traditional dress, worn solely for those staged

²⁹ Valdimar Tr. Hafstein, *Intangible Heritage as a Festival; or, Folklorization Revisited*, in “Journal of American Folklore” 131, 2018, 134.

representations? On the ICH UNESCO website, we can read about the risks of theatrification, which is defined as “the practice of intangible heritage outside its usual context, especially on stage or at festivals, possibly leading to reduction of repertoire, diminishing participation and loss of significance”. Moreover, in a context of broad external diffusion (especially with the mass medias), folk music can often be ‘westernised’, i.e., arranged so as to fit the model of classical western harmonies – instead of polyphonies deemed dissonant to our classical trained ears (that are, for example, often typical in female choirs).

To conclude this chapter, modernity is commonly defined by the rapid urbanisation, the rise of nation states and the accelerated communication it engendered. The consequences of modernisation that I tried to analyse throughout this essay created a general nostalgia for pre-modernisation, still very palpable in the field of folklore studies. And, because intangible heritage feels threatened by those processes of modernisation (industrialisation, consumption, tourism, nationalism...), the heritage community is expected to protect its threatened unconscious rituals, such as folk music and dance. Consequently, those rituals are transformed and become aware of themselves, as they are reconstructed to be protected and/or to foster a sense of belonging or the creation of an identity. However, we must not forget that we define folk music as a process of creative transformation and not as a set or closed ensemble. As stated by Michael Bakan, “Globalization, mass media communications, the internet, multinational entertainment industry corporations, easy access to international travel, and other forces of modernity often make it difficult, if not impossible, to draw a clear line in the sand distinguishing one culture from another, musically or otherwise”³⁰. Although traditional music establishes a *de facto* continuity with the past and is deeply entrenched in one’s national imagination, it is deeply transformed by the processes of modernisation: the mobility and the interconnectivity of the world in which we live allowed folk music to be enriched by various influences. Beyond the negative views regarding modernisation as an endangering force for a disappearing folklore, we prefer to consider folklore as permanently evolving and transforming. And in contradiction with the conservative theories in folklore studies as well as in social studies, we must not forget the diversity that modernisation has cultivated in folk music.

³⁰ Michael Bakan, *World Music: Traditions and Transformations*, McGraw-Hill 2007, 10.

Thus, ensuing from those transformations brought up by the processes of modernisation, we can witness in our modern world and especially in the urban context an “affective yearning for a community with a collective memory, a longing for continuity in a fragmented world”³¹, a kind of nostalgia for pre-modernisation (a period we never experienced) building on an imagined and idealised notion of rural community and cohesion. “There is a perception that as a result of society’s industrialisation and secularisation beginning in the 19th century, a certain void of social and spiritual meaning has opened up”³². This void can thus be easily politically manipulated for different aims: legitimization of power, obedience to authority, social cohesion... Also, the structures of power can easily recreate or/and invent traditions, as an official political production of practices to ensure a sense of continuity. The following chapter will thus try to depict the political uses of folk music in two different contexts where the support of folk music was conscious and deliberate, “undertaken by institutions with political purposes in mind”³³.

³¹ Svetlana Boym, *Nostalgia and its Discontents*, The Hedgehog Review, vol. 9, no. 2, 2007, 10.

³² Svetlana Boym, *Nostalgia*, 14.

³³ Eric Hobsbawm, *Mass Producing Traditions: Europe, 1870-1914*, in Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger (eds.), *The Invention of Tradition*, Cambridge University Press 1983.

POLITICAL USES OF FOLK MUSIC...

We have defined folk music and tradition in general as a dynamic process of creative transformation that sustains and nurtures a continuity with the past³⁴. In this chapter, the object of analysis will rather be the use of folklore, or the way it is officially displayed – what is often called folklorism. The example of totalitarian regimes is patent but it is nothing new concerning the appropriation or the invention of traditions: since the 18th century, folklore has been widely used in Europe for political and other representative aims. I would like to take a look at the use of folk music for clearly announced political aims in two large and ‘ideal type’ periods which experienced a massive folk revival and saw the flourishing/proliferation/backing of traditional forms of expression. First, in the context of the Czech National Revival of the mid to late 19th century up until the independence of Czechoslovakia in 1918; then, during the Communist totalitarian regime implemented from 1948 to 1989. For both contexts, the same questions concerning the use, misuse and appropriation of folk music can be asked. The shifting meaning of the ‘People’ will also be analysed, alongside different issues concerning identification, national cohesiveness and national identity.

This chapter will function as a historical introduction that will exemplify the political function of folk music. In contrast, the case study of participatory movements of folk music that I will develop further in the second part of the thesis will rather be concerned with showing that despite the close historical ties of folklore with national identity and political instrumentalisation, present-day movements are not overly concerned with the national or ethnic dimension that prevailed at the time of the Czech National Revival, nor with the social class dimension of the Communist regime. As a matter of fact, they claim to be apolitical, reject the political function of folklore, its ideological and national character and emphasise instead its social function. The important aspects stressed by the movements are specifically their participative aspect, the fact that they recreate a community or teach people important values.

³⁴ Michael Bakan, *World Music: Traditions and Transformations*, McGraw-Hill 2007, 29.

...At the time of the Czech National Revival

Folklore has always been connected to the discourse and the development of the nation. This first part will focus on its political instrumentalisation for the purpose of nation building. Indeed, the long 19th century witnessed a widespread phenomenon of the construction or invention of nations. In the not yet born Czechoslovakia, this nationalistic impulse came as a result of the awareness of being subjected to the hegemony of the Austrian Empire. The National Revival (or Národní obrození) thus started to mushroom from the first part of the 19th century, as a response to the Germanisation imposed by a highly centralised empire. Simply put, resistance to this political as well as cultural domination developed through for example claims for equal status for the Czech (unused in higher social settings such as university and administration) language with the German language. Language equality was a very important claim of the 1848 Revolution. At that time, language also was becoming one of the identity markers characterising a nation. In the Czech language standardisation process, the “awakeners” relied on 15th or 16th century literature, as Czech had lost its status of common language when it became subordinate to the German language. During the national revival, the normalisation process of the language was thus very vigorously reinitiated. Indeed, the revival depended entirely on nationalists’ actions: they attempted to heighten awareness about the nation’s situation, deemed to be dormant, while subjected to the authority of another nation (for the Czech lands after the military defeat of the battle of the White Mountain on November 8th, 1620); they tried to record and codify Czech – that had survived only as a peasant patois – and transform it into a literary and scientific instrument. As a result of the empire’s centralisation, the power of the Bohemian Assembly had also been drastically reduced³⁵.

In the same way as for language – as an objectifying marker of culture, a similar process occurred with folklore. Folklore often constituted one of the key elements of national identities, a distinguishing feature of a group of people which could be identified as a nation through their folkloric cultural practices, stories, traditions, dwellings, songs, music, costume, dialect, cuisine, etc.³⁶ At the same time, it was part of the discovery of and the subsequent fascination for the countryside.

³⁵ Kelly St Pierre, *The ‘People’ in Czech and Slovak Music Criticism*, in Christopher Dingle (ed.), *The Cambridge History of Music Criticism*, p. 440-456, Cambridge University Press 2019.

³⁶ Timothy Baycroft and David Hopkin, *Folklore and Nationalism in Europe during the long 19th century*, Brill 2012, 1.

Before this discovery, folklore was merely enacted in people's lives, and was unaware or unconscious of itself. The Folk Revival and the Romantic ideology transformed folklore into an object of study and into a potential factor of nostalgia for bygone times. As explained by Svetlana Boym, "nostalgia as a historical emotion came of age during the time of Romanticism and is coeval with the birth of mass culture. In the mid-nineteenth century, nostalgia became institutionalized in national and provincial museums, heritage foundations, and urban memorials. The past was no longer unknown or unknowable. The past became heritage"³⁷, hence the subsequent wave of collecting and documentation, with the idea of saving or rescuing a culture, and also as a form of protest against industrial modernity.

A lot of the collecting work and documentation from the countryside that occurred during this period was not political in its primary purpose, but clearly motivated by aesthetic, romantic or scientific curiosity. To take the words of Zdeněk Vejvoda, "their interest in the countryside was based on idealised notions of the noble simplicity of the people and the exceptional moral and artistic values of the folk song culture"³⁸. Nevertheless, the lines are very blurred between research undertaken for ethnographic or political purposes: the collectors were often close supporters of the nationalist movement. The collections often became used for nationalist action, and to claim the 'pre-existence' or the 'objective' characteristics of the nation. The individuals concerned had mixed motives: the quest for authenticity, romantic interest, scientific research and political legitimacy blended all together in a closely tied ensemble. Therefore, the beginning of ethnographic research in Czech lands is intricately linked to the development of the first movement of Czech nationalism. This is exemplified by the creation of the musicology department in Prague's Charles University as early as 1869.

A similar phenomenon took place concerning 'art music'. For example, national composers such as Antonín Dvořák or Leoš Janáček, among many others, who were contemporaneous with the revival and who can be considered as precursors to the field of ethnomusicology, were willing to create a 'high culture' in Czech rather than German, integrating characteristic elements of the nation, and in this way increasing awareness that the nation exists as a collective entity. They invested their compositions with specific national elements (including folk-like themes) so that they could be easily related to the concept of Czechness while raising their compositions to the status of serious, erudite, or legitimate music, contesting in this way German domination for establishing cultural frames (i.e., domination defining what is

³⁷ Svetlana Boym, *Nostalgia and its discontents*, The Hedgehog Review, vol. 9, no. 2, 2007, 13.

³⁸ Czech Music Quarterly Magazine, from the 3/2007 publication, article from Zdeněk Vejvoda, p. 18.

acceptable or not in high culture in that period of anti-Czech hostility and snobbery). Indeed, one of the characteristics of the Revival was the blending of the ‘high’ and the ‘low’ culture to place the emphasis on a collective identity.

To take the words of Carl Dahlhaus: “if a piece of music is felt to be characteristically national, that is an inseparable feature of the work, not something extraneous”, so it is something to be taken as an aesthetic fact, even if there is no evidence of it with a stylistic analysis. He continues: “One possible way of escape from the labyrinthine difficulties of finding adequate definitions of what constitutes national ‘substance’ in music is offered by the hypothesis that in the 19th century – that is, in the age in which it received more emphasis than ever before – the concept of nationality related not so much to substance as to function (though this is contrary to the nationalist interpretation itself, which regarded nationality as a ‘substantial’ element).”³⁹ This means that the meaning of music is determined by matters of contexts rather than by the notes themselves; but also that our conceptions of music are closely tied to conceptions of identity and nationality – and tend towards ethnicity specifically in the late 19th century. “Czech nationalism at the turn of the twentieth century also became increasingly enmeshed in ethnonationalism, especially in the possibility of empirically determining who belonged to the nation and who did not”⁴⁰. Indeed, it was believed possible to pin down the ‘objective’ characteristics of a given nation. Those characteristics were thought to be obvious and visible in the distinctive folkloristic elements of the nation, such as specific patterns in folk music, themes, intervals, specific rhythms, considered to be specifically Czech. This vision has been deconstructed by the constructivists defending the idea that the nation is a pure invention of nationalists. Even if nations exist firmly in the minds of individuals, it is always difficult to precisely define their distinctive traits and to draw a clear line between them. This is particularly obvious in our highly mobile and interconnected world but it has always been the case: it is impossible to deny the neighbouring and/or travelling influences, especially in music. For example, the Jewish and Romani communities living in the Czech lands contributed a lot to the enrichment of traditional forms. The porosity between Moravia and Slovakia also adds to the non-necessity

³⁹ Carl Dalhaus, *In Between Romanticism and Modernism: Four Studies in the Music of the Later Nineteenth Century*, (translated by Mary Whittall, University of California Press, Berkeley 1980, 87.

⁴⁰ Kelly Saint Pierre, *The ‘People’ in Czech and Slovak Music Criticism*, in Christopher Dingle (ed.), *The Cambridge History of Music Criticism*, p. 440-456, Cambridge University Press 2019, 447.

of inflexibly characterising in national terms, and dismantles the possibility of considering a society to be absolutely closed.

The National Revival thus depended on the action of the ‘awakeners’ to raise awareness about the nation’s sleeping status. In this way, they claimed they were speaking in the name of the whole nation, in the name of the people. The supposed unity of the people was put forward in order to serve the political nationalistic discourse of Nation building. “Whether or not actual people were consulted on their government, ‘the People’ mattered”⁴¹. Indeed, nationalists mostly addressed their own interests – of a ‘cultivated’ and urban elite, but needed the backing of this ‘imagined community’⁴² to reinforce their claim to autonomy. The whole discourse was built on the more general context of the Romantic movement, and its main interest was in the idealised countryside and its people. Indeed, people enacting in their everyday life practices that we now call folklore had long been believed to be backward, primitive, superstitious and illiterate, to name but a few of the pejorative terms used to describe them. The Romantic ideology depicted them in a much nobler light, portraying them as simple, unspoiled, pastoral or close to nature⁴³, respecting/supporting/promoting the cult of the noble savage typically adopted by Romanticism. In the concept of the noble savage, the individual had not yet been corrupted by civilisation. Indeed, modernisation started to be viewed negatively, as something threatening folklore. In this way, the whole field of folklore studies was, since its initial conceptualisation, entrenched in the idea that “the golden age of folklore occurred in the past’, and that ‘the oldest, original version of an item of folklore was the best, fullest or most complete one.’”⁴⁴ This idea has been further developed in the previous chapter (specifically focusing on the transformations of folk music through different processes of modernisation), and deconstructed following a conception of folklore as something being constantly recreated.

⁴¹ Timothy Baycroft and David Hopkin, *Folklore and Nationalism in Europe during the long 19th century*, Brill 2012.

⁴² Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origins and Spread of Nationalism*, Verso, London 1983.

⁴³ Richard Dorson, *Folklore in the Modern World*, Mouton Publishers, The Hague 1978, 11.

⁴⁴ Stephen Stern, *Ethnic Folklore and the Folklore of Ethnicity*, *Western Folklore*, Vol. 36, No.1, *Studies in Folklore and Ethnicity*, January 1977, 12.

...During the Communist Regime (1948-1989)

During the Communist regime, the 'true' people shifted away from the romantic representation of the idealised peasant. Folklore was now transformed into the symbol of the working class. Indeed, overall, there was massive enthusiasm for folklore after the Second World War, mainly driven by the heads of the party at first, but also followed by the people. Folklore was advertised as something belonging to them, and they were encouraged to go and see themselves and their unity beautifully represented and put forward in grandiose staged performances. A lot of professional folk ensembles developed, mainly performing spectacular representations on stage, where the emphasis was on dance and the coordination of large bodies of people, as a depiction of the unity of the masses. The performances were indeed very synchronised and ultra-choreographed, and prepared and rehearsed mostly in view of a representation destined for the public, thus not leaving a lot of space for innovation inside the performance.

But the Communist Party did not promote only professional performances in their 'conscious cultivation of folklore'. Of course, everybody was expected to appreciate the grandiose performances; but the authorities also wanted to encourage the mass participation of the people, once again for political aims. In this way, the people had not only to be admired on stage but also to be enacted in the processes of performing and preparing for performances.⁴⁵ So folk ensembles were not only highly professional, they were also extended to multiple spheres of life, as a leisure activity. A slogan of the early Communist era went as follows: "in every school, factory, collective farm – a folklore ensemble!". Folklore thus became omnipresent in everyday life, as an intrinsic part of everybody's social interactions and entertainment: folklore ensembles were an opportunity for people to meet and find a sense of community and social cohesion.

Nevertheless, folklore was closely controlled by the authorities, who allowed solely an official form to develop. In this way, they censored a lot of traditional expressions. For example, songs with erotic allusions, or containing religious or superstitious elements (i.e., a large proportion of the traditional folk song repertory). Folklore, and interest, support and participation in folklore became like a compulsory part of the corporatist welfare state, "like a social program or an employment benefit"⁴⁶. The obsession of the Communist authorities for

⁴⁵ Joseph Grim Feinberg, *The Paradox of Authenticity: Folklore Performance in Post-Communist Slovakia*, University of Wisconsin Press 2018.

⁴⁶ Joseph Grim Feinberg, *The Paradox of Authenticity*, 54.

folklore also led to a professionalization of many musicians: they were offered regular, formal employment in the ensembles they played in.

However, as early as the late 1950s, the debate over the saturation of folklore broke out in the public sphere. For example, Vladimír Mináč published in 1958 a very critical article named “The heaviness/burden of folklore” in the magazine *Literární Noviny* stressing the overabundance of folklore production⁴⁷. Undeniably, people began to get fed up with folklore and started to experience it in ways in contradiction with the official presentation. For example, by playing folk music informally with friends, or in folk dancing themed parties, to distance themselves from the grandiose performances that had become so closely associated with the political sphere. The participatory movements of folk music that I want to study further in the research project will, I think, present many similarities with these unofficial versions of folklore that were developed and experienced during the Communist regime: replacing the dominant choreographed repertoires, experiencing living folk culture, putting the emphasis on embodied feelings, collective effervescence, and the inclusion of all participants in a shared activity.

The Communist Party tried to move folklore away from excessive politicisation and highlight the fact that it was an enjoyable activity for anyone’s free time; but it definitely promoted it as a pillar of the new society anyway, “which over time became an established order; and folklore was increasingly normalised as something that any ordinary citizen was expected to appreciate”.⁴⁸ Folklore quickly turned into a support institution for the new order of the socialist regime. The ensembles were supervised and given instructions closely related to the objectives of the Party. For example, they included “the support of socialist-construction efforts, the fight for peace, and the education of the new socialist man”⁴⁹. To achieve this, new folk songs with propaganda content were also created. They mostly presented the ideal life as that experienced in a socialist society, i.e., living in peace, with enough food, enjoying the benefits of cooperative work and improved farm work conditions, due to the modernisation of agriculture. However, as stressed by Lucie Uhliková, “the folk have not

⁴⁷ Vladimír Mináč, *Tíha Folkloru, Dopis z Bratislavy*, in “*Literární Noviny*”, Volume 7, 22.3, Number 12, 1958, 1.

⁴⁸ Joseph Grim Feinberg, *The Paradox of Authenticity: Folklore Performance in Post-Communist Slovakia* University of Wisconsin Press 2018.

⁴⁹ Lucie Uhliková, *Recollecting versus Remembering: on the era of the new folk songs in Czechoslovakia during the totalitarian regime*, in: *Od folkloru k world music: o paměti. Náměšť nad Oslavou: Městské kulturní středisko v Náměšti nad Oslavou*, 2018.

identified with these songs, despite all the efforts of the totalitarian regime and the subsequent visions of certain professionals. Real life lagged behind the praised ideal too much”⁵⁰.

Indeed, the Communist Party and its folklore, whether it arose from the folk tradition or was completely based on its inspiration, created a category of its own: a very stylised folklore, and, to borrow the words of Monika Murzyn, created “a fashion for pastiche, simplified folklore heritage”⁵¹. In their preoccupation with legitimacy, the elites of the Party used very characteristic national or local elements to establish, once again, a sense of continuity with the past. To answer the accusations Socialism was facing, especially those of internationalism (workers of the world against national bourgeois class) and modernism, they drew from the ancient bases and traditions of society in order to rally its people. This is a typical feature of all regimes profoundly and rapidly transforming society: in order to compensate for the rupture, they claim continuity; and call for new devices to ensure and express social cohesion and identity and structure social relations⁵². Folklore, and thus folklorism, was a medium for the unification of the people and their leadership. At the same time, “folk music ensembles were supposed to extend folk tradition, not to preserve them, and to further develop them by reflecting on contemporary problems within society and the transformation of the countryside. As a result, in their performances folk ensembles presented a romantically imagined world of folk culture with new, politicized compositions inspired by folk heritage”⁵³.

To sum up this paragraph with the words of Joseph Grim Feinberg, “the global Communist turn to folklore is widely understood today as a concerted effort by Communist Parties to represent themselves as the legitimate heirs to their respective national traditions, and thus to downplay their image as flag bearers of international revolutionary rupture. This strategic concern on the part of Communist Parties does help to explain why the old and locally grounded sides of folklore would be emphasized, since this connection to locality and the past could bolster the legitimacy of movements and governments that were accused of excessive modernism and internationalism. Still, this general Party strategy did not amount to a simple, one-sided return to tradition. In the newly developing discourse of Communist folklorism,

⁵⁰ Lucie Uhliková, *Recollecting versus Remembering*, 69.

⁵¹ Monika A. Murzyn, *Heritage Transformation in East and Central Europe*, in: Brian Graham, Peter Howard (eds.), *The Ashgate Research Companion to Heritage and Identity*, 2008, 324.

⁵² Eric Hobsbawm, *Mass-Producing Traditions: Europe, 1870 – 1914*, in: Eric Hobsbawm, Terence Ranger (eds.), *The Invention of Tradition*, Cambridge University Press 1983.

⁵³ Lucie Uhliková, *Recollecting versus Remembering: on the era of the new folk songs in Czechoslovakia during the totalitarian regime*, in: *Od folkloru k world music: o paměti. Náměšť nad Oslavou: Městské kulturní středisko v Náměšti nad Oslavou*, 2018.

village lore served a double purpose. On the one hand, it was conservative and legitimating: due to established romantic values placed on village life, village lore could appear as the least controversial, least politicized form of folklore, the most readily accepted premise for the establishment of a new folk. On the other hand, the cultivation of village lore could also appear progressive and transformative, since it inscribed popular traditions in a narrative of active change”⁵⁴.

To sum up, folklore has very high potential to be instrumentalised as a political legitimising discourse, and was used in this way in different contexts and places. During the two different periods examined in this paper, folklore was used as a national claim to legitimacy, “derived from association with the ‘true’ people identified through folk culture”.⁵⁵ Throughout those two historical periods, the ‘true’ people shifted from the idealised peasant closely linked to the idea of romantic nationalism, to a more urban working class. The national culture erected into the sole symbol of the nation was supposedly the culture of this ‘folk’ or ‘people’, in order to symbolise an idealised national identity. Thus, folk revivals were generally promoted by those in power and other official institutions. In both cases examined here, the awareness came from outside the actual community bearing this folklore rather than from within: the elites used what were considered as objective characteristics of the nation for their respective claims to legitimacy. In the first case, those seeking legitimacy were the nation builders and their claims to nationhood. In the second case, it was the Communist Party, keen to establish a sense of continuity with the past. But, even though the historical development of nationalism coincides with the development of the academic discipline of folklore, interest in traditions is not only specific of groups seeking legitimacy. It was also part of a general fascination and scientific study paired with a fear those traditions would disappear as a result of industrialisation and its massive development. This fear is still very much present in folklore studies, which primarily consider folklore conservatively: as something lost in the past, as picturesque and backwards instead of contemporary, keyed to the here and now, to urban centres, to the industrial revolution⁵⁶. However, during those two folk Revivals, and despite massive politicisation, folklore contributed to the development of cultural heritage and helped

⁵⁴ Joseph Grim Feinberg, *The Paradox of Authenticity: Folklore Performance in Post-Communist Slovakia*, University of Wisconsin Press 2018, 54.

⁵⁵ Timothy Baycroft and David Hopkin, *Folklore and Nationalism in Europe during the long 19th century*, Brill 2012, 5.

⁵⁶ Richard Dorson, *Folklore in the Modern World*, Mouton Publishers, The Hague 1978.

to revitalise many waning traditions.⁵⁷ It created a general interest in folk music, helped to bring people together and feel a sense of community they had 'lost'. It also triggered the development of different forms of folk music, further removed from folklorism, putting more emphasis on the social function instead of the political, and sometimes gaining an oppositional character under Socialism.

The aspect of the political connotations of folk music will be further developed in the ethnographic research. I will take a closer look at the way representations of folklore are viewed by different actors. For example, how do today's participatory movements look towards the image of late 19th century folklore and its developments? Is folklore considered politically charged because of its recent implications and uses by the communist regime? What is the discourse surrounding the rejection of politicised folklore by the participatory movements? What about the new 'coolness' of folklore? How do older generations who have experienced the oversaturation of folklore react, do they understand this interest coming from a part of the younger generation?

⁵⁷ Lucie Uhliková, *Revitalising and Innovating Tradition: the individual motivations behind new songs in the Slovácko region*, Glasnik Etnografskog instituta SANU 65, 2017.

CONCLUSION

As a conclusion, this research project will be articulated around many aspects that have been introduced theoretically throughout this first chapter, before being further developed through the fieldwork and analysis. To sum up and clarify the research questions, we can organise them around three aspects. First, stressing the historical political instrumentalisation of folklore and opposing it to today's participatory movements of traditional music which claim to be apolitical, especially as a reaction to the politicised folklore oversaturating the public sphere during the Communist times. Also, along with the transformations triggered by modernisation, the identification processes and senses of belonging "are not exclusively based on ethnic or national principles" due to the multiplication of 'imagined communities'⁵⁸, and the individuals therefore see their emancipatory possibilities and choices expanding. Investigating the non-ideological and non-national character of the participatory movements would be an interesting line to follow. The links of participants with political movements and activism will be developed especially through interviews. In my assumption, they would be more progressive and open minded (despite the fact that folklore is often used by far right movements).

Second, I want to examine the aspect of the social function of folklore, analyse those participatory forms of folk music in the urban context and show that they recreate the 'original' function of folk music: its social dimension. Those questions will focus on the acceptance of the very existence of folk music and culture in the urban modern world, which is often denied because our conceptions of folklore are closely tied to the 19th century Romantic ideology which circumscribes folklore as purely rural, isolated, orally transmitted and limited to a primary social function.

Third, I would like to focus on more musicological questions. For example, by exploring the possible space for personal creativity/ individual innovation within the framework of traditional music and oppose it to the idea of a certain 'correct interpretation' of a traditional song or tune that has emerged. Comparing different recordings or transcription of given songs from different periods could be an interesting approach, while constituting an ethnomusicological work within the nowadays urban participatory movements.

⁵⁸ Svetlana Boym, *Nostalgia and its discontents*, The Hedgehog Review, vol. 9, no. 2, 2007.

PART 2: EMPIRICAL RESEARCH/ ANALYSIS

PRELUDE/OPENING TO THE FIELDWORK RESEARCH

Methodological point

In order to address the research goals summarised in the previous section, the adopted methodology was centred on interviews. More practically, I conducted nine interviews with people involved in one way or another in folk culture. The interviewees are all musicians from different generations usually taking part in participatory forms of expressions of folk music. I had met half of them previously during these gatherings⁵⁹. However, some of them also dance or are involved in ethnographic research. I thought it was more than relevant to also ask them about their conceptions of folklore and to take their voices into account while putting together the narratives I am collecting. Indeed, while dancing does not always accompany music, dancers always need some kind of music for their practice. In the same way, musicians are generally familiar with dancing. In this way, these different accumulating and interlocking discourses come to constitute a broader perception and experience⁶⁰. On the other hand, some of the musicians I interviewed are concerned about the ‘accuracy’ or ‘authenticity’ of the tunes they either play or sing, and for this purpose examine various recordings – also in order to be ‘accepted’ in a more conservative folk world which can be rather closed to changes. They thus have a very large knowledge of the topic, and some of them have also conducted academic as well as fieldwork research. All of the interviewees are Czech, although from various parts of the country, including Moravia. The language barrier was never a problem between us. First, I wanted to give them the choice to answer the questions in Czech (of which I have come to have a good understanding), but most of them felt comfortable enough to speak English (or French in one case). Still, more than half of the interviews were then conducted in Czech, as I saw it as a great opportunity to improve my language skills as well as to let the participants speak more freely about a subject deeply

⁵⁹ It was thus easier to contact the interviewees: I knew them personally, although not so closely, and I could contact new musicians with the help of the first interviewees.

⁶⁰ Una Crowley and Rob Kitchin, *Academic ‘truth’ and perpetuation of negative attitudes and intolerance towards Travellers in Contemporary Ireland*, in I. Honohan and N. Rougier (eds), *Tolerance in Ireland North and South*, Manchester University Press, 2015, pp. 153-170, 154.

connected to their language. Later, I had the chance to be able to ask for the precious help of a friend both for the transcription of the recordings and the clarification of some specific points I could not understand. In the cases where the interviews were not conducted in English, the translations are mine and revised by the same abovementioned friend.

When I met most of the participants at first, I expected to be gradually fully integrated in those movements, sometimes as a musician, sometimes as a visitor or a participant. I thought I would gain an increasingly insider status through participation and interaction while reducing the distance, showing deep interest, discovering more tunes and playing along with the other musicians. This would have contributed to reducing certain biases in the research, by presenting myself as a learner and an interested person rather than as a ‘researcher’, and letting the participants act and interact in a natural way during the events. But the insider/outsider status and the way we act accordingly is a complex process: my position is constantly shifting between an outsider (the outsider I am, sometimes to the point of feeling like an interloper) and an insider (involving myself personally, thus interfering with my own affection and sympathy towards the participants, their music and their activities). However, an outsider has the advantage of asking simple questions, that someone with an insider status would be supposed to know. Maybe I also consider myself to have the advantage of an ambiguous cultural identity, by this I mean not too closely tied to one nation in particular. I thus think the perspective of the outsider is an interesting dimension of this research project. When we addressed the matter together with some of the musicians, they shared the same opinion.

In the same way, identification with the participants helped not to inscribe myself in the continuation of anthropology as imposing an external authority, or what has been sometimes called the ‘ethnographic gaze’. Once again, in reaction to the beginnings of ethnology bringing elusive, ‘disappearing’ oral lore into legible textual form, striving for an impression of constructed scientific objectivity and enmeshed in unequal power relations, anthropology no longer speaks with automatic authority for others defined as unable to speak for themselves ("primitive," "pre-literate," "without history")⁶¹.

⁶¹ James Clifford, *Introduction: Partial Truths*, in James Clifford and George Marcus (eds.), *Writing Culture: The Poetics and Politics of Ethnography*, University of California Press 1986, 9.

Practice Theory Concepts

The purpose of this paragraph is twofold. It will serve as an introductory section to the interview section and as a reconceptualisation of my approach to folklore in a more practical and individual sense. Indeed, I could not really collect data through participatory observation in folk events (festivals, concerts, parties...), as initially planned, since the folk movements could not organise themselves in events during my fieldwork period. However, my definition of folklore and what I am looking for with the help of the interviews stays the same. Folklore will still be defined as an expressive action, serving various purposes – with a special interest in its social and collective dimension. My research project will still consider culture as a lived experience, obviously englobing folklore. My research question is still the analysis of the motivations of participants for the enactment of folklore, whether in their everyday life or on a more organised scale, and I want to take a closer look at the purposes of this enactment. However, because of the sanitary situation and thanks to the influence of practice theory studies, the subject of my research shifted from the *performance* to the *practice* of folklore. This was already expressed in the theoretical introduction, following Thomas Turino's distinction between presentational and participatory ways of representing folklore. But the folk movements I am talking about are no longer organised in events; the subject of my study is no longer the participatory event – as a space for the living expression of culture – in itself. Instead, the folk movement is redefined around the people who compose the movement, who thus express a culture, a tradition, a practice, a way of life, a belief, a hope. It is a very slight change in the definition of the abstract term 'movement' of this research, which I nonetheless consider important to clarify.

Practice theory is particularly interesting for its reflectivity concept, considering our practices as a mirror of a cultural reality, as an expression of values, social relations, world views. Once again, this echoes Antonio Gramsci's definition of folklore in his prison notebooks as something "that should be studied as a conception of the world and life"⁶², a conception that was the trigger for this whole research project. In the same way, practice theory considers "doing as a social and ethical act"⁶³. What we do (even very simple things) is the expression of what we think about the world and of what we long for, linked to ideas of social change.

⁶² Antonio Gramsci, in: *The Gramsci Reader, Selected Writings 1916-1935*, David Forgacs (ed.), New York University Press 2000, 360.

⁶³ Simon J. Bronner, *Practice Theory in Folklore and Folklife Studies*, in: *The Practice of Folklore: Essays Towards a Theory of Tradition*, University Press of Mississippi 2019, 35.

Thus, our understanding of folklore is now centred on people and their practices/expressive acts. Those acts mirror people's culture, by expressing ideas, values and traditions in a creative way. In this way, folklore becomes a way of understanding people, taking into account its changing and dynamic dimension, just like the people who share folklore grow and change, to recall the words of Henry Spiller quoted above⁶⁴. And the process of understanding the other's or one's culture obviously englobes learning and transpires through interaction. Already in 1954, William Bascom identified *Four Functions of Folklore*, among which he recognised the third function of folklore as being a pedagogic device, its teaching regarded as important; "and to the extent to which it mirrors culture, it 'contains practical rules for the guidance of [hu]man'"⁶⁵. But not only does folklore mirror one's culture, as this would omit folklore's role in the creation of culture, it would omit the fact that it is one of culture's dynamic constituents. Indeed, folklore reflects, but also helps to teach, reinforce and create social values of a 'folk' – we will clarify the use of this term in the following section. Ben-Amos insists on this point: "once viewed as a process, however, folklore does not have to be a marginal projection or reflection; it can be considered a sphere of interaction in its own right"⁶⁶.

⁶⁴ Henry Spiller, *Focus: Gamelan Music of Indonesia*, Routledge 2008, 4.

⁶⁵ William Bascom, *Four Functions of Folklore*, *The Journal of American Folklore* 1954, 345.

⁶⁶ Dan Ben-Amos, *Toward a Definition of Folklore in Context*, *The Journal of American Folklore* 1971, 15.

Who is the ‘folk’?

What transpired from the above discussion on the political uses of folk music is that the ‘folk’ is a social group that can be easily instrumentalised, by different structures of power and for various aims. The ‘folk’ as a category shifted from an idealised peasant society to a working class striving for the establishment of a socialist order, but has kept its negative connotations (or essentialist associations⁶⁷) until today, designating a simple and unsophisticated human. The term is still imbued with the nineteenth-century assumptions that categorise the ‘folk’ as a lower social class (whose culture was manipulated by the elites for nation-building aims). Again, as opposed to the ‘modern’ concept of folklore, it limits the ‘folk’ to be an inhabitant from a rural setting rather than from an urban setting, old and vanishing rather than young, and religious rather than secular. Here, we will focus more concretely on who is the ‘folk’ in the folklore being analysed. Completing what has been said above, this short paragraph strives to clarify the sources of this research, i.e., the people enacting folklore. Alan Dundes brought an interesting contribution to the definition of the ‘folk’ following this modern concept. Indeed, he defined the folk as “*any group of people whatsoever* who share at least one common factor. It does not matter what the linking factor is – it could be a common occupation, language or religion – but what is important is that a group formed for whatever reason will have some traditions which it calls its own.” He continues: “with this flexible definition of folk, a group could be as large as a nation or as small as a family”.⁶⁸ What is important in this definition is that it helps us to consider every human being as a ‘folk’, as a particular member of one group plus a myriad of other groups. Individuals indeed belong to many different and interconnecting identities. Thus, instead of considering the ‘folk’ as a single bounded entity which was dislocated (by modernisation, urbanisation, secularisation, the rise of social inequities...), we will identify the ‘folk’ as being synonymous with the group concept⁶⁹, as simply being all the people taking part in the process of an expressive practice of folklore, and therefore part of the Prague-based folk (revival) movement.

⁶⁷ In his essay *Constituting folklore: a case for critical folklore studies*, Stephen Olbrys Gencarella shows by an alliance between folklore and rhetorical studies how the folk is established as a political category for rhetorical purposes of power articulation. *The Journal of American Folklore*, University of Illinois Press, Spring 2009.

⁶⁸ Alan Dundes, *Interpreting Folklore*, Indiana University Press 1980, 6.

⁶⁹ Dan Ben-Amos, *Toward a Definition of Folklore in Context*, *The Journal of American Folklore* 1971, 12.

Related to the fieldwork, the ‘folk’ with whom I discussed is heterogeneous. My first interviews were conducted with singer musicians who are members of a group composed of ten women based in Prague, singing traditional songs from Moravia and Slovakia. All of these women live in Prague, all of them except one are from Prague, and they are the ones who initiated this kind of traditional movement⁷⁰, and in a way who brought this conception of folklore in Prague. Then, I carried out the other interviews with musicians who are members of folk ensembles, ethnomusicologists, music teachers, all enacting folklore in various forms and for various purposes, actively promoting (either explicitly or tacitly) a certain vision of folklore. In this way, their vision contrasts with other representations (for example fixed representations) and will be presented here in order to enhance our understanding of this phenomenon, this love for folklore in the world we are living in.

In order for us to gain a better understanding of the sources of this research, we will present here more precisely its protagonists and main informants. We reported here some of their words for them to present their activities in their respective folklore ensembles.

Anežka, 30 years old, from Brno and living in a village very close to Prague. Member of several music groups, playing violin, accordion and singing, in addition to being a writer for a folklore program on the radio, an organiser of folkloric events and many more.

“I was in the folklore ensemble Púčik until I was 25, with my four siblings, with whom we took turns there, not only playing but also dancing, I started there.

I have been in one folklore ensemble for almost 20 years, I also founded a girl’s choir with several girls, it still continues now, but it continues mainly for its own interest, it is a collective that belongs to itself, sometimes we also perform with Holinka“.

Matěj, 47 years old. Lives in Prague. Clarinet and saxophone player, ethnomusicologist, university teacher, wrote his Ph.D. and many other publications on folk music.

“I did not grow up in traditional culture in a conventional sense, I was born in Prague, and my parents spent most of their life living in Prague, they are city people with university education, interested in modern music, people with roots in Prague culture. I had some contact with a rural context when going to my grandma’s village house, I met old people there but it was marginal for me, we did small Easter carolling celebrations there. I got in

⁷⁰ Interview 1, 24’.

contact with folk culture when I started to play in this folklore revival ensemble when I was in Prague, it was already the second life of folk culture when I got in contact with it, I started in the ensemble playing recorder when I was 5. We started as kids only 5 to 15 years old. As it successfully grew, old ones remained, and it split into two groups: the old group of teens and young adults and new kids coming”.

Eliška, 22 years old, from Lysá nad Labem (Central Bohemia) and living in Prague.

Cimbalom player and singer in a folklore ensemble.

“I’m a student at Charles University’s Faculty of Arts, I study Czech language and literature and translation-interpretation from French to Czech. I’m very interested in music, I grew up in music, I started to play piano then cimbalom, then I started to sing in a group. First, I played in an ensemble of traditional music from the Polabí region [Central Bohemia, North from Prague, along the Elbe], and then I started to sing and play cimbalom in a Prague folklore ensemble but that focuses on Moravian and Slovak traditional music”.

Martin, 24 years old, from Uherské Hradiště and living in Brno. Grew up in a traditional environment. Primarily double bass player.

“So far, I have been in several groups and played as a guest with many. The first were the already mentioned groups from childhood in Uherské Hradiště [South Moravia]. This was followed by a move to Prague, where I took refuge in Rosénka and its band Muzička, or easily wandered into Czech folklore with the music of Hájíček, which operates under Zakladní Umelecká Školá Jižní Město [Elementary Art School, this one located in the South of Prague], or Balkan folklore with the band Czardashians. At the same time, I became a member of Cimbalová Muzika [traditional music band] Ohnica from Uherské Hradiště, with whom I had worked for a long time, and for one time I travelled back from Prague to Uherské Hradiště every weekend. After moving to Brno, I established cooperation and became a member of the music of the folklore ensemble Půčik, which focuses on Slovak folklore”.

Magdalena, 60 years old, grew up and lives in a folklore environment in South Moravia.

“I danced and played in the ensemble Zavádka from Čejkovice in Hanácké Slovácko [Hanakian Moravian Slovakia, SouthEastern Moravia], then in 1988 I co-founded the Cimbalová Muzika [traditional music band] Danaj in Strážnice, with whom we accompanied

the [Ensemble of Traditional Music and Dance] of the same name for several years. We have our own Little Dance Group for over twenty years“.

Václav and Miroslav, respectively 71 and 75 years old, brothers who grew up in Krnov, “*which was settled by German populations after the war”.*

Václav: “*I didn’t grow up in traditional music, I got involved myself thanks to my older brother and to my own interest. I learnt to play at the folk art’s school [Lidová Škola Umění, the predecessor of today’s Elementary Art School, Základní Umělecká Škola]. I collaborated with dance ensembles from the very beginning, first accompanying them and then also as an editor of various dances in terms of music“.*

Miroslav: “*Teacher Štěpán Kotek from Frýdlant nad Ostravicí worked at the music school, and founded the Cimbálová Muzika [traditional music ensemble] of Lidová Škola Umění [Folk Art School] and we learned the songs from sheet music. Then we established cooperation with the children's ensemble Radost, which was led by teacher Mirek Poláček from Tvrdonice near Břeclav in South Moravia.*

I got the basics of playing at LŠU [Folk Art School], later I started working at Cimbálová Muzika [traditional music ensemble] Technik in Ostrava, since 1969 as a primáš [main violin]. Cimbálová Muzika Technik recorded on the Czech Radio Ostrava mostly Wallachian [Valašsko, i.e., Moravian Wallachia/Northeastern Moravia], but also Moravian and Slovak folklore, and later also Romanian and Hungarian folklore. We also accompanied the dance ensemble Hlubina. I now work at Cimbálová Muzika Lipka in Ostrava”.

Presentation of the Interviews

The following section is a brief overview of the main questions of the interviews. I collected the testimonies of my participants especially around the three aspects that I developed in the theoretical introduction, i.e., the social aspect of folklore, the national aspect of folklore and the more personal aspect of their practice of folklore, including musicological aspects.

The interviews will help to understand some of the participants' motivations for their enactment of folklore. While listening to the interviewees, the vitality of folk processes became apparent in very diverse and individual forms, and contributed to the claim inherent to this research project that folklore can exist in the urban modern world, that it is not something limited to a disappearing peasant society. However, the term 'individual' used here should not be understood in a purely individualistic sense; in my opinion, it reaches far beyond the single individual. Indeed, we could consider the individuals as the bearers of a tradition, passing along a culture – although not in a linear way, but through shared and sharing, lived and living collective expressions.

Roughly speaking, we can present the interviews along the elementary questions: Who? What? Where? Why? And How? The discussions with the interviewees were organised around the following questions, for example:

Who is the interviewee? Did he or she grow up in traditional culture? How did she or he get to become involved in folk culture? What was the reaction of his or her parents or grandparents? How did she or he learn to play? What are her or his links with professional ensembles? What do they play? Do they wear traditional costume? Why did she or he become involved in folk culture? What does it bring to her/him? Does he or she think it carries or conveys a certain conception of the world? Does he or she think it is a way of life? Does folklore influence his or her life or lifestyle? Does she or he believe in or advocate for the inclusion of folklore in everyday life? What about the social dimension of folklore? What is her or his definition of authenticity? How does he or she apply it to particular participatory events, the folk ensembles he or she is playing in, to other folk ensembles? How does she or he learn to play new pieces? From whom/what? How far do they feel they can go with their personal creativity within the framework of the folk tune? How much do they feel they can innovate within the tradition? Would it be appropriate to add something to a piece or to

modify it? What is the range of appropriate contexts to play a certain tune/song? ⁷¹ Did they ever feel limited when playing in a certain context? Do they claim the national dimension of the music they play? Could they say they sometimes play ‘purely’ Czech/Moravian/Slovak music? Did they ever witness any kind of conflicts within the folk world? For what reasons? Do they think folklore is open to changes? That its fixed version is dominant? What about the idea of coming back to the sources? Do they still consider folklore as politically charged? What about this new ‘coolness’ of folklore among younger generations? (cf. questions in Annex). Of course, in the course of the interviews, the participants often grouped multiple questions in one long answer, in the same way as some of the questions were sometimes skipped, and others added according to personal facts I knew beforehand. The above enumeration is here to enlighten us about the general direction the interviews took.

Through the following more practical part and according to what arose from the discussions, we will take a closer look at the dynamics of tradition in the relationship between the local and the global, the rural and the urban, the traditionalist and the modern models⁷², by analysing different representations of and perspectives on folklore that were developed during the interviews with the musicians, involved in one way or another in folk culture, question their motivations and try to explain the functions that the enactment of folklore fulfils, especially in our modern urban globalised world. I am leaving a precise definition of folklore and authenticity to the participants, for the diversity and complexity and intermingling of all these forms to emerge.

⁷¹ Philip Bohlman, *The Study of Folk Music in the Modern World*, Indiana University Press 1988, 73.

⁷² Max Peter Baumann, *Folk Music Revival: Concepts Between Regression and Emancipation*, in “The World of Music”, Vol. 38, No. 3, *Folk Music Revival in Europe*, pp. 71-86, 1996.

FINDINGS WITH THE EMPIRICAL DATA

In order to organise the following chapter, we will assemble and condense the research questions into three main parts resulting from the theoretical and historical framework: folklore's national character, social dimension and openness to changes (or a more ethnomusicological part). I established these three themes in accordance with a categorisation of the motivations of the participants for their enactment of folklore with the help of the interviews. In other words, the interviews want to bring to light the 'why' of one's involvement in folklore, and help us to understand better the purposes, reasons and outcomes of this involvement. We can organise these motivations (this 'why?') into three groups. The first group of motivations is the less present proportionally among the statistical sample of my interviewees. However, the aim of collecting empirical data here was to conduct qualitative research, and not to reach the broadest number of people enacting folklore in order to rank their motivations from the most commonly shared one among them to an unusual motive. In other words, I was not interested in a possible quantitative way of addressing my subject and research question. In this way, the interviews were very dense, lasted more or less for an hour, covered various aspects of the topic and reached far beyond the points outlined here.

Thus, the motivations of the participants for their enactment of folklore can be organised in keeping with these three themes: first, for the national/ regional character of folk music, or a cultural pride in folk traditions; second, for the social dimension of the folk movements, events and ensembles (that I divided into sub-chapters 2 and 3); third, for the pure enjoyment of the music, or for an aesthetic quality. Of course, two, and in some cases three of these motivations can be combined for some participants, and can coexist with varying degrees of importance accorded to each. This was also my case, I first attended folklore events out of mere curiosity or pure interest in a music or a cultural heritage I had everything to discover about, and the atmosphere of these nights and the desire to learn more thrilled me before the social dimension came into play.

This broad categorisation of the motivations of the participants is also in keeping with the general categories of motivations for one's enactment of folklore drawn in the *Oxford Handbook of Music Revival*. Indeed, in the introduction, the authors Juniper Hill and Caroline Bithell identify four types of motivations. They state that there can be an aesthetic motive, but that "in the majority of the cases there are clear (if sometimes unspoken) agendas linked to

contemporary social, cultural, and/or political circumstances”⁷³, that they divide into four broad lines. The first is related to “a dissatisfaction with aspects of the modern world”. This corresponds to my second (and third) group, i.e., the social dimension of folk movements. Indeed, this aspect emphasises “participatory music-making, face-to face interaction, community building, self-expression and/or creativity”. It is linked to a representation of a (romanticised) past, and thus evokes “positive images of community-oriented interpersonal relationships, unmediated and non-commercial musical expression, pre-modern simplicity or innocence, pastoral tranquillity, or the nobility of the peasant”⁷⁴. My first category, i.e., the national aspect, combines the *Oxford Handbook of Music Revival*’s second and third motivational categories: the bolstering of the identity of an ethnic group, minority group or nation, and its political use, both by governments and its contesters (the state-sponsored folklore of the Communist regime and the “little island of freedom” it triggered is an excellent example, see the following chapter). The fourth category of the *Handbook*, defined as a “natural response to a human or a natural disaster”, does not concern our case study, and will thus be left aside here.

National/non-national dimension of folk movements

Throughout this chapter, we will bring together what has emerged from the discussions with the participants regarding the political and national aspects of folk music. As briefly mentioned before, this category was definitely not predominantly encountered during the interviews within my spectrum of participants. While they acknowledge the politicisation of folk music of past regimes and ideologies, they refuse it for the present day and assert that the national dimension does not constitute a reason (or the primary reason) for their enactment of folklore. We already agreed that the national aspect is not an essential or an intrinsic character of music, that it all depends on how it is used and claimed. But it also depends on how the music was discussed, argued or written about, as the representation(s) we often keep in mind are linked to powerful symbols constructed by an author about a composer some decades or centuries ago and mobilised for purposes.

⁷³ Juniper Hill and Caroline Bithell, *An Introduction to Music Revival as Concept, Cultural Process, and Medium of Change*, in Juniper Hill and Caroline Bithell (eds.), *Oxford Handbook of Music Revival*, Oxford University Press 2014, 10.

⁷⁴ Hill and Bithell, *An Introduction*, 11.

The political uses of folk music have already been discussed in the eponymous chapter dedicated to this broad question. There would of course be much more to say in this regard, alongside the fact that folk music or folklore is politically used up to the present day. The most striking example, mentioned numerous times among the participants is the one of (nationalist) politicians appearing wearing the *kroj* (traditional costume) and/or singing a traditional song during their political campaign. In the words of the participants, this seems like “doubtful patriotism” but remains “rather marginal”.

This short paragraph aims to nuance what has been stressed in the above chapter on the political uses of folk music during the Communist regime, essentially drawing on the works of Daniela Stavělová and Miroslav Vaněk⁷⁵. On one hand of course, folklore has been used to represent the ideology of Socialist Realism and was excessively manipulated in this direction. Still, on the other hand, the folklore movement was an opportunity for participants to escape from the oppressive political reality of the regime. They could devote themselves to (in our case) music and dance, become accomplished in these domains, and meet other people with whom they came to develop very strong links. As shown by Daniela Stavělová with the help of oral history research, these links were maintained even after one left the ensemble and tightened by solidarity in any life situation (she takes examples as varied as help when moving house, collective trips, birthdays, weddings and babies)⁷⁶. The ensembles were also the only chance to travel legitimately to the West. Both Miroslav Vaněk and Daniela Stavělová use the term of ‘inner emigration’, that the latter defines the following way: “activities outside of the public sphere, with which those engaging in them can fully identify, and which contribute to their sense of purpose and satisfaction, something they lack in everyday reality”⁷⁷. Thus, the folklore movement provided space for alternative activities and an opportunity for a legitimised withdrawal from a harsh social and political reality. However, the author insists that this second aspect of the folklore movements, or “implicit meaning” remains much less known and under-studied regarding the Czech context. It is both this lack

⁷⁵ Miroslav Vaněk, *Folklore in the era of Socialism – display window of official culture or little island of freedom? Folklore Movement in Contemporary Historical Research and Oral Historical Studies*, in Stavělová, Daniela and Buckland, Theresa Jill (eds.), *Folklore Revival Movements in Europe post 1950: Shifting Contexts and Perspectives*, Institute of Ethnology of the Czech Academy of Sciences, 2018, 103-113.

⁷⁶ Daniela Stavělová, *The Folklore Revival Movement in Former Czechoslovakia: Dichotomy of the Term*, in Stavělová, Daniela and Buckland, Theresa Jill (eds.), *Folklore Revival Movements in Europe post 1950: Shifting Contexts and Perspectives*, Institute of Ethnology of the Czech Academy of Sciences, 2018, 123.

⁷⁷ Stavělová, *The Folklore Revival Movement in Former Czechoslovakia*, 107.

of research and my earlier own focus on the sole aspect of folklore movements as an official display of the regime I wanted to address here. In order to briefly develop, folklore ensembles were less controlled than, for example, professional and institutional spheres. The members of such ensembles were often people “who had lost their professional and social status during the purges of the late 1960s and found new opportunities for self-fulfilment in folklore ensembles”⁷⁸. I will continue quoting Daniela Stavělová to jump on to a neighbouring topic: “after all, folk dance and song ensembles were about innocent popular culture, and there was nothing wrong with it in principle. That was, however, a principle following from a deep-rooted belief that folk art is nothing more than harmless and cheerful entertainment”.⁷⁹ It is because of this innocence or belief in the pure and genuine expression of folklore as a representation of the people that it was so easily instrumentalised for ideological purposes, and ideological imports to music are always functional, since ideology serves a purpose⁸⁰. In the same way, claiming to be apolitical can also serve a purpose, for example dissociation from the straight-forward propaganda and politicisation that occurred during the totalitarian decades, to challenge the persistence of long-lasting associations and stereotypes. However, one of my informants was very categorical about claiming the movement to be apolitical: “*apolitical? Definitely not, music can be always political but it’s interesting the connection between folk music and politics how it changes.*” This connection is what has been described, hopefully effectively, in the earlier chapter on the political uses of folk music.

I did not really encounter in the interviews a testimony moving towards the sense of ‘inner emigration’ discussed in the previous paragraph. This aspect would be an interesting addition to this part of the research. It was widely encountered in the oral history studies mentioned above. However, one of my informants, whose testimony is not really included in this research because she was a dancer during the Communist regime and stopped her activity in the ensemble after the change of regime in 1989 mentioned it. In this way, her experience is not so much related to our investigation, i.e., folk music in the present day, but can be very briefly reported here as she said her folkdance practice gained a sort of oppositional quality under Communism, in addition to the fact that she started folk dancing through American country dancing deemed as a rebellion with its smuggled banjos.

⁷⁸ Stavělová, *The Folklore Revival Movement in Former Czechoslovakia*, 121.

⁷⁹ Stavělová, *The Folklore Revival Movement in Former Czechoslovakia*, 121.

⁸⁰ Marcello Sorce Keller, *Why is music so Ideological, and why do Totalitarian States take it so Seriously? A Personal View from History and the Social Sciences*, in “Journal of Musicological Research”, 26:2-3, pp. 91-122, 2007.

As an answer to the question “do you think folklore is politicised?”, most of the participants answered that it used to be, but that they do not think is not anymore. In my opinion, they are working on the process of breaking the negative associations regarding folklore constructed during the Communist regime that are somehow persisting up to the present day in general public opinion.

“Folklore was more politicised before, today it is already not used in the same style, and that can only be good in my point of view.” Martin, 24 years old.

“Precisely, my parents and grand-parents they don’t like folklore a lot, they don’t really understand, they have a very negative image because of Communism, because it supported a lot the whole folkloric movement and made it a pillar. ‘You have to like it, good, it comes from the people’, so it was a bit forced. [...] But at the same time a lot of young people took this [negative] image from their parents and grand-parents. But there is a difference between my grand-parents’ generation or older who still know the folklore that wasn’t deformed by the Communists, or people who come from folkloric regions, who kept this non-deformed image of folklore.” Eliška, 22 years old.

„Unfortunately, the abuse of folk culture has taken place, takes place and will continue to take place – I have no illusions about that. But folk culture holds on!” Václav, 71 years old.

Indeed, folk culture has been manipulated in various ways, through different processes of representation and stereotypification. In this way, the people taking part in the expression of folklore today may consider themselves as activists for a ‘true’ vision of folklore, untainted by the previous regime’s connotations, and contrasting with the representation constructed by the latter. Folklore may still be perceived as something connected to the Communist Regime. However, there are many contrasting representations persisting nowadays, as this research project strives to outline. I chose to demonstrate this through the analysis of the motivations of the musicians for their enactment of folklore. Now that we mentioned the political aspect and uses of folk music, we will take a closer look at the national aspects imbued in folk music. By national aspects I do not only mean a straightforward national(istic) use, but also a cultural pride in national or regional heritage. This section will also cover the reliance on an

idealised past (where folklore is believed to stem from) and a certain need to feel historically connected or grounded that folklore can help to express.

As a reminder of what has been said in the theoretical and historical framework, folklore studies have been tremendously influenced by two theories or ideas we are willing to reconsider and question throughout this whole research project: the ideology of romantic nationalism and the myth of cultural evolution. Indeed, these two theories have contributed to the belief that modernisation was threatening cultural practices, and encouraged folklorists, ethnologists and collectors to focus their attention on the practices believed to be pure and ancient, surviving among the peasants. Romantic Nationalism has added another traditional historical layer by emphasising that these practices were expressing the ‘soul’ of a nation or a region, promoting them as such, and thus “avoiding those ‘contaminated’ by the influence of foreign, urban, or modern culture”⁸¹. However, I think it is of relevance to report here the words of Mark Slobin in order to oppose once again this fixed conception, frozen in an romanticised past: “I don’t think expressive culture really dies; you’d have to think of culture as a straight-line evolution to believe that, and I don’t. I think of it more as a spiral, changing, but dipping back along the way”⁸². Indeed, tradition (whether invented or not) is always inscribed in a continuity with an idealised past and with the envisioned values associated with that past. But fixing it in this past would blind our vision and hinder us from looking at the transforming aspects of tradition, discrediting them at first sight because they were not born in the ‘original’ rural and ancient context.

In the following part, I want to examine if a certain dimension inspired by Romantic Nationalism is important for my informants in their enactment of folklore, because tradition can obviously fill a gap and answer a need for some participants to feel historically that they are part of a certain continuity, together with a certain imagined community.

We will start this paragraph with the words of James Clifford on the predicament of ethnographic modernity: “ethnographic because [we find ourselves] off-centre among scattered traditions; modernity since the condition of rootlessness and mobility [we confront]

⁸¹ Juniper Hill and Caroline Bithell, *An Introduction to Music Revival as Concept, Cultural Process, and Medium of Change*, in Juniper Hill and Caroline Bithell (eds.), *Oxford Handbook of Music Revival*, Oxford University Press 2014, 6.

⁸² Mark Slobin, *Rethinking “Revival” of American Ethnic Music*, in “New York Folklore”, Vol. 9, No. 3, 1983, 37.

is an increasingly common fate”⁸³. In both cases, folklore itself plus the values it projects can serve as a reference point for many in the existential confusions of contemporary society. First, because it refers to an idealised past, with landmarks throughout the year, with a stronger connection to agriculture, nature, a simple way of life; second because of the idealised community living in this past, supposedly more supportive to each other in life situations. The community aspect will be discussed in the following chapter, and we will focus here on the reference to and mobilisation of this “quasi-mythic past-as-refuge”⁸⁴.

Of course, nostalgia can also come into play here, even if it is nostalgia for times one has not known or lived in. In this idealised past, modernisation is a threat and folklore is viewed as something disappearing and endangered. Some may still think about folklore this way in a general public opinion. However, as soon as one takes a closer look at folk processes, whether in rural or urban settings, this opinion is wiped out due to the diversity and vitality of these folk processes.

„In the city folk music and dance are – according to my experience – more present than what it would seem at first sight, and this across generations. Unfortunately in today’s Covid period it is repressed by the circumstances.“ Václav, 71 years old.

“František Bartoš said before 1900 [that folklore would disappear], ethnographers in the 60s said there would be nothing left, but many years have passed and there is still something. Folklore disappears in the form that someone walks around wearing the traditional costume, and there is already very little of this in our country, but crafts and musical folklore are getting into the position of regeneration, and the Covid situation also testifies to this: it won’t be so bad, quality will return and the movement will interest itself in the traditional way, it will not be part of everyday life, but it will be part of conservation”. Anežka, 30 years old.

As regards the traditional costume, all the participants wear it in the context of some concerts and events. However, they wear it in its living form, not just as a museum piece, together with the ‘always in movement’ tradition, and, as we will see below, they wear it because they enjoy wearing it, and some musicians also wear it outside of performance contexts.

⁸³ James Clifford, *The Predicament of Culture: Twentieth-Century Ethnography, Literature, and Art*, Harvard University Press 1988, 3.

⁸⁴ Juniper Hill and Caroline Bithell, *An Introduction to Music Revival as Concept, Cultural Process, and Medium of Change*, in Juniper Hill and Caroline Bithell (eds.), *Oxford Handbook of Music Revival*, Oxford University Press 2014, 13.

“Under normal circumstances, I wear the costume quite often and I always like it. Usually it is a performance with music or festivities such as Easter, Masopust (Carnival), festivals, etc...” Martin, 24 years old.

“Yes, I wear the traditional costume. Formerly in the ensemble activities, for performances, parades, festivities, but in our family it is normal, my mother and my sister started to make traditional costumes, already as a child I wore it for Christmas but otherwise I started to wear parts of the costume in civilian life, so it is not only for the activities and performances, typically we also wear the traditional costume with the family at Easter, sometimes, maybe not all of us, but we like it”. Anežka, 30 years old.

“I like to wear it. [...] And for festivity occasions, I also go to church wearing the traditional costume”. Magdalena, 60 years old.

In the same way as for traditional music, the traditional costume is neither reproduced in an untouchable fixed form, neither solely worn in the context of a performance for an external audience: the participants wear it for themselves, on personal or familial occasions, sometimes integrate fragments of it in their ‘civilian life’... Again, it is adapted in various ways to fit current needs, and this from different generations in multiple settings.

As a primary motivation for the enactment of folklore, the nation as such was rarely mentioned explicitly by the participants. It would definitely be encountered more in different settings and non-participatory (or less participatory) events. Indeed, these kinds of participatory events I observed tend to be more progressive and more motivated by socialisation and enjoyment than purely by the preservation of folk forms fixed in an idealised past representing the ‘soul of the nation’. This does not in any way mean that they are not of good musical quality, but rather that they are more open and mix influences in a ‘post-modern’ way, in accordance with their epoch and context.

“And on the other hand, the thing that some people play it because it’s our Czech national culture, I understand it but I don’t share the feeling because I enjoy when we meet with other musicians playing Hungarian music or Roma music, this level is not so important for me. It’s a personal thing, I’m not too interested in this nationalism, national identity, but for some other members of ensembles it is certainly important.” Matěj, 47 years old.

Indeed, instead of putting forward the national aspect, the participants spotlighted the regional and local elements in their practice of folklore. In most the cases, Moravian and Slovakian folklore is stressed, but this also extends to Roma or Hungarian folklore. Indeed, as we will see further on, the musicians know a lot about every region's characteristics regarding the way of playing, and they emphasise their influences from given regions.

"I grew up among Slovak folklore ensembles, so Slovakia, especially Eastern Slovakia, from Spiš, our leader was from the locality Kožov, it was also popular at that time to listen to bands such as for example Železiar, it was the base of our repertoire, but then from my own interest I got involved in folklore from the West, but mainly from central Slovakia, I'm interested in Liptov, Horehronie, Podpolanie, the most characteristic. " Anežka, 30 years old.

"I am personally influenced the most by forms of folklore from Uherské Hradiště, that's where I come from". Martin, 24 years old.

"We play especially music from Moravian, Czech and Slovakian regions, but also Roma, Romanian, Polish, Hungarian music. When touring abroad (France, China, Russia, Greece and others) we always prepared some local song which always met with huge sympathy".

Václav, 71 years old.

"In Cimbálová Muzika Lipka, we play Moravian songs, mainly from Horňácko, and there we don't collaborate with any dancing group". Miroslav, 75 years old.

These testimonies serve to illustrate many conceptions of a sense of place in the current practice of folklore. Respectively, influences from regions not tied to the place people grew up in but which grew up with them anyway, one influenced by the very region he grew up in, one very large supra-national conception, one very specific one. Moreover, every person brings his or her own experience. Thus, the national element as such (in terms of playing 'purely Czech music') is not actually stressed, musicians rather highlight influences from a given region, and not necessarily from the Czech Republic. Besides, 'national cultures' have always influenced each other and are constantly influencing each other. Ethnomusicology has taught us that music travels, that we cannot clearly delimitate it and confine it inside a closed border.

However, whether on a broader or smaller scale, the words of the participants express a desire to feel grounded, either geographically (with the sense of roots in a place), regarding identity

formation as it will be discussed later, or historically (a link with the ancestors). We encounter this last dimension the most in the following testimonies.

“We try to follow our ancestors” Miroslav, 75 years old.

“Of course! I have lived in the folklore world since birth and I am convinced that a person who did not or does not have the opportunity to live in a folklore community has been deprived of pride for the time of being aware of their own roots, national identity, tribal affiliation. National folk culture is - in all its forms - our greatest national treasure - unfortunately, increasingly dishonoured and neglected”. Magdalena, 60 years old.

“The family should sing to their children from their birth, teach them the relationship to music as such and lead them to the recognition/ to learn about the culture of our ancestors”.

Miroslav, 75 years old.

“It brings a feeling of national rootedness.” Magdalena, 60 years old.

These participants’ testimonies clearly fit into the category we named earlier cultural motivation for the enactment of folklore: a pride for a region/nation, a continuity with a past. Indeed, in the framework of this research, these aspects were encountered more among older generations, who do not live in Prague or another big city but rather in the countryside. But this type of motivation can also be encountered among younger generations. For example, when playing music from their region, from the place they were born in or/and grew up in, when playing or singing a song sang in their family, by their parents or grandparents, the musicians expressed an intimate cultural connection to folklore. But in this sense, this motivation was more apparent among the musicians who learnt folk culture ‘first hand’, i.e., the ones who grew up in a traditional environment, as we will develop later.

The enactment of folklore and folklore events obviously involves multiple generations. I intended to reflect this transgenerational affiliation with the interviews, by giving a voice to multiple age groups. Indeed, at first sight, one could primarily associate folklore with older generations. In the context of participatory events, as mentioned before, I was also surprised myself in the beginning to witness a huge interest from younger generations, i.e., young adults, who constitute the greatest proportion of the gatherings. Older generations told me they were pleased to see younger people taking an interest in their culture, their roots, their

ancestors; and adapting folk culture to their current needs, in the same way as older generations are transforming folk culture for it to fit in current contexts.

As we said earlier, folklore is associated at first sight with rural settings, older generations and fading traditions to be preserved in a given fixed form before they disappear. This project questions these persisting associations and considers the needs folklore can express. In this paragraph, we will take a closer look at the needs folklore can express, especially in an urban context. Folk culture can indeed help to develop a stronger sense of belonging and a stronger attachment to a place, to a tradition, to feel a closer link with previous generations or past ancestors, aspects that the city can lack or aspects that can be more easily missed in the city. Indeed, feelings of ‘placelessness’ or feelings of rootlessness are expressed more often by inhabitants from an urban context. And the kind of testimonies quoted above may seem more difficult to encounter in a city, and maybe even more by younger generations living in the city. But in this way, cultural motivations for the enactment of folklore, such as the ones cited above, can ease feelings of rootlessness and fulfil a certain need to feel historically connected or grounded that folk culture (whether national, regional or local) can convey.

“I think that many people like, especially in cities, when they start playing, singing, dancing to folk music, they realise that they lacked this, that it is filling their lives.” Václav, 71 years old.

Indeed, cities have been theorised as depersonalised places deprived of meaning, where one can easily get lost in confusion. As Václav’s comment stresses, *especially in cities*, folk culture can help fill this missing need, by providing a sense of place and a sense of roots, in contrast to a globalised and mobile world. In his article (and in order to be critical of it), Owe Ronström put together theorists’ narratives opposing modern societies to traditional societies, that are binding the first to change, motion, pluralism, multiple choices for the individual, and the latter to authenticity, stability, secure social norms and a life closer to nature⁸⁵. Obviously, one can get lost more easily in modernity and the sense of globalism, mobility and quickness it stimulates. In this way, folk movements can emphasise a desire to go ‘back to the roots’, but in a way built upon this opposition, i.e., the construction of the image of idealised traditional societies as opposed to modernity. However, the idealised image of traditional societies emerges from this modernity, and refers to a past one has not lived in, hence ‘quasi-mythical’.

⁸⁵ Owe Ronström, *Traditional Music, Heritage Music*, in Juniper Hill and Caroline Bithell (eds.), *Oxford Handbook of Music Revival*, Oxford University Press 2014, 55.

We also need to be critical in regard to this binary conceptualisation of tradition as opposed to modernity which automatically links folklore to anti-modern aspects and nostalgia.

Dissatisfaction with aspects of the modern world has indeed been defined as a characteristic of folk music revivals, and this is precisely why we wish to take a closer look at the dynamics of tradition in the modern world, repositioning the local in the global, and the rural in an urban context. In this sense, the following comment emphasises the fact that folklore means different things for different people, and encourages us to look at the dynamics of tradition of the global and the local:

“Again, definitely for some people it works this way, they turn to folk music as a kind of connection but for others it is part of this globalisation. I know musicians who play this, who play Moravian folklore but the next evening they play a mixture of Klezmer and Drum and Bass or jazz, they learn Moravian folklore and go to Balkan music and play a mixture of everything, so definitely folk music becomes part of this globalisation and mobile fluid culture but on the other hand some people take it as like they play mostly songs from their regions and have it as a very strict strongly locally defined and rooted connection”.

Matěj, 47 years old.

“But how can we avoid this in this globalised world, where we can have access to all information and where we can go where we want to go, how can we hinder people who are not, let’s say, “appropriate”, to take interest in and to represent a culture that is not their own, and to take it out of the context in which it was created and to enrich it with other fragments of a different culture?” Eliška, 22 years old.

However, the access to many different influences that our modern and globalised world has stimulated is considered as an enrichment for folklore. We want to see here the positive sides of the city and of global mobile fluid modernity, enabling and stimulating the access to different cultures and influences.

The above comments also introduce the question of territorial roots. Indeed, some people *“have [folklore] as a very strict strongly locally defined and rooted connection”*. Thus, the ones who do not have these roots sometimes see their legitimacy for enacting folklore called into question:

“People who are not doing anything wrong objectively are going to be frowned upon anyway for doing something they don’t represent because they lack the roots of a certain region for example”. Eliška, 22 years old.

Indeed, it does not mean folklore cannot be done in a good way by the ones who lack those territorial roots, but it nonetheless brings up the topic of the importance of local roots in the practice of folklore.

“Most of the time when I was speaking with Moravians and Slovaks they were telling me you play cimbalom, very strange, you are not from Moravia or Slovakia, why do you do this? I don’t know, I like it. Ah but you are from Prague so you do not know how to play it properly... I didn’t care that much but sometimes it made me think a lot about all this thing of geographical borders and territorial dimension...” Eliška, 22 years old.

In the following part, we will address the question of folklore in the city, in the eyes of the participants. In other words, we want to stress now the dynamics of tradition of the urban and the rural.

“Folklore in the city is an extensive topic, which has many particularities, and its functioning is different today from the countryside, especially in the Czech Republic. Today, the presentation of folklore is associated with some events. In the countryside, it is often traditions such as harvest festivals, carnivals, feasts, that are folklore, so formed by the very tradition based on the past. On the contrary, a culture of festivals and events has arisen in our cities, which are adapted so that folklore can be presented in its various modified forms and is not based on original traditions. Of course, such festivals can also be found in the countryside, used to present local and surrounding ensembles, but traditional events are often attended by locals, who are not even part of any groups and only carry, spread the tradition further, which is usually not possible in cities, as the tradition is no longer widespread.”

Martin, 24 years old.

Of course, and as the commentary above stresses, we could primarily associate the city with the palpable scattering and loss of traditions within its walls. Indeed, folklore in the city could easily (and dangerously) become decontextualised, theatralised, or festivalised. For example, if a harvest festival starts to be celebrated in the city, outside its usual context (the countryside), and only becomes staged for city dwellers who have nothing to do with the context in which it was created. In this way, folklore practice loses its whole significance.

UNESCO also acknowledges this threat of out-of-context theatrification and deplors the fact that it may lead to diminishing participation and a loss of significance for the people. Thus, we could argue that the need for significant folklore practices, speaking to inhabitants of the city, is even greater in an urban context. The urban context itself can be used as the starting point for emerging bearings, rituals or traditions. In Prague, we could take the example of *Folklorní Mejdlo* [Folklore Party], a participatory event investing a different space every month to make their events (with a high degree of participation) happen (Fig. 2). The city can thus become a playground and a possibility-opener for such activities, bringing folkloric events to different spaces (and revitalising those spaces at the same time) while creating and moving the community around them from one place to another. Those events do not seek to bring in the city and precisely recreate an original tradition from a region that one would, for example, feel nostalgia for. Instead, it rather answers the collective need of city dwellers for meaningful social interactions, for feeling we belong to or are part of a place, and creating a sense of attachment to the place through the events and community. Those events fill the participants' lives but they also want to show this beauty to others who do not really know it, so they can in turn be filled themselves. The purpose is accordingly twofold: to answer a feeling of placelessness or rootlessness that can be felt in a stronger way in the city and to get the tradition to be known better by inhabitants of cities, to bring countryside cultures to the city, where they are practically unknown. There is of course an intrinsic idea of 'going back to the roots', but I think that the idea of showing the unknown vitality of folklore is even more present: and thereby its liveliness and transformations, also englobing new emerging forms, which are not really based on 'original' traditions.

"I consider these activities to be beneficial, especially in terms of the efforts of young people from still-living (Moravian) folklore regions to transfer the liveliness and vitality of folklore life and the creation of a folklore community to large metropolises. I consider city festivals to be a good and important part of the cultural offer of every city and the possibility of presenting local folklore groups." Magdalena, 60 years old.

In this commentary, the dangers of festivalisation or theatrification are not stressed and the flourishing of a culture of festivals is preferably described in a positive way: presenting local folklore groups and spreading cultural diversity.

Indeed, the 'danger' of losing traditions in the cities is accompanied by a much more positive side: cities permit and stimulate the encounter of multiple and various influences thanks to

increased mobility, and they are the meeting point of various musicians becoming mutually enriched, creating new groups, new events, new smaller communities to feel tied to. Of course, Prague is a capital city, but it retains its human scale and accessibility to its musical scene without destroying new possible initiatives because they would seem too far away from one's reach. In this way, the city is considered as a place enabling increased connections between musicians, the intermingling of multiple influences and the creation of a sense of possibility on a relatively large scale regarding new initiatives and projects.

“Folklore is connected to the city a lot, because there are a lot of ensembles accumulating there, both in Brno and in Prague. I come from Brno, but I've been living in Prague for many years now and I meet folklore paradoxically very often, already as young people we organised various beseda u cimbálu [chat at the cimbalom], where you play, sing, drink wine... In fact life in Brno is very much connected with folklore, we organised various events in parallel with Folklorní Mejdlo [folklore party, participatory event in Prague]. I experienced some besedas in Prague, also an event called Folklore and City in a café in Brno. I don't have the feeling that folklore would lack, there are various seminars, but of course the movement around Folklorní Mejdlo was very activated, I was always meeting with the folklore community.” Anežka, 30 years old.

Indeed, the folklore community plays the most important role: they are motivated, active, in need of folk music and everything it brings them and making it happen. We will develop this in the following chapter focusing on folklore's social function and the role of the community.

In this paragraph, I would like to take the example of the *Masopust* (Carnival) of a small village near Prague – that did not use to have a historic *Masopust* tradition – to illustrate the desire to feel grounded in a tradition and connected with a community. Indeed, we assist here at this ‘carnavalesque’ comeback⁸⁶ or rather twenty-three-year-old creation whereas the place has no tradition or documented folk song collections. It started as a minor local happening,

⁸⁶ For its central function of criticising power, and other reasons, for example the superstitious (or tending towards the religious) aspect of those ritualistic events, *Masopust* was forbidden or highly discouraged during the years of the Communist regime. Indeed, most of the fertility rites, the celebrations for some Saints' days, or some other magical practices that contributed to the organisation of life in the villages were deemed too religious or superstitious, and merely suppressed, and sometimes with them the characteristic tunes and dances and songs associated with the particular event.

involving more or less 20 people and has grown, year after year, to reach maybe a few thousand participants in the big parade of 2020 (Fig. 1).

Most of the work is done voluntarily, simply because everybody enjoys being a creative part of it. *Masopust* requires a lot of preparation time, with for example the making of masks, the coordination of the event, and the organisation of the performances (musical, theatrical...). Their website announces that around 200 people volunteer for around 2500 hours all together. However, all these preparations throughout the year contribute to connecting people and thus creating a feeling of community. And of course, this sense of community is not only perceived by the organisers, as *Masopust* connected all the participants (a striking example was a big circle dance). Especially close to a big town like Prague, where everything become impersonal, anonymous, and social interactions are mostly limited to the spheres of work and home, this was one of the main aims of reviving or creating *Masopust* in this village: connecting people, making them meet up, for them to have fun and ritually do something together. *Masopust* participates in the satisfaction of this natural social human need of sharing with others by generating a sense of community, creating new social forms and relationships, linking people together, as well as with nature, by stressing our proximity with nature. Barry Stephenson emphasises the origins of the festival's renewal as a response to modernity and some of its characteristics: "feelings of placelessness and the loss of tradition; secularization and the inability of the church to serve as a centre for collective identity; the shrinking of social life to the family and workplace; the loss of seasonal rites that accompany the shift from agriculture to industry; and the attempt of urban populations to get back, however metaphorically, to roots and the land"⁸⁷. In our *Masopust* case, the inhabitants merely invented these roots to try to answer these needs, invented traditional costumes and the structure of the event, drawing inspiration from other places in the Czech Republic, and already pass this tradition along from generation to generation while trying not to break the continuity of the ritual (and this even in the current period of sanitary crisis, parts of the event occurred on a very small scale while respecting the enforced sanitary measures). Certainly, *Masopust* does not only connect people to each other, it also connects them to a past, either remembered or constructed, and also this connection with a common past helps to build the community together. This echoes Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger's notion of the invention of tradition, which means that the rituals of symbolic nature "seek to inculcate

⁸⁷ Barry Stephenson, *Ritual Negotiations in Lutherland*, in Ute Hüsken, Frank Neubert (eds.), *Negotiating Rites*, Oxford University Studies, Oxford University Press 2012, 92.

certain values and norms of behaviour by repetition, which automatically implies continuity with the past. In fact, where possible, they normally attempt to establish continuity with a suitable historic past.”⁸⁸ This relationship to the past takes the shape here of reconstituting certain aspects of it: for example, in Masopust the masks are based on traditional customs that are repeated year after year, the symbolic death of a pantomime horse named Klibna follows generations of deaths, and more generally the whole celebration announces the upcoming spring as it is a festivity in harmony with seasonal rites and cycles. The symbolic place of *holý vrch* (‘bald hill’, an ancient Bohemian settlement) may also contribute to an emphasised feeling of an ancient tradition, while relating to a mythical past. Moreover, the fact that Masopust is an extremely participatory event makes it the “embodiment of conviviality”⁸⁹, where everybody is called to celebrate together, through the costuming, music and dance. Here those ritual events, based on the calendar and seasonal festivities contrast with the society of modernity; as they generally come directly from the people and their full participation, because they are an integral part of the rituals that punctuate life throughout the years and create new social forms and relationships. *Masopust*, as a ritualistic event, is a way for people to connect to a collective, to remember or construct a mythical past, to build social solidarity, and to form or maintain a community. *Masopust* is deeply rooted in the idea of tradition, with a lot of symbolic elements such as sweepers opening the way, circle dances (considered as the border for something magical going on inside), *Klibna*’s death... However, people really identify with those traditions and feel closely connected to them, and it is not a solemn ceremony to preserve this tradition from disappearing, but rather a strong connection to cultural heritage. This case helps us transition to the following paragraph, which will accentuate the importance of the community and its solidary ties in the practice of folklore.

⁸⁸ Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger, *The Invention of Tradition*, Cambridge University Press 1983, 1.

⁸⁹ Barry Stephenson, *Ritual Negotiations in Lutherland*, in Ute Hüsken, Frank Neubert (eds.), *Negotiating Rites*, Oxford University Studies, Oxford University Press 2012, 93.

Social function of folklore according to the participants

For all of the participants, the social aspect of folklore participation plays an important role in their practice, and is an important argument for them to stay involved in folklore and to like it that much. Indeed, the fact of meeting with people on a relatively regular basis leads to the development of strong ties, and to the creation of a kind of mutual solidarity network that manifests itself in life situations. Moreover, the participants share a common interest and passion for folklore among themselves that unites them, and this even more as it is a relatively small and unknown (to the general public) community. We will take a closer look at this community aspect in this chapter. We already mentioned the fact that the social basis of folklore was theorised in folkloric studies as one of its “original” functions. Depending on the theory, folklore and its social aspect are more or less central to each other. This ranges from a highly reflective theory, considering folklore as the mere mirroring of the social structure in which it was born and of course to the other way around, i.e., collective musical expression strengthening community ties. Anyhow, the social basis of folk music is constantly shifting and is very much linked to processes of identity formation and identification. These are the general topics that will be addressed along this chapter.

We will start by quoting the words of the well-known ethnomusicologist Alan Lomax. “Indeed, it might be argued that a principal function of music and dance is to augment the solidarity of a group. Singing the same melody, dancing to the same rhythm, even utilizing the same pitch or the same levels of accent or any of the shared regularities of behaviour essential to song or dance performance arise from and enhance a sense of communality. Such activity represents a decision that a certain stretch of communication is of central significance to the group producing or attending it. Thus every performance demands and brings about group solidarity in some degree”⁹⁰. Now even if Alan Lomax was carrying fieldwork and writing in the sixties, and that folklore studies have since developed into a less ethno/euro/andro centrist perspective, his argument here seems unshakeable. Apart from debates concerning the fact of assigning the principal function of music and dance to its social aspect (the social aspect is seldom denied, only its primacy and assertion as a key condition), contradicting his words seems difficult, as it would be equivalent to denying the power of music for interactions and social relations. Indeed, now taking the words of Thomas Turino regarding social solidarity, “we depend on social groups to survive emotionally and

⁹⁰ Alan Lomax, *Folk Song Style and Culture*, American Association for the Advancement of Science 1968, Transaction Publishers Rutgers New Jersey 2009, 171.

economically and to belong to something larger than ourselves”⁹¹. Thus, this chapter will examine some of the ways in which the practice of folklore and folk music is socially meaningful for our participants, in the formation and maintenance of social groups, in the understanding of one’s identities and thus of one’s self, for a type of communication freed from its verbal burden... We outlined in the previous chapter the ways in which music could be socially meaningful for political purposes, and social cohesion is certainly an important aspect of it and for its mobilisation.

The formation and maintenance of social groups seems to be the more obvious and visible part of folklore’s social aspect. First of all, friendship is a very important element in folklore practice. Folklore enables people to meet other people, with whom they share a common passion or at least a common interest or curiosity that can develop into passion with the help and impulsion of those very people. Meeting friends and friendship was highlighted in the interviews by all the participants without exception when answering questions such as “what does folklore bring to you?”, “why do you stay involved in folklore?”, “what role plays the ‘meeting with people’ part in folklore for you?”, or more explicitly, “how important is the social dimension for you in your folklore practice?”. Moreover, the friends met by the participants in the context of folkloric events are not only limited to this sphere and extend to other realms of everyday life as they often become lifelong friends or life partners.

“It brought me and brings me a lot – for example through folk music I met my wife and also many excellent people from the most varied ages, professions, education, nationalities and so on... ” Václav, 71 years old.

They help each other out in significant life situations, for example caring for each other’s children, giving a hand if somebody is moving house, helping to organise one’s wedding and of course singing and playing there, along with emotional, psychological and all other kinds of precious support characteristic of friendship (social solidarity). They often organise collective trips among themselves, for example to folkloric festivals and folkloric events, where they of course play and meet new people as well as friends they had not seen for a long time.

“For me, it is a lifestyle and in my essence it influences me daily. For example when I meet with friends that I met thanks to folklore, then I listen predominantly to only folk music, I go

⁹¹ Thomas Turino, *Music as Social Life: the Politics of Participation*, Chicago and London: the University of Chicago Press 2008, 3.

back to Uherské Hradiště for traditional events and even holidays are folklore festivals for me, where people don't really relax, more the other way around [laughs]. There are plenty of such things". Martin, 24 years old.

All this leads to the development of very strong ties among them, that renders their practice of folklore even more personally important and valuable. This also applies the other way around, as their personal involvement and attachment to the other members strengthens the community in return. Moreover, this folk world is quite a small and intimate community. The fact that the expression of folk forms is not limited to a sole performance taking place in the public sphere bolsters a certain feeling of intimacy: for example, folk forms expressed in a familial context, during rehearsals, in the framework of participatory events... but we could also argue that folklore festivals and events are a sort of in-between, bubble or liminal place⁹² that is not really located in the public sphere, as it mobilises and appeals to the ones taking interest in folklore. When taking place in a completely public sphere, people outside the folk community may not understand what is going on and small clashes may arise easier as the values put forward by the movements may contrast to the ones dominant in the public sphere (for example solidarity and sharing versus individualism and orientation towards profit, or more material questions such as the blocking of a street due to an event disrupting car circulation...).

"Every meeting with people for the purpose of collective singing, dancing and playing music together is socially very beneficial for both individuals and for society. " Václav, 71 years old.

Indeed, this feeling of collectiveness and togetherness, whether entirely felt or merely imagined is very important for us as humans. Practically all the musicians highlighted the fact that they really miss these kinds of interactions due to the Covid situation, and express their desire to get back to it as soon as possible. This feeling of togetherness could also go as far as experiencing a feeling of oneness with the others, through shared activities among members of the collective, and the feeling of belonging to a certain collective and community: "sharing with other ensembles members a feeling that they belong to a collective that encompasses all the people who dedicate their lives, or at least their free time, to folklore"⁹³, "Feel part of the

⁹² Victor Turner, *Liminality and Communitas*, in *The Ritual Process: Structure and Anti-Structure* (1969), Aldine Transaction 1995, pp. 94-113.

⁹³ Joseph Grim Feinberg, *The Paradox of Authenticity: Folklore Performance in Post-Communist Slovakia*, University of Wisconsin Press 2018, 103.

community through the realisation of shared cultural knowledge and style and through the very act of participating together in performance.”⁹⁴ Indeed, this feeling is realised through the means of a shared collective experience, where signs of social intimacy are experienced directly by the participants. Moreover, folklore events also obviously involve dancing and drinking, thus reinforcing the bodily proximity and contact. This can be enlarged to a more general context, the one of the beginning of the dancing houses and participative movements in the late 60s onwards, where music saw a return of its more embodied and experienced forms, with more bodily contact and less disembodied music (“you do not dance on classical music”). Thus, bodily proximity reinforces the social intimacy and the feeling of belonging to a special community, a microcosm in which people share strong ties among themselves. “Communities are imagined and embodied in the shared activity of the people who imagine them”.⁹⁵

“For me the social function is of course a big part, this is why I love it so much. Folklore community is for me fundamental and when events don’t occur in my surroundings, then I am able to bring them to me, to plan activities, I speak with musician friends to organise collective evenings in a different way.” Martin, 24 years old.

To put it simply, the members of the folk community/the ones enacting folklore enjoy playing music together, being and feeling that they are part of the collective with the same interests and the same passion as their own.

In the following paragraphs, I want to emphasise the fact that the folklore community and the social aspect of folklore events is key to one’s identity formation. Indeed, individuals develop a sense of identity through their interactions with others. The sense of belonging somewhere and feeling a connection to a community, to a place, to a region, to an activity helps individuals to have a better understanding of their own identity, musical and personal (with the two kinds obviously mutually shaping each other). Indeed, they construct their identity through their belonging to the collective and shape at the same time a collective identity all together, what we call here in a general sense the ‘folklore community’. As Simon Frith says:

⁹⁴ Thomas Turino, *Music as Social Life: The Politics of Participation* Thomas Turino, Chicago and London: the University of Chicago Press 2008, 3.

⁹⁵ Joseph Grim Feinberg, *The Paradox of Authenticity: Folklore Performance in Post-Communist Slovakia*, University of Wisconsin Press 2018, 123.

“the question we should be asking here is not what does popular music reveal about “the people” but how does it construct them”⁹⁶.

Beyond the attachment and sense of belonging to a given collective, musicians also tie themselves to places and to a continuity with the past. According to Max Baumann, the acknowledgement of local identities is another counter-concept against modern globalisation⁹⁷. Indeed, against the complexity/confusion/alienation of the modern world, folk culture helps to celebrate regionalism, a sense of place, go back to the roots and to a certain simplicity. These aspects are stereotypically tied to folk culture in cultural imagery: we already mentioned the idealisation of the simplicity and nobility of the peasant and of pastoral life. The idea of a simpler but purer way of life contrasts once again with the massive commercialisation occurring with modernity, and participatory movements favour these non-commercial musical expressions. The commercial aspect of musical expression was criticised in one testimony, stating that nowadays, “*it is common to be a musician without a permanent band (and - unfortunately - a regional anchor) and to do business with anyone who offers an interesting fee*” (Magdalena, 60 years old). And it here again bridges the celebration of regional ties, as seen in our previous chapter.

In this way, the image that participatory movements project can be attractive to a wide range of musicians, coming from various backgrounds (for example musicians with a classical formation), as they can feel it emancipates them from a certain rigidity or from the industry and its constraints, and playing because they really want to play. It then brings them the feeling to belong to the traditional environment because of their self-identification to it and the subsequent collective identity they build.

For many of the musicians, this kind of folk identity is not a direct part of their geographic background, as they discovered it and adopted it later. This applies for example to musicians who were raised in Prague or more generally in Bohemia and did not grow up in a folkloric familial context in the conventional sense, or that had very little contact with it while growing up (when visiting grand-parents in the countryside, for Easter carolling...). Nonetheless, the traditional music they are playing comes from the regions of Moravia and also Slovakia. It is

⁹⁶ Simon Frith, *Music and Society: the politics of Composition, Performance and Reception*, Cambridge University Press 1987, 137.

⁹⁷ Max Peter Baumann, *Folk Music Revival: Concepts Between Regression and Emancipation*, in “The World of Music”, Vol. 38, No. 3, *Folk Music Revival* 1996, 79.

different with my Moravian informants: in their case, traditional culture is an integrant part of their regional background in the geographical sense, and was also practiced in their familial contexts: musician father/siblings, dancing mother, singing, playing and learning new songs with the family, sewing traditional costumes, telling folk tales, listening to a traditional folk music hour on the radio...

In many testimonies from the participants, we encounter again the difference between learning folklore first hand or second hand, i.e., as part of one's direct geographical and familial background or not. In the second case, the musicians are more concerned with their legitimacy to enact this folklore as legitimate culture-bearers.

“Moravians and Slovaks were really into it, to transmit their tradition and culture to the others, they grew up surrounded by all this, it was more natural, you could feel it. I don't come from a folkloric region, I don't have these kinds of roots, what could I represent?”

Eliška, 22 years old.

But, notwithstanding the fact that traditional culture is certainly stronger in the personal sense in Moravia, we must remind ourselves that we want to show here its persistence and vitality in the context of an urban capital such as Prague, a place not really enshrined in a regional traditional culture but where folk processes are nonetheless present, and this as opposed to a general public opinion that would tend not to know and see them.

However, the fact that folk culture was discovered later in one's life does not hinder the very important community aspect of folk movements. Indeed, the sense of community is primarily based on shared affinities. This brings us to an interesting term defined by Thomas Turino in *Music as Social Life: cultural cohorts*. He uses it as follows, in order to refer “to social groupings that form along the lines of specific constellations of shared habit based in similarities of parts of the self”⁹⁸. In this way, we also reject the conception of ‘culture’ as a holistic or unified entity. It gives us space for more flexibility, and allows us to take into account the “variety of habit trajectories because of similar or different experiences, social positioning, and aspects of the self”. To take the words of Tamara Livingston, this provides us with a “framework for talking about broadly shared habits and beliefs without losing sight of

⁹⁸ Thomas Turino, *Music as Social Life: the Politics of Participation*, Chicago and London: the University of Chicago Press 2008, 111.

the individual and his or her socially and individually constituted identity, and it reminds us of the necessity of grounding the global in the local⁹⁹”.

Indeed, in the modern world and the increased communication and mobility it stimulated, individuals can identify with multiple groups, this due to increasingly permeable social boundaries, according to Frederick Barth. He defined ethnic groups as “categories of ascription and identification by the actors themselves, [that] thus have the characteristic of organising interaction between people”¹⁰⁰. Once again, this helps us to reject an essentialist point of view and focus more on shifting boundaries than on what they enclose. Following this aspect, somebody who did not grow up in traditional culture can also identify with it and become an integral and integrated part of that group – if he or she is also recognised as so by the other members of the group. The words of Philip Bohlman confirm our argument: “the geographic basis of folk music has not disappeared, but it has effectively migrated from rural to urban models, from simple to complex settings”¹⁰¹. A geographic basis can and needs to be felt in an urban context (because of every region’s particularities), and this even without a ‘first-hand’ connection to traditional culture (although yearning for a better knowledge of it). But the city can function as a giant concentration to learn more about a diversity of multiple styles coming from different regions that can be now found in the same place, setting up new boundaries and new possibilities of identification to various groups. All these themes are intimately connected with each other and it is difficult to draw a clear line among them, in the same way that every chapter re-crosses aspects of the previous ones. Likewise, our subject of study is perpetually shifting and always in movement – we can neither consider cultures nor groups as completely closed on themselves or as bounded entities.

To come back to identity, another participant from Moravia, without denying the difference between learning folklore first or second hand, emphasised the great power of folklore to help a sense of belonging, and this even if it was discovered later in one’s life.

“It depends, whether a person came later into folklore or if they grew up in it, for someone who grew up in it, it may be like a natural component of their life, they dedicate themselves, it

⁹⁹ Tamara Livingston, *An Expanded Theory for Revivals as Cosmopolitan Participatory Music Making*, in Juniper Hill and Caroline Bithell (eds.), *Oxford Handbook of Music Revival*, Oxford University Press 2014, 65.

¹⁰⁰ Frederick Barth, *Ethnic Groups and Boundaries*, 1969, 9-16, 10.

¹⁰¹ Philip Bohlman, *The Study of Folk Music in the Modern World*, Indiana University Press 1988, 67.

belongs to their life, however I think that for a lot of people self-identification with the traditional environment or to the songs is very important, collective singing is also very important for people, and also some kind of belonging somewhere, some kind of self-determination, folklore does help this.” Anežka, 30 years old.

In the same way, another participant stressed female strength as another important aspect of what her practice of folklore is bringing her. Indeed, the power that emerges from collectives and collective activities multiplies the emotional strength that can be sensed individually, and also consolidates the collective itself. Singing in a choir is already a powerful experience, with the multiplicity of voices merging in one unity, but singing in a militant choir, or singing in a women’s choir adds another dimension of shared identity to the experience itself. Indeed, gender, class, colour or occupation influence habits and experiences. And a shared experience expressed with a song reinforces the feeling of collective, of being all part of a same identity, and experiencing the same problems because of this assigned or chosen identity. In the same interview, the participant underlined the occupation differences of all the different members of the folk group she is part of, *“that they are all very diverse, that it is very beautiful and pure”*. And in this case, they share a gender identity in addition to the folkloric identity, the cultural cohort they create, endorse and perform together.

In this way, folklore can be perceived as bringing people something they are missing in their everyday life. As stressed in the theoretical and historical introduction and drawing on the works of philosophers, sociologists or historians who highlighted the impersonal aspect of the city, folklore can fulfil this need for meaningful social interaction with people sharing the same interests, this microcosm of the folklore community, with strong links and meaningful connections. We also put forward the opposition between an increasingly globalised and mobile world and a strong desire for a sense of local belonging, and attachment to a specific place, a tie to certain origins. All this is in line with the research questions we outlined in the introduction: what needs does folklore express in this context and how does it answer those needs? We can remember here Václav’s significant comment already quoted above: *“I think that people like, especially in cities, when they start playing, singing, dancing to folk music, they realise that they lacked this, that it is filling their lives.”*

Many folklorists or ethnomusicologists saw revivals of traditional music in general as responses to social and cultural change. In this case we see folk music revivals as a response

to ‘modernisation’ in that they can express the quest for an idealised primordial community. As Richard Blaustein puts it, “such revivals of traditional music enable modern people to offset disorientation and displacement by enabling them to periodically regenerate an idealized primordial community evoked through particular historical musical styles”¹⁰². In the previous chapter, we used the same arguments when referring to the romanticisation of an idealised past for itself. Now, we merely transfer our attention to the idealised community that used to live in this past. The example of the *Masopust* narrated above also illustrates this desire and need to revive this primordial community.

To sum up our chapter about the social functions of folklore, it allows participants to answer questions about their identity and their place in society: by feeling they belong to a collective sharing strong emotional ties among itself. In our modern period that has been defined as “liquid modernity” to take Zygmunt Bauman’s terms¹⁰³ (“where all that is solid melts into air”¹⁰⁴), it enables the participants to feel an attachment, an anchor point and a fastening belt to a place and a community. It provides them with a strong sense of identity and contrasts with the modern fear of losing identities in the globalised mass culture. “The fact that most humans can no longer conveniently exhibit their cultural specialness by dress, social structure, material culture, or even by their location, language or religion has given music an increased role as an emblem of ethnicity. Culture units, nations, minorities, even age groups, social classes, educational strata all identify themselves by adherence to particular repertoires and styles of music. As other means of identification become less effective, music is increasingly stressed. I would agree this is why world music of the twentieth century has retained its diversity”¹⁰⁵. Once again, the role of (folk) music in identity construction is powerfully stressed in the above quotation. And once again, this is even more relevant with the participatory forms of folk music, as participants really do feel part of the collective as they are embodying and performing directly their folk identity through their collective activity, together with the other members.

Thus, as a response to (a negatively perceived) modernisation (associated with a certain homogenisation of culture), the folklore community inscribed in an idealised past offers a

¹⁰² Richard Blaustein, *Grassroots Revitalization of North American and Western European Instrumental Music Traditions from Fiddlers Associations to Cyberspace*, in Juniper Hill and Caroline Bithell (eds.), *Oxford Handbook of Music Revival*, Oxford University Press 2014, 562.

¹⁰³ Zygmunt Bauman, *Liquid Modernity*, Cambridge 2000.

¹⁰⁴ Marx and Engels, *Manifesto of the Communist Party* [trans. Samuel Moore] 1888, 16.

¹⁰⁵ Bruno Nettl, *The Western Impact on World Music: Change, Adaptation and Survival*, Schirmer Books New York 1985, 165.

strong basis for identity construction, with a collective bound by solidarity ties and a feeling of belonging. In this way, participatory movements of folk music express the participants' desires and needs for meaningful social interactions and meaningful social connections with significant others, and others sharing the same passion (something we can consider as a key human emotional need). Also, interactions are not limited to the sphere of verbal communication but can be expressed through musical, dancing, emotional, bodily, facial and many more types of communication. To finish, the folklore community is pretty active, follows events to illustrate their strong desire, like a necessity, and strongly misses events when they do not or cannot happen.

Now, in order to position ourselves in a more theoretical context, and to transition at the same time to the following chapter, it was especially after the publication of Merriam's *Anthropology of Music* in 1964 that the study of music became inherently linked to social behaviour. Indeed, since then, the whole field of ethnomusicology reconsidered the idea that music would be essentially aesthetically autonomous and taught us to look at music's value beyond its intrinsic qualities, and so to also seek its extra-musical associations, and the social relations surrounding it. In the previous chapters, we agreed that the national was not an intrinsic quality of (folk) music and we therefore focused on its extra-musical associations (political, mythical, historical, idealised, romanticised...) and its uses (political, of legitimisation...). In this present chapter, we tried to cover the topic of folk music as a form of social interrelation¹⁰⁶ in a more collective way, i.e., focusing on folk community construction and preservation through processes of identification (collective or not). As Bruno Nettl puts it in a simple way, the field of musicology extended its horizon to study not only the "music itself", i.e., as sound, but also "music in culture, how it interacts with other things people do", as well as of course music as culture, as a product of human society and thus inherently social¹⁰⁷. And once again, we want to focus more on processes than on given products and "we stress the understanding of musical change"¹⁰⁸. The following chapter, extremely linked to the one we are closing now, zooms in on music's interrelation with the social fact and will focus on a more personal musical behaviour, combined with questions regarding the

¹⁰⁶ Franco Fabbri, *Music as a Form of Social Interrelation*, in Josep Martí, and Sara Revilla (eds.), *Making Music, Making Society*, Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars Publishing 2018, 35.

¹⁰⁷ Bruno Nettl, *The Study of Ethnomusicology: Thirty-one Issues and Concepts*, University of Illinois [1st ed. 1985] 2003, 7.

¹⁰⁸ Nettl, *The Study of Ethnomusicology*, 13.

understanding/articulation of social relations/life/structure through folk music and the understanding/articulation of folk music through social relations/life/structure.

Personal practice/ conceptions of folklore

We just discussed the community ties and social interactions of folklore movements as well as the self-identification aspects of the participants to the latter. In this chapter, we will consider this social aspect in a more personal way. How does the participant's practice of folklore manifest itself in his or her life, and how does it influence his or her lifestyle? This is linked to many other facets related in a more or less pronounced way to the previous chapter. Of course, folklore becomes important for participants thanks to a powerful combination of elements including links with the other people involved, links with a place, a region or a traditional environment (as discussed in the above chapters), as well as musical elements. This chapter will address the views of folklore as a hobby, or an interesting way of enjoying one's free time, also thanks to the people taking part in the movement and to the parties; as well as folklore as a lifestyle, a way of life, or a reflection of one's values. It is also understood by the participants (as well as by the audiences or from an outsider's point of view) as a personal way to fulfil oneself creatively, and to feel oneself improving and developing, musically, socially, intellectually...

"Thanks to my musical talent or my gradual focus, I moved on to music, to which I devote all of my free time today" Martin, 24 years old.

Indeed, the practice of folk music and folk culture in a more general sense can enable the musicians to fulfil themselves personally in a creative way: they can feel themselves improving and developing, alongside with the direct pleasure one gets from singing and playing. Thus, we will here present more aesthetic motivations for the participants' enactment of folklore.

"For me the cultural connection is not there, it's not part of the heritage. But as a way to socialise, to find friends, be musician as a teenager, good at something, get positive feedback, and you play a nice solo, people applaud, you see all the girls and there is positive social interaction, it's better than in other groups. I was also in a boy's scouts' group but playing in the ensemble has brought the most. We have an interesting team, we played together for 10 years, learnt how to play together, to communicate, and all had approximately the same age.

We played quite well, and enjoyed the pure enjoyment of the music. These are the reasons why I remained here for 25 years as a full member, and even now I still play with them, at events like Folklorní Mejdlo [folklore party, participatory event in Prague]. So yeah, social interaction and pure aesthetic pleasure. This is my why.” Matěj, 47 years old.

Of course, the energy shared with the audience and a certain sense of connection with the latter in a more performative context was also put forward by the musicians as a motivation.

“Meeting with people is important, we play for them and our energy comes back to us from the spectators and this charges us”. Miroslav, 75 years old.

Indeed, also because of the social interactions (as stressed in the previous chapter) and the atmosphere of the parties, the enactment of folklore becomes a very interesting way to enjoy one’s free time, to the point of dedicating the most possible time to it. It was defined by the participants as a hobby, to which one wants to devote herself or himself more and more.

After looking a bit more closely into the participants’ motivations for their enactment of folklore, we understood that it is more than just a leisure activity, or a way of spending a Saturday afternoon like one could have gone to play football. Or maybe it is actually a good comparison for football enthusiasts, if we could look at the many similarities between sports and folklore: fertile ground for nationalist purposes and nationalistic uses, appropriated for the construction and consolidation as well of representation of national identities (for domestic as well as foreign audiences), sense of belonging through team support, creation of a bond of attachment to an abstract entity, personal development, spectacles, commodification and commercialisation of entertainment...¹⁰⁹ In any case, it profoundly influences their lives and their lifestyles. The participants I contacted for interviews are passionate and devote themselves fully to what they are doing, and they spend much more time involved in folklore than one could expect from a material point of view, i.e., a weekly rehearsal and some subsequent concerts. They do rehearse with their ensembles for upcoming performances, but they rehearse on their own, they listen to folk music, they think about it, read about it, speak about it, they attend folkloric events (dancing, crafts, workshops, gatherings...), just for the pleasure (and it may also be sometimes tiring physically); it is all part of a whole.

¹⁰⁹ Barbara J. Keys, *Sport, the State and International Politics*, in Barbara J. Keys (ed.), *Globalizing Sport*, pp. 17-39, Harvard University Press 2006.

“When you spend purposefully several hours per day listening, looking at, playing folklore, it really becomes a big part of your everyday life”. Martin, 24 years old.

“It influences a lot my life and lifestyle, I constantly think about it, as a member of several folklore ensembles, as a redactor, and it is also in my life in a material form, I wear the traditional costume even outside of the context of performances. But I mainly devote myself to it musically, I always think about it, I always listen to some recordings, I deal with how something is played in a specific place, etc...” Anežka, 30 years old.

As we are constantly trying to emphasise, this whole research project is more focused on the process of playing folk music than on a certain ‘material’ result (that would be defined in this context as a performance for example). Thus, we want to take a closer look at the process of learning and the process of rehearsing as an end in itself and a source of enjoyment for itself, not oriented solely towards a given performance in a defined form. This is also why we chose to focus on participatory events.

Regarding the process of rehearsing, I chose to report here the comment of a participant that goes towards the ‘original’ way of playing folk music: meeting after one’s day of work, sharing each other’s problems and supporting each other, talking about life, eating and drinking together:

“...whereas we’re always the 10 girls who see each other in the kitchen or the flat of one of us once a week to drink wine, eat and sing”. Eliška, 22 years old.

This comment goes against a way of thinking about the practice of folk music in a very hierarchical way. Indeed, many folklore ensembles project a much more choreographed image – and project it to an audience – during their staged performances. Here, in a more participatory context, the desire to enact folk music seems sincerer and truer as it is enacted for one’s self (and for the other selves sharing the same passion) primarily. Outside of a performance and hierarchical context, musicians can enact folklore “to demonstrate that they have internalized authentic folklore and can enact it “naturally”. It is important for them to make it known that they are not just performing their enjoyment but really do enjoy”¹¹⁰. This goes in the sense of having folk music and folk culture intrinsically, as something natural, as a

¹¹⁰ Joseph Grim Feinberg, *The Paradox of Authenticity: Folklore Performance in Post-Communist Slovakia*, University of Wisconsin Press 2018, 102.

mother tongue, that one has so deeply internalised that he or she can own transform it and make it their own freely because he or she understood the inner structure of it.

“I learnt to sing since I was small, so I carry/take it naturally [...] I first started playing the piano, which my dad pushed for, because he is a supporter of the thesis that the piano is the basis. Then I somehow fluently came across the double bass...” Martin, 24 years old.

“I try to modify the songs according to my knowledge, completely freely.”

Václav, 71 years old.

In the same way as the fact that through the learning of a new language one gets also closer to new conceptions of the world carried by that language, folk music, understood as a language to be learnt and internalised, can convey conceptions of the world. This brings us back to Antonio Gramsci’s impetus to study folklore as a conception of the world and life. It is of importance here to mention that Gramsci did not have a very favourable opinion about folklore. However, he encouraged its study because he recognised the strong influence of folklore on social life, “to know what other conceptions of the world and of life are actually active in the intellectual and moral formation of young people, in order to uproot them and replace them with conceptions which are deemed to be superior”¹¹¹. So, even if we do not share Gramsci’s goal for the study of folklore, we accept its implications, i.e., that it carries a conception of the world, and this shares a lot with the reflectivity concept already mentioned. Indeed, many theories have pointed out the way folklore reflects a certain social structure or organisation, in terms of rituals or gender roles for example. “All musics are intrinsically social, but the intrinsic sociality of different musics is articulated and mediated in different ways in different societies, thus reflecting and bringing to expression the different manifestations of social process that can be found in different societies”¹¹². Thus, we should understand folklore as a reflection of the conditions of life of the people. This was confirmed in some testimonies of the participants, for example:

“First I find a lot of power in the melodies but also in the texts. The texts are really something simple but very profound but not simple at the same time because it speaks about horrible

¹¹¹ Antonio Gramsci, *Selections from Cultural Writings*, trans. William Boelhower, Cambridge, Harvard University Press 1985, 191, quoted in Stephen Olbrys Gencarella, *Gramsci, Good Sense, and Critical Folklore Studies*, “Journal Of Folklore Research”, Vol. 47, No. 3, Indiana University Press 2010, 222.

¹¹² John Shepherd, *Whose Music? A Sociology of Musical Languages*, Transaction Publishers 1977.

things but of things which were lived by the people and who thus represent in a certain way the world, a part of the world, and often they are songs that are not even simple to sing, and I'm speaking here more about the texts, the content, sometimes it isn't simple musically either but sometimes singing about, fff, how a women was beaten by a man or how she committed suicide eating herbs she gathered in the mountain, it's not simple but it's life."

Eliška, 22 years old.

The songs and tunes speak about people's everyday lives and can reveal a lot more than expected on a given society, if one is willing to dig into the old recordings. Indeed, we can learn about ways of living, dying, doing things, working, guarding sheep, playing, entertaining oneself or entertaining the collective, through concrete situations or small details of everyday life. It could resemble the making of certain archaeology methods, and thus rests on many assumptions, but that can help us come to a better understanding of a given society.

"Playing folk music satisfies me a lot. Folk authors managed to express through the texts their feelings and truths of life, joys, worries, love for nature". Miroslav, 75 years old.

Indeed, we saw in the previous chapter how folk music helped to construct the social (to build a community, a collective identity...). Now, through the participants' testimonies, we are shedding light on the fact that folk music can also reflect the social (representations of the world, values...). We already introduced this aspect with the help of the reflectivity theory: folk music reflects some of the people's conditions of life and folk music is also considered as an active ingredient of social formation. The articulations between music and the social are thus multiple and multidirectional, in the ways that they help to construct social formations and that these social formations reflect people's ways of thinking about the world and life. And obviously, people's ways of thinking about the world and life is something expressed in folk music as it stems (or at least is believed to stem) from the people. Folk music can help to reflect and express people's or different groups' representations of the world and values, because people project themselves in folklore. In the participants' testimonies, this was also expressed by a desire to fight against stereotypes associated with folk songs.

"For many people I've met during my involvement it does, of course it is connected to certain stereotypes, when you play Moravian folk music you will meet many stereotypes, about wine drinking and Moravia, a kind of patriotism of this particular part of Czech Republic, and maybe you can find people maybe more inclined to more conservative views, maybe. It

depends if you look at people from ensembles who are from Moravia from small villages, or if you look at me from big cities and who learnt it as a second culture. But it's of course it's hard to tell, in Moravia this connection with conceptions of the world is stronger and in bigger cities weaker, it's hard to clearly say. But otherwise today folklore means many different things to many different people". Matěj, 47 years old.

Indeed, different groups take folk music and use it for different purposes. Especially in the framework of participative events, folk music is appropriated by the participants in a way contrasting with conservatism (or purism), by allowing more fusions in the music, by dancing without necessarily wearing the full traditional costume...

"Even if [Folklorní Mejdlo, a monthly participatory event/party in Prague] pretends to be a progressive event, where we take folklore as a means of socialisation, I try to invite bands that don't play too artificially, but that bring some kind of authentic sound, to convey the dance to the people, who might not know it yet, I try to use what still hasn't been devastated by socialism, which has made it such a pozlátko (glitz, gilt, gloss, superficial brilliance)".

Anežka, 30 years old.

Indeed, as suggested by her words, Anežka is one of the organisers of the participatory event she is talking about. More interviews in the organisational sense would also be an interesting continuation in the development of this research. It seems there is not a lot of literature or research on the question yet. However, her commentary quoted above seems to me a good summary of some of the contrasting representations of folklore we have addressed so far. As we saw in chapter two, it considers folklore as a means of socialisation, as a way to meet people and friends. And as we are describing now, it aspires to fight against stereotypes associated with folklore (centred solely around wine drinking and beautiful girls), and against the negative connotations created in the times of Socialism. We could argue that a new aspect has emerged as an outcome of this impetus in the last decades: the attractiveness and coolness of folklore.

"Actually when I was a kid and started going to this folklore ensemble it was definitely not cool because I had this funny costume and sang the songs that were not cool because at the time like in the 80s and 90s this music was definitely not cool, the folklore itself was still perceived as something connected to the Communist regime. What was cool then was when my schoolmates saw that because I was playing with the ensemble, I could travel somewhere with the ensemble and they saw that this activity had some cool aspects but now during those

20 years many people changed their views about the folklore but you probably cannot put a finger on when and what changed it. It was like a gradual change which we can observe along the last 20 years, for example some rock bands started using some folklore influences and there are others who took rock sound and folk tunes and mixed them together so it was like gradually from the beginning of the new century that it started to change gradually”.

Matěj, 47 years old.

“I started to play cimbalom and sing in another music group which had just been created in Prague at the time, composed of 10 young women from Prague, who were singing in a classical music choir since childhood. As they grew older and left the choir to leave the space to younger others, they had an idea to create, to meet once a week in the house of one of them and to sing because they like it and were missing it. They started to sing folk pieces of Leoš Janáček. Then they started to care about what is really a folk song and to find other songs that aren't very well known, because there are many songs very stereotyped that everybody knows. They were looking for the richness, beyond the stereotypes, and they found quite a few”. Eliška, 22 years old.

To take the words of Tia DeNora, there was “a shift in focus from aesthetic objects and their content (static) to the cultural practices in and through which aesthetic materials were appropriated and used (dynamic) to produce social life”¹¹³. Indeed, it is this approach we want to broach here, where we focus more on the functions of the enactment of the aesthetic materials (folk music) than on the aesthetic material itself. In this context, the appropriation and use of folk music produces social life, for example “*meeting once a week in the house of one of them to sing, because they like it and were missing it*”. In this way, the participants project themselves into folklore (with their emotional attachment to it), and folklore projects itself into their lives in return. We indeed saw how it influences the participants' lifestyles and manifests itself in everyday life. However, it is not only about the social function but also about the aesthetic material, the sound itself: “*I try to invite bands that don't play too artificially, but that bring some kind of authentic sound, to convey the dance to the people, who might not know it yet*”. When talking about folklore, its value or quality is often defined in accordance to the authenticity criteria. This is what we will develop in the following chapter. But there is also this idea of *conveying* something to people through folklore (values, conceptions of the world, lifestyle, emotions...).

¹¹³ Tia DeNora, *Music in Everyday Life*, Cambridge University Press 2000, 6.

Certainly, folk songs (as well as of course non-folk songs) help people to express (and manage) their feelings. “People need the songs to give shape and voice to emotions that otherwise cannot be expressed”¹¹⁴. Music enhances a certain emotional resonance within ourselves, and we all have tunes ‘speaking to us’ in a very intimate way and giving intensity to special moments.

“I had a lot of moments where I was onstage singing a song and I told myself: I’m actually living this, what I sing, either it’s the joy of singing either it’s ah yeah a guy left me, what am I going to do, and I was singing this and I was realising that in fact, it was speaking about me and I started to cry for example.” Eliška, 22 years old.

In this way, even if some of the melodies and texts were created in a non-modern world and thus reflecting the conditions of life of the people of that time, they can still speak to today’s people, young or less young, and sometimes in a very emotionally vibrant way. Playing and singing music (as well as listening to music) is also deeply connected with emotions, and this can help to add an extra layer of personal identification with the tradition – whether one learnt it ‘first hand’ or not. The collective aspect, the connection with others, a sense of identity and many more elements may come into play, to make “music part of one’s own identity and build it into our sense of ourselves”¹¹⁵.

I attended twice a folkloric event in a Prague park which could serve as a good illustration for folklore as a way of life. At 5 o’clock in the morning, a group of about 40 people gathered in the middle of one of the capital’s parks to mow the lawn with scythes¹¹⁶, in the traditional way, as early as 6 o’clock because it is best for the grass with the morning dew. Singing and playing accompanied the event, not organised in a formal way, but ‘in the way it would have been done before’. Spontaneously, somebody starts to sing, followed by others and maybe by musicians. The songs were created to accompany the mowing of the lawn, and thus speak about this activity, as well as they encourage and reflect it. Echoes of the song can be heard coming from one end of the plot to the other, answering each other in a call-and-response way. When the plot had been mowed, the musicians (a double bass and two violins) played a bit more and some participants folk danced. A girl’s singing circle also arose suddenly: one

¹¹⁴ Simon Frith, *Taking Popular Music Seriously*, Ashgate Contemporary Thinkers on Critical Musicology Series, Routledge 2007, 141.

¹¹⁵ Simon Frith, *Taking Popular Music Seriously*, Routledge 2007, 143.

¹¹⁶ The city hall knew about this, and had kept a bit of un-mowed lawn for the event.

girl initiated a musical sentence *a capella* that others repeated, in this way also learning new songs. Some people were dressed in traditional costumes (from various regions, but wearing mostly the costume from the region they were coming from), some had brought their instruments, some taught others to handle the scythe, children were playing in the grass, coffee (and liquor and wine) was distributed, some girls were making daisy flower wreaths.

In this framework, and even if I am putting the emphasis on the beauty and enjoyableness of this activity, folklore can seem as not so much entertainment (waking up early for a pretty harsh physical activity) but as a pure re-creation – in the modern city – of the conditions of life and work of the people who were once living in the countryside. Events like this may express a kind of nostalgia for unknown times, that took place before modernisation, industrialisation, urbanisation, commercialisation, individualisation and other ‘-ations’, The atmosphere the participants created was so beautiful that I caught myself thinking about how much we were missing with individual lawnmowers, tractors and combine harvesters.

Presented like this, folklore revivals can appear as “related to a dissatisfaction with aspects of the modern world”¹¹⁷, to quote the Oxford Handbook of Music Revival, and it expresses clearly that it is not just about the music, or more generally speaking about the ‘tangible’ culture surrounding folklore, “but also – or even more – with the projected values and partly imagined lifestyles they associate with it”¹¹⁸. Indeed, in such contexts, the enactment of folklore strives to build a strong sense of community, that the making of music in a participatory way helps. A strong sense of community is what is believed to characterise this ‘pre-modern’ period, and the activities reinforce this feeling in this way. Moreover, it is not a closed event at all, it is open to everybody who would like to join. The regular participants are happy to teach the newcomers, and pleased to see foreigners taking interest and enjoying – and some foreigners are really involved and incorporated in this community. Thus, we can say the folk environment is not closed if one wants to join, and is willing to learn how to join in a respectful way.

¹¹⁷ Juniper Hill and Caroline Bithell, *An Introduction to Music Revival as Concept, Cultural Process, and Medium of Change*, in Juniper Hill and Caroline Bithell (eds.), *Oxford Handbook of Music Revival*, Oxford University Press 2014, 3.

¹¹⁸ Hill and Bithell, *An Introduction to Music Revival*, 14.

Authenticity/ Tradition/ Innovation/ Openness to changes

All of the participants agree on the same point: authenticity is a difficult question, and the more involved one gets in furthering its definition, the more problematic it gets to grasp its actual meaning. However, authenticity always has to be evoked when referring to folklore, as it serves as a legitimacy tool for the presumed legitimate culture-bearers, i.e., the ones enacting folklore and seeking legitimacy for the forms they are enacting. After our small chapter in the theoretical framework on the inherent contradictions of authenticity as such and the subsequent need to leave a possible definition of authenticity to emerge from the participants, we nevertheless need to distinguish a ‘historical authenticity’ from a ‘participatory authenticity’. Historical authenticity relies on fixed elements and seeks to reconstruct them as they were in the (imagined) past. Authenticity relies here on the exact reproduction of traditions through tangible materials that arrived up to the present days, for example thanks to the work of the ethnographic collectors. But here comes into play a first inherent contradiction to this conception of authenticity: if the practice is only a sheer reproduction of what has been, how could it possibly speak to the needs of the new context in which it is enacted now? And thus how could it be true to its essence – if it is only perceived as a relic of a bygone time? This brings us to the conception of participatory authenticity we will adopt here. Instead of preserving folk forms in an untouched manner, it emphasises their living side and the sincerity of participants’ identification to and involvement with them. To take the words of Richard Blaustein, “historical authenticity of reinvented traditions is beside the point ; we need to appreciate the emotional authenticity of the personal and social needs these musical revitalization movements fulfill¹¹⁹”. We will confirm this emotional authenticity through the testimonies of the participants, and their words will only confirm their conspicuous dedication to folklore, that reaches far into their personal lives and ways of living.

The conflicting models of Max Peter Baumann regarding folk music revivals are significantly pertinent in this paragraph as well. Indeed, he distinguishes the concepts of purism (“with a tendency towards stabilising or even regressive preservation”) and syncretism (“with a tendency towards reinventing the past by emancipatory creation to the point of breaking the local and regional frontiers”)¹²⁰. While the first model seeks to cultivate the ‘oldest’ and most

¹¹⁹ Richard Blaustein, *Grassroots Revival from Fiddlers associations to Cyberspace*, in Juniper Hill and Caroline Bithell (eds.), *Oxford Handbook of Music Revival*, Oxford University Press 2014, 567.

¹²⁰ Max Peter Baumann, *Folk Music Revival: Concepts Between Regression and Emancipation*, in “The World of Music”, Vol. 38, No. 3, *Folk Music Revival* 1996, 80.

‘authentic’ forms possible and reconstruct them the way they think they were practiced before, the second model is interested in combining the ‘old’ with the ‘new’. We will examine what this means in terms of musical practice for the musicians interviewed, and what do these choices express regarding their relation with the world surrounding them, and with historical times: the present, but also the past and the future. Indeed, Max Baumann uses the term of “musical-political behaviour” to explain that a musician (or a group of musicians) takes position through her or his musical practice. And of course, these choices may sometimes lead to conflicts within the folk world.

In order to assemble what I observed from the questions introduced above with the help of the interviews, we will start by taking a closer look to the musicians’ ways of learning new tunes. Indeed, it echoes Max Baumann’s models we just mentioned because in folk music some elements are rather fixed by the tune and the lyrics whereas others are more changeable and can associate and root a specific way of playing a piece to a particular region instead of another. The way of learning a new tune can be significant for the inclination of a musician or a group of musicians to purism or syncretism. During the interviews, I asked the musicians from whom or what they were learning to play new tunes because I thought that for example learning from a sheet music collection which had been praised as the ‘correct’ way of playing could influence a more fixed or rigid conception of playing folk music, whereas learning from many musicians from different regions and different styles could encourage syncretism – although it could also be severely criticised. The ‘correct’ way of playing, or in other words the purist way of playing converges with the concept of historical authenticity mentioned above. Indeed, it seeks to trace a cultural heritage back to an immemorial past (or at least back to a hundred or two hundred years ago) where it is believed to stem from, and this even if it is only an arrangement created a few decades ago that was already passed on generation after generation and that is now considered as the ‘authentic’ way of playing. In this way, something not even really historically ‘authentic’ can be deemed as such nowadays because a composer or a band member made a nice arrangement during the Communist regime for example, and this arrangement or way of playing is already being transmitted to the next generations. And when tracing back some particular arrangements perceived as authentic today, we might realise they actually do not stem from this immemorial past, and that they are not inscribed in the praised continuity from the late 18th or 19th centuries. These arguments help us understand more precisely why this notion of authenticity, and especially historical

authenticity, is a tricky one, and why we chose to address our subject through the lens of participatory authenticity.

“If you play one song with this harmony one kind of harmony it’s perceived as belonging to this village, and once you change the harmony to more complicated, it suddenly sounds as if it belonged elsewhere. If you play it for example to local musicians they will tell you this is wrong harmony, not from here, so I was interested also in how people learn this connection with musical elements you use and how it connects, the connection of music to particular places. Especially in Moravian music, if you play accompaniment in a slightly different way, local musicians will tell you this is not our way, this is, I don’t know, Hungarian way or Slovak way so that musicians learn also these particular details of connection between details of playing and belonging to one place or another. So I play clarinet and I had to learn if I play from Horňácko [one region of South Moravia] I should play in higher register and this kind of embellishment and if I play like Dolňácko and Uherské Hradiště [another region of South Moravia] I should play in a different way. If I play Roma music I should play a different way. And now this is interesting to see how conservative or liberal are different groups of people in relation to this. Because we were a group from Prague so we learnt from second hand and we only slowly learnt which way is the proper way to play this song. And now we came to a festival in Moravia and we played with musicians who were at home there and we were sometimes quite nervous if they will like agree and sometimes we were criticised that for example we put too much harmony in a particular tune, what was the term, over-harmonisation, so too many chord changes in the tune because it should be played more simply for example. So it showed us that’s it’s not just the correct tune but also many details of how to play if you want to play it the way local people consider it to be true”.

Matěj, 47 years old.

Many interesting elements were stressed in the extract of the interview quoted above that echo questions we addressed and will address: the connection of a particular way of playing to a place, the way one learns this connection, the fact of learning to play tunes that are not part of one’s direct geographical background (“second hand”) and the uncertainties about one’s legitimacy to do so, how do different groups react to these changes (“liberal or conservative”), and what kind of things might be modified regarding traditional music.

In the context of folklore events or folklore festivals, musicians get the opportunity to meet and listen to other musicians from different regions. As a result of these encounters, musicians open to other styles, learn new tunes and other ways of playing. They also might integrate parts of what they have learnt in their own playing. Indeed, “some of these influences will be taken back to the home culture, where they will appear as innovations – perhaps framed positively as inspired advances or, more negatively, as departures from the tradition”¹²¹. This can also concern a mixture of different styles and even genres, integrating new instruments, new harmonisations or ornaments in the playing. We will take a look here at some possible changes or innovations within the tradition that were either mentioned by the musicians or that I observed in the course of participatory events; and we will further on examine some negative reactions to these changes.

First, most of the musicians emphasised the open possibilities they had when playing folk music. But also, we need to stress here that all the musicians I interviewed are very knowledgeable vis-à-vis folk music. They dedicate themselves intensively to its study and learn from valuable sources, and thus internalise it. For this reason, because they deeply adopted folk music, they are able to modify it easily, without feeling any limitations when it comes to transforming it. Likewise, they are legitimate to do so because they have established their musical authority through their knowledge and passion and are recognised as talented and skilled musicians by other members of the folk community.

“In the ensemble we learnt from different sources, from printed collections from different regions, from recordings and from other musicians, listening to them, especially as we grew older, how is he playing, also the style and small details about how to improvise and through personal contact. When I started we also went, almost like field research, they took us to small villages where old people sang to us, when I was 10, an old lady in a Moravian village, learning from her”. Matěj, 47 years old.

In that regard, “[We cannot] concentrate upon isolated forms and ignore the real social and literary interchange between cultures and artistic medias and channels of communication”¹²².

¹²¹ Juniper Hill and Caroline Bithell, *An Introduction to Music Revival as Concept, Cultural Process, and Medium of Change*, in Juniper Hill and Caroline Bithell (eds.), *Oxford Handbook of Music Revival*, Oxford University Press 2014, 17.

¹²² Dan Ben-Amos, *Toward a Definition of Folklore in Context*, *The Journal of American Folklore* 1971, 13.

We often tend to consider oral transmission (from isolated, ‘pure’ and ‘untainted’ culture-bearers) superior regarding traditional music.

We want to present folk music learning as a process of interactions with other musicians and of confrontations with different original sources. Indeed, musicians learn from various sources, such as printed collections, recordings (original or not), but also from oral transmission and interactions with other musicians (from attending performances, concerts and informal evenings to more direct face-to-face contact such as a music lesson). The importance of field research is also emphasised in the above comment, leading us to the value of learning folk music from ‘legitimate culture-bearers’. The following comment also stresses this aspect: *“I like to be taught by friends who come from the given areas”*. Indeed, the interviewed musicians take folk music seriously, and in order to try not to offend anybody, they spend a lot of time studying it since they want to respect it.

“I try to start from the original regions where such a repertoire is played, by studying it, or I like to be taught by friends who come from the given areas. There are a lot of possibilities when modifying the piece and the only limitations are the ones one has in themselves, in the form of their style and towards where they are going.” Martin, 24 years old.

Musicians obviously take interest in different musical styles and may incorporate parts and influences of them in their playing. Most of the musicians are taking interest in several genres, and they often play in several ensembles or music formations inspired by and going in different directions, that can be respectively more or less traditionalist/purist or syncretic.

“In Prague I played in one world music band, so music of several nations and genre overlap. Today I play in a band that is similar, we play Klezmer (Eastern European Jewish secular music), Balkan, Ruthenian, Russian folk music, it is impossible to say that it is pure traditionalism, it is such a fusion... Moreover, everyone there gives their musical experience. But maybe that in Klezmer we try to get closer to the original sound”. Anežka, 30 years old.

In this way, traditional music is enriched by mixes of influences and individual experiences, especially in our modern world, where we have easy access to these different influences and where they are mixed, especially in participatory settings in a way in accordance with their time. Once again, the ‘pure’ national dimension of traditional music for itself is not so

important in participatory settings, as “*music of several nations and genre overlap*”, while breaking down local and regional borders in “*a post-modern mixture*” (Matěj).

“Definitely, by thinking about music and overall experiences, there are many more influences, even non-folklore ones such as jazz music or other genres. And in the dance, influences from standard dance and latin-american dance”. Martin, 24 years old.

In this way, it makes us reconsider the model of traditional music as necessarily purist, in the way of sticking strictly to the ‘old’ and ‘authentic’ original material. We can remember Max Baumann’s words describing this model as “regressive preservation”. Participants described the traditional music they play as a (respectful) fusion, inspired by different experiences and enriched by various musical influences. Once again, we cannot possibly confine culture or music into a delimited border, and these travelling influences and experiences are what make folklore alive and living. Moreover, Romani musicians have greatly influenced local traditional music of Europe. They are historically recognised as very talented musicians and were performing professionally at life events such as weddings and funerals or hired for pure entertainment. They played the local tunes of the place they were travelling through or had settled in, and added their characteristic ways of playing such as more complex harmonies. They also enriched these tunes by various influences (musical and cultural, such as instruments and language) they had encountered and experienced in other places. This brings us to the following paragraph, linked to the questions raised above regarding the links between models of traditionalism and syncretism in traditional music. During the interviews, I asked the musicians if they consider folklore to be open to changes. More practically, or ethno-musically, it concerns for example the combining or mixing of different styles, the instruments that are used, the arrangements, the harmonisations...

“Folklore is open to changes, the change of lifestyle manifests itself naturally in folklore and thus always lives – musicians play with renowned ensembles, combine styles more or less successfully, there is an effort to bring folklore closer to the current young generation. New creations also arise/come into existence”. Miroslav, 75 years old.

Once again, we want to emphasise folklore as a living and dynamic tradition, that corresponds to and echoes the needs and concerns of its own time: “*the change of lifestyle manifests itself naturally in folklore and thus always lives*”.

“Folklore is open to changes, yes, and if the fixed version is dominant, then again it depends on where you look. So there are some printed folk songs collections that are taken as the ‘Holy Grail’ so like ‘this version is the one’ but many musicians understand that the version in a collection is just one of countless possible forms. Many people understand that folk songs change and are modified”. Matěj, 47 years old.

The ‘one correct way of playing’ (or in other words a certain fixed version of folklore) is also an evolving area and subject, that went through many shifts along the years, and became maybe less conservative in the last couple of decades.

“And so for example the founder of this folklore ensemble she was quite open to all the funny ideas that we as musicians had but sometimes she said ok, this is too much; for example when we decided to mix one song from one region with something from another so she was conservative in the sense that we should stick to if we play songs from here we should play only from here but I think it changed because when I started in the 1980s it was still the community or the people who were around this ensemble were more conservative but today it’s more and more open to experiments, and I see it with other ensembles as well that they are mixing together different things.” Matěj, 47 years old.

However, even though all the participants emphasise folklore’s openness to changes, tending towards or keeping in mind the original material stays important for them:

“Changes in this structure have been, are and will be, but it is good that those who are interested in folk culture are also returning to their roots, so old song books, old authentic music recordings, old films...” Václav, 71 years old.

Indeed, most of the participants seem to agree with and apply this principle of ‘going back to the roots’ to their practice of folk culture. This also comes from younger generations:

“I search in songbooks, I research in the radio archive, I used to like that, to take the traditional material and adjust it according to myself. Today I try to maintain traditionalism with a small pinch of my own creations. There is really a lot of modified folklore, in our country the way one ‘returns to the older one’ is not so strong, people rather handle the material very freely. I want to be on the other side, but I’m influenced by modern harmonisation of the beginning of the 20th century, when one knows a lot of chords and has a

different approach to harmonisation than those who used bagpipes, instruments of limited tonality. I also like Romani folklore, which treats harmony a little differently”.

Anežka, 30 years old.

“Of course, folklore is open to changes, a lot of new works are being created, fusions, where the folklore, folk content is shifted and it's good. But for me it is important to rely on the traditional thing, on this I dedicate myself the most”. Martin, 24 years old.

UNESCO's definition of intangible cultural heritage, i.e. “constantly recreated by communities and groups in response to their environment” was also agreed and emphasised by the participants:

“Of course, music culture is a living organism that is constantly evolving in different directions.” Magdalena, 60 years old.

Changes are very often appreciated, even for example in a given context where the musicians were rather stressed and were not sure about how these changes would be perceived. But in some cases, certain transformations within folk music might lead to conflict. This is what will be developed in the following paragraph.

“People always quarrel: how does this have to be done, how do you have to wear this or play this... Folklore is a rather small world, a lot of tensions arise and tendencies about opinions lead to conflict, how to envisage things or how to understand them...” Anežka, 30 years old.

Conflicts can arise due to multiple reasons. They can of course concern musical aspects, as introduced above in the paragraph dedicated to the openness to changes within the folk world. ‘New’ musical instruments could be introduced, i.e., musical instruments that are not seen as traditional instruments, such as playing the saxophone instead of the clarinet. This specific example was mentioned in an interview with one musician, who was playing in the framework of a folklore festival. In this case, the conflict arose between the performers ‘distorting’ the tradition and an “angry local man”. The same arguments are also frequently encountered concerning the mixture of different influences, or the moving from one style to another, something that can be perceived as moving too far away from the tradition.

In the same way, as mentioned above, musicians witnessed accusations of “over-harmonisation”. In general, traditional music is not characterised by complex harmonies. For

example, it used to be played with bagpipes and other “*instruments of limited tonality*”, or played by melodic instruments (such as flutes) only and thus did not really use to have any constant harmonies accompanying. Of course, a violin can also harmonise, but traditional music was not influenced by the modern system of harmonisation of the beginning of the 20th century, with a lot of chords and much more complex ones. Thus, too many chord changes or too much complexity in the chords played can lead to something perceived as moving too far away from the tradition in certain settings, and receive the name of “over-harmonisation”.

The same applies for the mixing of influences, the combining of styles and the various fusions. Sometimes, these kind of innovative steps might not be well perceived among the folk community, but it always depends on the setting: something might be appropriate in the context of one specific performance or event and not in another. Indeed, according to the context of the performance, musicians can play more or less with the codes, feel freer and dare to transform the tradition more, even sometimes provoke in some way, intentionally or not.

“I remember once we gave a concert and we wore Moravian blue traditional skirts (modrotisk) with fragments of other parts of the Moravian or Slovakian traditional costume but for example we didn’t have good shoes or we were wearing ‘make Moravia great again’ t-shirts so there was still a bit of provocation and we liked to play with that. At the beginning. Then we calmed down a bit but it doesn’t mean we would never do it again, we’re still the 10 girls from Prague to which this folklore does not belong to. In quotation marks.”

Eliška, 22 years old.

To take the words of Philip Bohlman, “Most folk musicians are innovative and creative on some level. They may accept or reject change; they may rigidly observe tradition or wantonly violate it. But innovation and creativity do not exist without restrictions. If the folk musician breaches these restrictions, community approbation ceases, and, in some cases society censures. Creativity can be encouraged and yet limited, with the restrictions of cultural boundaries symbolizing a metaphorical realm within which creativity can transpire. Accordingly, these boundaries heighten the awareness of both the community and the folk musician of the potential function of creativity in the expression of tradition and the tendency

towards change. Creativity, too, serves to juxtapose stability and change and to determine the aesthetic forms both will take”¹²³.

Participatory events tend to be more open to changes in principle, because less planned, more spontaneous, and supposedly open to anybody who would like to join, so it mobilises in this way a different kind of authenticity, the participatory authenticity.

“And actually when I started playing, we, it was in this ensemble, it was just that we learnt sequences of songs and then we performed it with dancers on stage. And then a very important change came when we started doing what is today called Beseda u Cimbálu, this is basically ‘meeting at the cimbalom’, a kind of event that is similar to Folklorní Mejdlo but many of those folk music ensembles organise their own. It’s kind of semi-private so it’s mostly for the members but also friends. It’s an event where people meet and they present the same songs but it’s more participatory than presentational and it’s a place where musicians play and anybody who is there can come and start singing a song and it’s kind of an informal event. So this kind of Beseda u Cimbálu is something that we started, again, as soon as we learnt to play a little bit more and improvise a bit so people who organise the ensemble said ok let’s organise this Beseda let’s invite the parents so that we can meet and have some informal party with the music. So the music was no longer for presentation on stage. It’s kind of basically taking it back to its original context when music was played in a village by local people for local people and not on stage. So actually these events even before Folklorní Mejdlo were important and they still are organised by many of these ensembles (Fig. 3). I’m really looking forward to these kind of events once it will be possible, I really miss this kind of social interaction”. Matěj, 47 years old.

The above comment on participatory events of folk music recaps many characteristics emphasised by Thomas Turino in his distinction between participatory and presentational folk music. Indeed, participatory folk music is played in an *informal* context, *not on stage*, *by local people and for local people*, in this framework as a *semi-private* event, *mostly for members [of the folk ensemble] but also for friends*, and open to anybody who would like to join: *anybody who is there can come and start singing a song*. Another important aspect, already mentioned, is the fact that participatory events aspire to *take [the folk music] back to its*

¹²³ Philip Bohlman, *The Study of Folk Music in the Modern World*, Indiana University Press 1988, 86.

original context, in the way it was played ‘for itself’, for its social function, for people familiar with it and understanding its language, and definitely not for an external audience.

Thus, in these participatory events, the musicians do not arrange, rehearse or prepare anything. They do not play music (or dance) for an outside audience, they do it for themselves, and play and dance for themselves and for their own pleasure. In this way, it mobilises here what we previously defined as participatory authenticity. In the framework of participatory events, and even though the participants may play a mix of songs from different regions (for example Czech, Moravian, Slovak...), we consider these events to be very authentic because they involve spontaneity. Indeed, since the musicians did neither prepare nor arrange in advance what they were going to play in a fixed form, they play in a spontaneous way during the whole evening, and in a way that it suits or fits its particular moments. It is thus very authentic, although involving the second kind of authenticity we previously described, i.e., participatory authenticity. However, participatory authenticity is probably easier to define than the historical authenticity that intends to trace back the heritage to an immemorial past (and we previously mentioned some inherent problems and contradictions of historical authenticity).

In the words of Philip Bohlman again, “each performance is the expressive act of an individual or a group of individuals, and that expressive act reflects the interrelation of the performer and the tradition¹²⁴”. Thus, we also need to focus more closely on the individual roles and choices of the folk musicians in order to understand better the dynamics of tradition. In the following paragraph, we want to let the participants answer questions such as: how far away do you feel you can go with your personal creativity within the framework of the folk tunes? How much do you feel you can innovate within the tradition, while respecting the language of folk music? In what ways can you modify the piece? Add something to the piece? How much freedom do you have? Of course, and as we already stressed it above, a given modification of a folk tune might be appropriate in one context and not in another one.

“It’s a nice thing about folk music, that they are some like building blocks in the music which you can find in different songs so that then you can take the first half of a first song and the second half of a second song and put them together and you have a new song. So we were working this way too and I know that many folk musicians do this so you want you create a

¹²⁴ Philip Bohlman, *The Study of Folk Music in the Modern World*, Indiana University Press 1988, 73.

series of songs and you need just one more and you cannot find anything so you create just by this post-modern technique of collage or remixing basically. But it always depends on what is your goal: if you play it for a traditional folk festivity or celebration somewhere, you should be more careful and if you go to play at some performance when everything is more like a theatre¹²⁵ you can experiment more". Matěj, 47 years old.

"Author's rules are created by every musical modifier themselves. Personally, I try to not hurt the song, to respect its regional (for example harmonies, slides) specificities. As I get older, I agree more and more to the opinion that "less is often more"".

Magdalena, 60 years old.

Indeed, folklore is an expressive action. It involves the musicians' creativity and an aesthetic response¹²⁶. Musicians are creating and expressing themselves through traditional music, whilst the folk community and the "legitimate folk culture bearers", i.e. the ones who have the territorial roots, will endorse an attitude ranging from all levels of approval to possible non-approval.

In traditional music as well as in more general conceptions of life, a return back to a simpler way of life and of playing is often praised: "*less is often more*". Another element is important here regarding our markers of authenticity: the fact of playing for the other members of the group, i.e. for a part of the folk community instead of playing for an external audience, who would not be actively involved in the creative process. "Folklore is true to its own nature when it takes place within the group itself. In sum, folklore is artistic communication in small

¹²⁵ Matěj continues: "*Actually this is kind of a specificity for the Czechoslovak/Czech folklore revival, this close connection with theatre and even with experimental theatre. It goes back to the 1930s between the wars when there was a strong tradition of modernist or avant-garde theatre and some of these people were also using folk material. For example, Emil František Burian, who was composing classical music but also writing jazz songs, was one of the first Czech jazz composer and he was also doing experimental theatre. He was combining avant-garde theatre techniques with the Czech and Moravian folk music and so he and others created this specific combination. After the Second World War, many choreographers and leaders of those ensembles turned back to this tradition. I know that when we organised a conference and many people from Europe came who knew folklore revival in their countries, and we played them some videos and they were like is this a folklore revival it seems more like experimental theatre because the level of 'theatralisation' is probably a bit higher in the Czech revival tradition than in other countries because there was this strong tradition of experimental theatre and combination of theatre with folklore so many ensembles were doing more theatre pieces than just playing dances and music on stage. Even our ensemble during certain years was actually doing more theatre with folk songs and dances than just folk songs and dances"*.

¹²⁶ Dan Ben-Amos, *Toward a Definition of Folklore in Context*, *The Journal of American Folklore* 1971, 10.

groups.”¹²⁷ This is true in the context of participatory events: musicians play among themselves and create meaning together through their interactions and artistic communication. They play for the collective, for the group itself who is already more or less (but rather more than less) knowledgeable. Moreover, the musicians play for themselves, for other participants and for their own pleasure, and not for profit. Indeed, non-commodified folk music (in the context of participatory events for example) seems to be much more authentic, while commodified folk music seems to lose its authenticity.

According to different contexts, different definitions of authenticity coexist, and different attitudes regarding the folk material are endorsed, from more purist to more syncretic. The musicians taking part in participatory events are probably more open to changes regarding the folk material (in these settings), because participatory events are in principle more open than a staged performance, as they do not have to be planned and structured in advance. Here, we define spontaneity in playing as the ‘true’ authenticity we are interested in (participatory authenticity).

Thus a piece of traditional music does not have to be reproduced exactly – it would not be living anymore, just transformed into a museum piece. Indeed, every musician who has internalised folk music’s language can bring her or his own pinch of creation while maintaining respect for the tradition, keeping a balance and *“try[ing] not to hurt the song”*.

“Tensions, find their own balance between faithfulness to, respect for, or continuity with “the tradition” and their right to pursue their own creative paths as autonomous artists”¹²⁸.

“When I was a member and we were regularly rehearsing and performing it was something we had to answer for ourselves because of course if you create performance for the stage you have to come up with something interesting, it’s not just that you come to play the songs three times and then go away, so you come up with some arrangement and you think ok, let’s make it somehow more interesting, but making it more interesting always means let’s move from the tradition, or from what some people see as the authentic way, so it was always a question of balance.” Matěj, 47 years old.

¹²⁷ Dan Ben-Amos, *Toward a Definition of Folklore in Context*, *The Journal of American Folklore* 1971, 13.

¹²⁸ Juniper Hill and Caroline Bithell, *An Introduction to Music Revival as Concept, Cultural Process, and Medium of Change*, in Juniper Hill and Caroline Bithell (eds.), *Oxford Handbook of Music Revival*, Oxford University Press 2014, 17.

“So I think we can't keep all the aspects because of course everything evolves and we're not going to force ourselves to make things we do not want to make just for the folklore to stay authentic, it's not possible because it wouldn't be authentic anymore, so I wouldn't make any sense but at the same time we have to be conscious, be a bit in the point of view of people from before, know their lives a bit and understand it, try to understand. Then I think we can reproduce the folklore even when changing it a little bit but in a healthy and respectful way, respect is very important.” Eliška, 22 years old.

FINAL CONCLUSION

In conclusion, this research makes the claim that folklore exists in the modern urban world. Throughout the research, we reconsidered the sole focus of traditional folklore studies on rural disappearing peasant societies to highlight the multiple possible types of folklore: rural as well as urban, old and new, performative, participatory, authentic, stylised... The word 'folklore' in itself is rather disliked by many of those enacting it, and they prefer using the term 'traditional music'. During the field work, I wanted the participants to speak about their practice of folklore, and thus to let them define themselves what they associated with terms such as folklore, authenticity, tradition, or the city without imposing any pre-defined meaning. Fortunately, since the beginning, we focused on participatory forms of traditional music's enactment instead of more strictly presentational forms. This allowed us, in the sanitary context of no-events, to shift our subject of study from the *performance* (implying staged and orchestrated actions) to a more personal *practice*. I interviewed nine musicians from different generations and backgrounds to examine how they thought about and expressed tradition through traditional music, and to show the vitality of folk processes in urban and modern settings. The main question I wanted to answer was why: why do people enact folklore, especially in these urban and modern settings, where folklore is deemed to have no place? What are the participants' motivations? In line with this question, we divided the participants' motivations for their enactment of folklore into three categories (the sub-chapters of our empirical part): one culturally motivated, one socially motivated and one aesthetically motivated. We focused on the functions of their enactment of folklore more than on the folklore or the aesthetic material itself, and took a closer look at what folklore expresses, and especially at what folklore expresses in the city, a place it is not believed to stem from. In this particular context, we investigated the needs folklore answers. Thus, in our first category and chapter, we grouped one's cultural pride in a territory, a certain national, regional and local dimension or inspiration building on an idealised or romanticised past. Through the participants' testimonies, we put forward the fact that it could express a need to connect with a place and a desire to feel historically and geographically grounded. Indeed, through one's practice of folklore, a sense of attachment is created, contrasting with the condition of rootlessness often stressed as a characteristic of modernity. We saw that the sense of attachment could be felt concerning a place, but also regarding attachment to a tradition, a link to the ancestors, a continuity with the past. We also touched upon the political uses of folk music from two different ideologies (Romantic Nationalism and Socialism

Realism), that drew their inspiration and legitimation from this continuity with the past. In the course of the interviews, we discovered that the people taking part in participatory movements of traditional music tried to break these connotations and were promoting a new 'coolness' of folklore.

In our second category, the socially motivated enactment of folklore, we highlighted the community aspect that participatory folk movements strive and manage to recreate. We illustrated the fact that friendship and social relations were an important aspect for one to stay involved in folklore, that they play a central role in making it so enjoyable for the participants. Folklore, and especially participatory forms of folklore, thus becomes something producing social life. In this way, folklore in the city answers the need for meaningful connections with meaningful others, sharing the same passion, and expresses once again the need to connect with a community, to feel a sense of belonging to a collective, and to sense a feeling of collectiveness and togetherness, especially in this modern urban context. It evokes the desire to recreate an idealised primordial community and the values associated with it: strong solidarity networks, back to simplicity, a purer way of life. Indeed, we emphasised, following Gramsci, that we wanted to study folklore as conceptions of world and life, and also as a reflection of these representations and values. This was developed in our third chapter, that concerns folklore's social function too, but in a more personal way, less in terms of social group formation and collective identity construction but rather touching upon manifestations of folklore in one's life and lifestyle.

Our last chapter examined the participants' aesthetic motivations for their enactment of folklore, the pure enjoyment they derive from playing (and dancing to) traditional music. It was concerned with questions such as the tricky notions of authenticity and innovation within the tradition. The interviewed participants all consider folklore to be open to changes and open to modifications, also because they have internalised folk music's language and thus feel comfortable and legitimate to add their own touches of creation to the tradition: arrangements, mixing of influences... However, we also saw through examples that these innovative steps could sometimes lead to conflicts. In this chapter, we concluded that speaking about historical authenticity made no sense in the framework of this research. Instead, we concentrated on the emotional authenticity of the participants when enacting and dedicating themselves to traditional music. In the same way, we consider the musicians' performances in the framework of participatory events even more authentic because of their spontaneity, in the way that they fit in particular moments, and thus shifted our focus on participatory authenticity.

To quote our *Oxford Handbook of Music Revival* once again, the motivations of participants for their enactment of folklore can be explained in our case by “a combination of musical participation [our chapters 3 and 4] and the social cohesion [our chapter 2] it can create, combined with the powerful ideologies of connecting and shaping the past in the present” [our chapter 1]¹²⁹.

Throughout this paper, we hopefully deconstructed the view of folklore as something that is in the process of disappearing. Indeed, it only changes forms, as it is “constantly being recreated”.

“Folklore will not disappear, it will always be present, only its forms can change. The forms from which we are drawing inspiration today weaken and will weaken, in any case other trends and the subsequent shift to another form will come. I can only hope to find a place there with my approach”. Martin, 24 years old.

We also increasingly aimed to depict folklore’s living processes of transformation, and view folklore much more as a process than as a product.

“Furthermore, if folklore as a discipline focuses on tradition only, it ‘contradicts its own *raison d’être*’. If the initial assumption of folklore research is based on the disappearance of its subject matter, there is no way to prevent the science from following the same road. If the attempt to save tradition from oblivion remains the only function of the folklorist, he returns to the role of the antiquarian from which he tried so hard to escape. In that case, it is in the interest of folklore scholarship that we change the definition of the subject to allow broader and more dynamic research in the field.”¹³⁰

To conclude this research (for now), we can quote more of Miroslav’s words: *“Some people think that folklore is disappearing but at events we see all generations, young people are taking an interest in their roots, they try to learn songs, they also dance. Folklore lives!”* Miroslav, 75 years old.

¹²⁹ Tamara Livingston, *An Expanded Theory for Revivals as Cosmopolitan Participatory Music Making*, in Juniper Hill and Caroline Bithell (eds.), *Oxford Handbook of Music Revival*, Oxford University Press 2014, 68.

¹³⁰ Dan Ben-Amos, *Toward a Definition of Folklore in Context*, *The Journal of American Folklore* 1971, 14.

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ANNEXES

Questions in English

Age, occupation

Did you grow up in traditional culture?

How did you get to involve yourself in traditional culture?

What was the reaction of your parents/grandparents?

How did you learn to play/sing? In official institutions?

What links do you have with professional ensembles?

Do you wear traditional costumes? Which ones and why?

Why are you involved in folklore? What does it bring to you?

Do you think folklore expresses/answers a need in today's urban world?

Does folklore influence your life/lifestyle? How?

Folklore in your everyday life?

What about the social function of folklore? Is meeting with people an important aspect of your practice of folklore?

What is your definition of authenticity? How do you relate it with certain events, with the ensemble you play in?

How do you learn the pieces? From whom/what?

How far away do you feel you can go with your personal creativity within the framework of the folk tunes? How much freedom do you have when modifying a piece or adding something to a piece?

National dimension? Mix of influences?

Did you ever witness some kind of conflicts within the folk world? For what reasons?

Do you feel that folklore is open to changes?

Do you think that the view of folklore as something disappearing/ a relic of the past is still quite present in popular opinion?

Do you think folklore is considered as politically charged nowadays?

Questions in Czech

Vyrůstal/a jste ve folklóru?

Jak jste se k němu dostal/a?

Jak reagovali Vaši rodiče?

Jak jste se naučil/a zpívat a hrát?

Působil/a jste v nějakém folklorním souboru? Které oblasti zpracovával?

Jakým folklorem se zabýváte?

Nosíte tradiční kroj? Kdy, kde, proč?

Co si myslíte o dnešních reprezentacích folkloru ve městě? Myslím tím akce jako jsou například pražské Folklorní mejdlo nebo třeba brněnský projekt Folklor a city (Maruška Hvozdecká), nebo různé městské folklorní festivaly.

Přináší Vám folklór to, co v něm hledáte?

Myslíte si, že folklór lidem přináší něco, co jim v životě chybí?

Ovlivňuje folklór Váš život a životní styl? Jak?

Jak se promítá folklór ve Vašem každodenním životě?

Je pro Vás u folklóru důležitý také aspekt setkávání se s lidmi?

Jakou máte definici autenticity? Jak ji přenášíte na dnešní projevy folklóru?

Jak se učíte nové skladby? Od koho/čeho?

Jak můžete upravovat písničky? Kolik při tom máte svobody?

Cítíte se skrze folklór vlastenecky? Má pro Vás regionální folklór národní charakter? Jak vnímáte např. folklorní soubory z Prahy interpretující moravský folklór?

Už jste zažil/a nějaké konflikty ve folklóru? Proč?

Myslíte si, že je folklór otevřený změnám?

Myslíte si, že pohled na folklór jako něco, co vymizí, je stále přítomný?

Myslíte si, že je folklór politizovaný?

PICTURES



Fig. 1: Masopust, Zoe Perrenoud, 16th February 2019.



Fig. 2: Folklorní Mejdlo, František Vlček.



Fig. 3: Folklorní Mejdlo, František Vlček.