

**Promised Land of Heavy Metal: An Ethnographical Study of the
International Presence within the Metal Scene in Finland**

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ABSTRACT

In this thesis, mainly through ethnographic research and participant observation, I look at the presence of international metal music fans in Finland. My main research question asks first how observable the international presence within the metal scene in Finland is, and then how it has affected the scene. I conducted research through participant observation and ethnographic fieldwork while attending metal music festivals in addition to my role as a music journalist and photographer. I was also able to include observations and ethnographic research through my involvement within the Turku-based metal scene including the Turku University's metal club and other Turku-based events and promotional agencies. I also included interviews that illuminated the perspective of people such as promoters, musicians, patrons and other industry members who were active within the metal scene in Finland.

The research concludes that there is an observable international presence within the metal scene in Finland including both visitors and those who have moved to Finland from abroad. The research also concludes that the international presence has had a significant impact on the metal scene in Finland. Examples include my observance of festivals and promotional agencies becoming more accommodating to people coming from abroad or acknowledging the population of non-Finnish patrons by providing more information in English as well as other social media based instances where the international presence was acknowledged such as polls and surveys asking where people are coming from.

Keywords: Metal studies, Finland, Finnish metal, metal from Finland, festivals, international, scene, translocal, local, virtual, fandom, fan culture, tourism, ethnography, participant observation, self-reflexivity, phenomenology.

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 - Object of Study and Research Questions

In this thesis, I look into the international presence within the metal scene in Finland in regards to those who come from abroad temporarily, specifically to experience the scene, or more permanently to live, work or study. I include myself in this international presence and incorporate my own experiences as a foreigner¹ whose interest and desire to visit and move to Finland originated from an interest in Finnish metal as the foundation for my research. I take advantage of my opportunity to study and conduct my research in Finland and observe through ethnographic fieldwork how relevant the international presence is within the metal scene in Finland, as well as the affect this presence has had on various aspects and institutions within the scene.

Finland is not one of the most popular travel destinations in the world. As a foreigner in Finland, one of the first questions asked by anyone, Finns and other foreigners alike, is, "Why are you here?". Of course, one might still encounter this question in more popular destinations, but the difference is the skepticism and surprise typically accompanied by the question. Though family ties and work are typically the more common answers regarding what brought a foreigner to Finland, I considered throughout my research whether or not music has also become a prominent reason people are coming to Finland.

Finland has been globally known in the music world for centuries, dating back to classical music and Jean Sibelius, continuing on to early rock bands such as Hanoi Rocks and Leningrad Cowboys, and most recently, hard rock and heavy metal. One of the events that brought international attention to the Finnish metal scene occurred in 2005. Lordi, a Finnish heavy metal band, won the European song contest Eurovision. Before that, heavy metal was an unlikely genre to be found within the confines of ESC. Lordi's participation in the contest as the representatives of Finland was quite controversial, until they won. The controversy was based on the idea of this "monster metal" band, with a somewhat unpalatable aesthetic, representing Finnish identity on an international scale despite the fact they had achieved mainstream status in the national charts (Kahn-Harris, Hjelm & LeVine 2013, 5). Andrew Nestingen (2008)

¹ In this thesis, "Foreign" and "Foreigner" refer to non-Finnish scene members

explored the idea that it was Lordi's unexpectedly well mannered, media friendly demeanor that helped ease the original image of distasteful transgressiveness to ultimately winning Eurovision and the overall acceptance of metal music in Finnish culture proceeding the victory.

It was also around this time that metal from Finland began gaining a significant global fan base through other bands such as HIM, Amorphis, Children of Bodom and Nightwish. HIM also gained international fame by means of television. In the US in the early 2000s Bam Margera, a well known skateboarder, was the star of two of MTV's most popular shows called *Jackass* [2000–2007] and, later, *Viva la Bam* [2003–2006]. Since Margera was a big fan of HIM, they received a lot of airtime and exposure due to his rising stardom as well as becoming a significant symbol in the skateboarding world. Brad Klypchak (2016, 53) briefly mentions how Bam Margera's fandom of both HIM and The 69 Eyes brought them recognition and helped pave the way for the popularity in the US. Klypchak's article focuses more on Hanoi Rocks and their role in glam rock, thus also mentioning that Bam was also a Hanoi Rocks fan. In 2014, Loudwire magazine released a video interview accompanied by a short article written and conducted by Graham Hartmann titled "HIM Reminisce About Bam Margera + Ryan Dunn". The article begins by claiming many HIM fans in the US found out about the band via Margera and his MTV fame. Hartmann's interview with Ville Valo, HIM's frontman, includes discussion of how the band and Margera became friends and the progression of their interconnectedness, as well as how that affected HIM's success and experience in the US.

One of the interesting things about this fan base recognizing Finnish Metal as an individual entity is that it surpasses genre confines. A specific genre is typically the foundation of other worldwide metal fan bases. For example, other metal sub-genres such as Black Metal or Heavy Metal have similar fandoms that include interest in a country relevant to music and bands of the genre (Black Metal in Norway or Heavy Metal in England). Kahn-Harris (2007, 97-98) gives a variety of examples where nationality is significant to metal sub-genres. He mentions not only the fact that numerous iconic bands spanning various extreme metal sub-genres came from the UK, but also that there is an abundance of well known scenic institutions still in existence there. He recalls his own fieldwork in Sweden, and how their local scene is exceptionally strong as well as the fact that the music hailing from Sweden (specifically death metal) has a distinctive sound recognized globally as Swedish Death

Metal. In regards to Norwegian metal, he focuses on the transgressive activity within the early Black Metal scene that received global attention, which aided in its infamous and iconic scenic relevance. Each one of the four previously mentioned Finnish bands (HIM, Amorphis, Children of Bodom and Nightwish) could be considered of a completely different sub-genre of metal, yet a majority of self-proclaimed “finn-o-files”² would be a fan of them all and potentially group them together under the umbrella term of “Finnish Metal” rather than identify them in their respective sub-genre.

The rise of metal in Finnish popular culture in previous years could be an intriguing subject to study on its own. In most cultures around the world, metal as a sub-culture is viewed as transgressive/counter-culture in relation to what is considered mainstream. As Kahn-Harris (2007, 15) writes:

According to the Chicago School of Sociology, subcultures are transient yet tight-knit groups that exist on the margins of ‘acceptable society’ and continues to relate various subcultures as the morphology suggests ‘sub’ meaning lower, and how they exist in relation to a more acceptable, larger culture.

People who listen to metal and participate in the scene³ are generally a minority, and metal as a music genre and subculture would typically never be considered mainstream or appealing to the general public. However, in Finland, it was accepted as a mainstream cultural phenomenon around the time Lordi won the Eurovision song contest. Though the impact of this is still visible within Finnish mainstream culture, its visibility seems to be slowly decreasing which is observable in lack of attendance to metal gigs and events as well as other once popular scenic institutions such as iconic metal bars, clubs and stores going out of business.

In the rest of the Western world, the metal craze of the 1980’s died down through the 1990’s and became a less prominent (and less acceptable) sub-culture. However, it seemed the 1990’s were a crucial time in the growth and development of the metal scene in Finland and provided a solid foundation for the mainstream acceptance later seen in the early 2000’s (Karjalainen & Sipilä 2016). Whether it was Lordi’s success in

² A person who is extremely interested in anything having to do with Finland, Finnish culture, language, history, geography, etc.

³ Simply put, the cultural community people belong to. This will be defined more in depth later on in the paper.

Eurovision, or a deeper cultural attraction to the darker, somber aspects of art and music, the reasons behind heavy metal's success and acceptance in mainstream Finnish popular culture could be a research topic all on its own. Though the question of metal's role in Finnish culture as well as the common Finnish themes and sounds found in Finnish music are touched upon in this thesis, it is not a focus of my research topic.

Many international fans of Finnish metal did find something attractive in the sound of the music which led to their interest in the location the music originated from, more than the attraction to a specific metal sub-genre. The relation of sound to national identity is a common theme in the discourse of global scenes in relation to music, specifically metal (Kahn-Harris 2007, 23). In her presentation at the Modern Heavy Metal Conference in Helsinki in 2017, Cynthia Grund provided sonic examples on the piano of early classical Finnish music to determine if it shared common traits to modern metal from Finland. When broaching the topic of a notable Finnish sound while interviewing⁴ various artists in Finnish bands (such as Apocalyptica, Nightwish, Stam1na and Moonsorrow), there seemed to be a consensus that there is a common melancholic atmosphere that can be observed throughout the history of Finnish music in regards to tonality, melody and lyrical theme. Some artists I interviewed attributed this to the unique climate and abundance of nature in Finland, while others simply mentioned the inspiration in their own music stemmed from the familiarity with the melancholic sounds coming from the music they grew up with such as traditional Finnish *Iskelmä* (comparable to German Schlager) or other folk music. I personally noticed traditional Finnish folk music and early Finnish popular music had much more melancholic sounds and lyrical themes than music from the US and other European cultures dating from similar times. This common thread is an aspect that seems unique to Finnish music in relation to traditional music hailing from most other Western countries. It has not only aided in the branding of Finnish metal (Karjalainen and Sipilä 2016, 210), but has also potentially contributed to the increased interest in Finland and helped to deepen the desire to learn more about the unfamiliar culture and eventually visit, study, or even move here. Toni-Matti Karjalainen and Eero Sipilä (2016, 211) state:

Finnish metal was also, at times, boosted by national and cultural

⁴ I personally conducted these interviews to be published in various metal promotion websites over the span of eight years. They included video, audio and text interviews. Some of these are not available online anymore.

imperatives to promote Finnish identity, allowing it to become a recognizable global/local phenomenon that could challenge the Anglo-American hegemony in heavy metal music production

This phenomenon of musical fandom creating an interest to learn about or visit the music's location of origin is not new or uncommon. The vast array of ethnomusicological studies focusing on national/cultural identity could exemplify these issues, from studies in the Blues scene of the southern US and punk scene in the UK to Eastern European folk music (see Bennett & Peterson 2004). However, due to Finland's unique geographic location and obscurity as a travel destination, it is still a fairly untouched culture and topic in the realm of international popular culture studies. Because of this, it is intriguing and highly relevant to make known the link between those who have discovered and eventually traveled to Finland and their initial interest and fandom to Finnish metal.

My main research question asks how prominent the international presence within the metal scene in Finland is and how it affects the local Finnish scene. As previously mentioned, my position in this research is self-reflexive in the sense that I, myself, am one of the many who initially became interested in Finland due to the discovery of music from Finland. This led to the development of a strong interest in learning more about the country, culture and language, as well as to travel and eventually live here. My own observations of this fandom started many years before, simply by being an active member of this cultural phenomenon and a member of the scene of non-Finnish fans of metal from Finland in the earlier years of its existence (around 2004–2008). Throughout these earlier years, I began to meet other people at gigs or online who followed a common path discovering one Finnish band which then led to another and another, leading to a realization that these bands had something special about them and were all hailing from the same place and creating a fan culture.

As stated earlier, my participation in the scene began in the early 2000s when television was still considered an outlet for discovering music, and the internet as a vehicle for music discovery was just starting to become more common and easier through outlets such as YouTube, forums, social media or music streaming websites. This made it easier to find bands similar to those one already enjoyed, or simply bands from the same country. These early years of social media also made it easier to connect with people and bands in all corners of the world. In this specific case, I observed it

was not uncommon for foreign fans of Finnish metal to have connected with a Finnish person online at some point. This not only enabled them to be exposed to more music via their new internet friend, but also made the idea of traveling to Finland more palatable since they "knew" someone who could host them once arriving.

Shifting my participation from the international to the translocal scene⁵ as well as the ability to observe the local scene provided the opportunity to gain a diverse viewpoint of the fan culture. I personally visited Finland four times (2007, 2008, 2011 and 2013) before moving here to study in 2014. When I began studying in Finland, I knew I wanted to look into the global Finnish Metal fan base but wasn't quite sure how I could take advantage of my opportunity to conduct my studies while living in Finland. My research question was formulated based on various experiences observed before I moved to Finland as well as observations noted throughout the early stages of my studies. My observations of the international presence within the first few months of my own activity in the metal scene in Finland prompted the questions regarding the significance and impact it has had on the local metal scene. Instances such as hearing an abundance of people speaking in other languages at events I assumed would be mainly attended by Finns, as well as observing the frequency in which local promoters posted in English and provided information for people coming from abroad helped formulate my main research question.

Initially I considered whether or not the international presence had an impact on the live scene, specifically on things such as event accessibility to those coming from abroad, lineups that would appeal to both foreigners and Finns, information posted in English and the overall acknowledgment that there is significant amount of people being active in the scene that are not Finnish. Though various larger festivals had already been accommodating to foreigners in various ways, throughout my four years studying, I was able to observe the evolution of smaller festivals, events and promotion agencies and take note if and how they began evolving and taking into account the rising international presence.

The foreigners' perspective of the metal scene in Finland alone was an interesting subject to observe. Besides the international presence at gigs and festivals, one of the other aspects that encouraged me to research this topic was the activity of foreigners in

⁵ Based on the "Local, Translocal, Virtual" model of Andy Bennett and Richard Peterson, further explored later on. (Bennett and Peterson 2004)

the University of Turku's metal club (TYRMY⁶) and their impact on the club itself. Again, this observation arose due to my own participation in the club during the early days of my studies at the University of Turku. Much like the evolution I observed with smaller festivals and promoters, I was also around to observe changes within the metal club. The year that I joined TYRMY, not only did they create a separate Facebook page for international members where information was posted only in English, they introduced a new board member position, “kansainvälinen vastaava” or “international correspondent” and began hosting international themed events such as parties hosted solely in English where members were encouraged to bring food or music from their home country. It was made apparent that these changes within the club had only begun that year, though there had been a steady presence of foreign members in previous years.

Though this was a current and significant example of the international impact on the metal scene, the international presence at events and festivals was what my research mainly focused on. At Tuska festival in Helsinki during the summer of 2015, I handed out short surveys to anyone I heard speaking in English or another language other than Finnish. I also engaged in casual conversation and unstructured interviews at various other festivals and metal events such as the after-parties for Tuska, Nummirock Festival 2015–2017, QStock Festival 2015, a Nightwish/Children of Bodom/Sonata Arctica stadium gig at Ratina Stadion in Tampere in 2015, and other smaller gigs whenever I heard people speaking in English or other languages besides Finnish. In addition to interviews and surveys I collected visual data of those who were carrying or wearing their country's flag at these events,⁷ and gathered observations from social media activity surrounding these larger festivals as well as smaller, niche festivals such as Turku Saatanalle, Black Flames of Blasphemy and Steelfest between 2014 and 2018 in relation to promotion and how they interacted with or catered to the international crowd.

1.2 - Methodologies and Aims of Research

The basis of my research and the seed from which the concept sprouted was the idea of ethnographic research. The idea of taking advantage of my ability to study in Finland

⁶ TYRMY stands for Turun Yliopiston Raskaan Musiikin Ystävät, directly translated - Turku University's Heavy Music Friends club

⁷ See appendix 8.

by researching through active fieldwork, observing culture, engaging with people and even participating myself helped develop my research question and concept. Harris Berger (2011, 13) emphasizes the importance of fieldwork when studying popular music and suggests that the ability to take part in a culture and create a dialogue with the research participant is crucial in being able to bring focus to the lived experience of music. Ethnography in the context of researching music and music practices has also evolved to focus more on understanding the culture rather than simply documenting and explaining observations as it did in the earlier years of its existence as an academic methodology (Barz & Cooley 2008, 2).

Since my undergraduate studies in Anthropology focused on applied ethnographic work and research methods, it was also a comfortable methodological approach for me and seemed most natural. My activity in the scene also provided the ease of access to study my subjects ethnographically. My ethnographic work was mainly based on participant observation and interaction with research subjects. The main field of observation included various metal gigs, festivals and other scenic institutions attended throughout my graduate studies, but expanded to my personal experience and observations over many years as an active scene member both in the international, translocal, and local scenes (Bennett & Peterson 2004). I was also highly active within the scenes at the festivals and gigs and gained exclusive access due to my second role as a photographer/journalist. This role made it financially possible to attend many festivals and gigs since the media passes allowed me free entry, as well as access to back stage and VIP areas of the festivals. This allowed for the ability to observe diverse areas and crowds in attendance at the festivals including the media representatives and artists themselves. I also gained some insight relevant to my studies from artists that I conducted interviews with.

My more quantitative ethnographic research was collected using the surveys I handed out to foreigners at festivals as well as my observations taken from social media. When engaging in casual conversation with foreigners at festivals and events, I typically asked where they were from and what brought them to Finland. If the conditions were suitable, meaning we had time to talk more and it was quiet, I might have gone on to ask how long they had been here and what they thought of the country and local metal scene. These questions were also included in the physical surveys I handed out at Tuska Festival. Aside from these questions, survey questions included what they thought about the metal scene in Finland in particular and, if they had

previous expectations and how their expectations compared to their experience⁸.

Conducting these surveys at the festival was a bit problematic, not only due to physical logistics (sitting and talking in a quiet environment was a rare opportunity) but I believe it also skewed the mentality of the interviewee's a bit. Their sobriety was definitely a factor, but I also wondered whether their responses would have been different if they were asked these questions outside the geographical context of the festival. Had I approached them a few days after the excitement of the festival wore off, or once they arrived back home, would they have provided a different perspective? I based these questions off my own memories of attending festivals in Finland for the first time before I moved here, and remembered feelings of jetlag mixed with chaos, excitement, adrenaline, intoxication and an overall altered mental state. Though Berger (2011, 13) suggests that the researcher and research subject must collaborate to provide a valid account of the social experience, it is important to take into account the varying forces that might influence how the researcher and research subject interpret an experience. The emotional and mental state of both researcher and subject can influence the data collected. For example, there were multiple times through out the festivals (specially Nummirock which was a four day camping festival) where, myself and specifically people coming from abroad who might be experiencing jetlag and culture shock, might have been in an altered mental state which provided skewed data. I, myself was in an altered mental state due to fatigue or having to balance between my duties as a photographer, researcher and attendee. Though it was, at times difficult to balance everything, and may have had an affect on the data collecting process at the festivals, Boellstroff et. al. (2012, 69) states, "Good participant observation means play and research in parallel as the same engaged activity".

Aside from the international presence at gigs and festivals, one of the other sources of scenic activity I included in my fieldwork was observing the foreign presence within TYRMY and taking into account the international presence within other university metal clubs around Finland. Initially, I became a member of TYRMY around the time my studies in Finland began (August 2014). I attended events and socialized with club members both Finns and foreigners alike. It was brought to my attention, after explaining what my research was going to focus on, that there were new things happening within the club which were relevant to my research, such as the previously mentioned new board member position and activities aimed towards the foreign

⁸ See appendix 4 for full survey questions.

members.

During my second year of studies (and as a TYRMY member), I applied for this position on the board and held the title of “International Correspondent” (or “International flotation device” as stated on my club t-shirt) for two years. Not only did I apply for this position with my thesis in mind, I was also genuinely interested in being the contact person for those coming from abroad and helping them acclimate and find their way into the local metal scene as quickly and efficiently as possible, specially since a majority of the new international members each semester were Erasmus exchange students and would only be around for one semester, two at most. This aspect of the international impact on the metal scene simply at the university level was inspiring and definitely contributed to my thesis subject and evolution of my research as well as provided another scenic institution I could include in my fieldwork.

1.3 - Defining Terms

Terminology was also important to be aware of and a bit problematic at times. While doing fieldwork and conducting interviews or during casual conversation, I found myself having to specify what terms such as “scene” implied and explain the differentiation between Finnish Metal and metal in Finland as well as other terms that might have had a more specific meaning in regards to my research. In this thesis, it is equally noteworthy to elaborate on terms used to explain the music, scene and other aspects, such as sub-genre, scenic institutions, local, international, translocal, foreign, and so on. There are some terms which are used interchangeably such as “foreign” and “non-Finnish”. I will also focus on the terminology used by Andy Bennett and Richard Peterson in “Music Scenes: Local, Translocal and Virtual” (2004, 6) but modify them a little to encompass my specific themes more adequately and explain their relevance and definition in relation to my research more in depth later on in the thesis.

The concept and definition of the term “scene” in relation to my research will be utilized taking Bennett and Peterson's (2004) model into account as well as previous research by Will Straw (1991, 2002) and Keith Kahn-Harris (2000, 2007, 2013). However, when using the term in dialogue with interviewees and scene members, I had to specify that the scene I was talking about was the community of people in Finland who predominantly listen to metal music and the events, activities and institutions that cater to the individuals and their interest in metal as a fan, patron, musician, industry

practitioner or other actor with other scenic connections.

The information gathered throughout my research is not only relevant to bring to light within an academic context, but could be also useful to people and companies within the music industry. Specifically, conducting this research ethnographically provides an outlet to connect the issue at hand within the music scene and apply it to more prominent cultural matters spanning other aspects of society (Berger 2011, 10). The concept of phenomenology (Berger 2008, 62–75) also played a part in the theoretical framework of my research. My research focuses on the experience of scene members, as well as myself, within the international, translocal and local context. The foundation of my research was strongly based on my experience long before I knew I would be conducting research. I took into account what I experienced as a scene member both on the intentional and translocal levels, and took that into account alongside my more recent activity and observations to formulate my research topic. From there, I not only observed and interacted with the other individuals I encountered within the scene, but included their experiences as scene members in various contexts. I also considered the experientiality of the scene itself, how the scene as an object is experiencing the influence of the international presence. The scenes I observed in this context included both the international scene outside of Finland as well as the local scene within Finland.

My research provides the evidence that people are becoming interested in a country and culture outside their homeland due to music and how it is culturally significant. This research will bring light to how music is creating such a strong global fan culture that the fans are willing and curious enough to spend time and money traveling to their destination of interest simply to experience the culture their favorite music is coming from. Particularly for a country as isolated (in comparison to other European countries) geographically, linguistically and culturally as Finland, this type of fan culture phenomenon is prominent and unique enough to acknowledge and research. Though such cultural phenomena are not new to music fandom, I believe the uniqueness of the evolution of this particular fan culture and its relative newness in the history of Finland and modern popular culture makes it a relevant subject to study, and could most definitely be elaborated on and followed up with as it continues to evolve through out the years culturally and academically.

1.4 - Data Collection

My data consisted of participant observations at events and online, structured interviews conducted in person or via email/messenger, semi-structured interviews and casual conversation with scene members conducted at events or via messenger as well as handing out physical surveys at one festival. When collecting data online, I took screen shots of polls that were conducted in event pages⁹, noted in a Word document when I observed English being used or information provided for those coming from abroad on social media or websites, and saved any relevant messages or emails between myself and scene members as Word documents.

Utilizing screen shots was an effective way to collect data that was time sensitive as in the information was either not likely to remain available long, or would be difficult to find in the future. "Photos or screenshots are never simply representation of objective social facts. That said, they can be incredibly rich data points as source of in-depth analysis when used in context of other materials." (Boellstorff et. al. 2012, 115.) In the case of screen capturing the polls in the event pages, these event pages are no longer available on Facebook. The numerical data provided by the polls contributed to more tangible evidence that there is an observable international presence, at least in attendance at these types of scenic institutions. Boellstorff et. al. (2012, 115) also mention screen capturing is a decent way to collect data virtually since it is unobtrusive to the subjects. This is true, however, it also breaches the subject of ethics and whether or not informed consent is necessary or if the information being collected should be anonymous.

Since ethnographic fieldwork was my main source of data, I utilized my second role as a photographer/journalist to attend multiple festivals. While at the festivals, I took notes on paper and on my cell phone using a notepad app. I noted observations of people as well as relevant information I gathered while engaging in casual conversation or semi-structured interviews with individuals I heard speaking in English or other languages besides Finnish. At Tuska festival 2015, I handed out paper surveys to anyone I heard speaking in English and other languages besides Finnish. I provided pencils and clip boards made of cardboard for them to quickly answer the short questions on the single sided paper. Most of the people I stopped were walking from one place to another so there was little time or resources to sit down and provide long

⁹ See appendix 1 figures 5-7

answers or detailed insight. I also collected visual data with my camera¹⁰ by photographing those I saw carrying flags of their own countries. I was able to get verbal consent from a few of these people but there were many I could not talk to due to noise, or position in the crowd. Some people I photographed while I was in the photo pit since they had their flags draped over the railing and did not have time to stop and explain how I might use those photos in my thesis. This was another example of how my second role provided exclusive access to various locations and aspects of the festivals that a regular attendee would not have had. However, since my main purpose in the photo pit was to photograph the bands on stage, I could only sneak a few photos of the crowd in the limited time I had there.

1.5 - Ethical Reflection

My research topics and form of ethnographic fieldwork did not pose too many instances where ethics were in question or the research subjects could have felt uncomfortable or mistreated. Hammersley and Atiksons (2007, 209) broke down ethnography ethics into five categories: informed consent, privacy, harm, exploitation, and consequences for future research. Boellstorff et. al. (2007, 130) also broke down ethics of virtual ethnography in a similar way but included subjects such as mitigation of institutional risk, deception, sex and intimacy, compensation, taking leave and accurate portrayal. Out of these categories, it seemed informed consent was the most relevant to my work. I could not think of how the others might be relevant other than possibly exploitation when it came to mentioning the festivals but that also returned to informed consent since I received consent from the festival promoters to utilize their events in my research. Most of my research was done on an individual basis asking personal questions that did not invade the individuals' privacy, and the institutions that hosted the events or provided information relevant to my research were informed and asked permission.

The consent of photos taken of people carrying flags was one of the main things that came to mind while considering the ethical aspect of my research. Since I was not able to get tangible consent, I simply used photos in which the individuals were not identifiable. Other aspects of my research that prompted the question of ethics was including questions such as "Would you prefer to remain anonymous or can I use your

¹⁰ See appendix 1 figure 8

name" and "Can I contact you later on for further information" into my survey and interview questions. I also made sure to email the promoters of festivals I would be collecting the most data at (namely Tuska and Nummirock), informed them of what kind of research I would conduct and made sure it was acceptable that I was handing out surveys or collecting data on festival grounds.

I also contacted the promoters of Nummirock and Steelfest to get permission to use data collected from their Facebook event page. Both festivals posted polls and contests asking attendees where they were coming from, which was relevant to my research and provided a somewhat visual representation of the international presence in attendance at the festival (or at least a representation of the international presence activity in the event page). In relation to the polls, when screen capturing them and including the screenshots in the appendix, I made sure to blur out or cover up the photos and names of the individuals who took part in the polls since I could not get everyone's consent and their individual identity was not relevant to my research.

Boellstorff et al (2012, 129) made apparent the imbalance between what the researcher and research subjects benefited from the research. At one point I considered bringing some kind of reward such as candy with me to hand out to those who took part in the surveys, but it proved to be difficult to carry a bag of candy, plus the tools needed to collect the data, plus my personal belongings (including all my camera gear). In all, the most that my research offered to its subjects was exposure of festivals as welcoming to foreigners and attention to the foreigners who were attending the festivals, mainly the ones who seemed to want their identity as a foreigner noticed by walking around with their country's flag.

1.6 - Structure of the Thesis and General Points

This thesis is divided into four chapters: Introduction, Central Concepts and Previous Literature, Ethnographic Work and the Conclusion. The central concepts that are examined include the most influential terms utilized throughout my research: scene, clarification of other terminology and key concepts, previous literature focusing on metal, and previous literature focusing on methodologies and theoretical approaches. Ethnography was my main method of research, thus the main scenic institutions I included in my ethnography are explored as well as looking into my research questions and interview questions in depth. The conclusion brings together my findings and main

aspects that contributed to my research, the importance of my research and possible future research. Visual compilation of the quantitative data collected with the surveys I handed out is provided in the appendix as well as a sample of the survey questions as they appeared on the paper hand outs, screen shots I took of the polls posted in event pages, photos taken of festival goers with flags, and full answers of the structured interviews conducted with multiple industry practitioners

One of the main themes in my thesis revolved around the concept of a metal scene and its scenic institutions. The most relevant institutions explored in my research were metal festivals, other metal gigs, the advertisement and promotion of these events online, virtual activity via social media, apps and websites, as well as bands, promoters, and the metal club at the university. The metal festivals ranged from two day indoor festivals (such as Black Flames of Blasphemy in Helsinki and Turku Saatanalle in Turku), to four day camping festivals (Nummirock). The indoor festivals and non-camping festivals and events (including Tuska and stadium gigs) were located mainly in larger cities and did not provide accommodations, thus attendees needed to find places to stay the night in hotels or residences in the area. Nummirock was located in a more remote area and provided a camping area for the attendees which was included in the ticket price. The indoor festivals typically only had one stage and a smaller lineup while the outdoor festivals had anywhere from two to four stages and had much more elaborate and diverse lineups as well as other activities and entertainment aside from music to give people more to do.

Some of the festivals such as Black Flames of Blasphemy, Steelfest and Turku Saatanalle were genre specific, including a lineup that catered to more extreme metal genres such as Black Metal, Thrash Metal and Death Metal. Other festivals such as Tuska and Nummirock had a lineup that spanned more genres, thus appealing to a more diverse crowd. All festival lineups included bands that were from Finland as well as abroad. Taking notice of the amount of Finnish bands versus bands from outside of Finland inspired one of my research questions in regards to how or if the international presence is affecting things such as which bands festival promoters are bringing in and if they are considering the demand of both Finnish attendees as well as bands foreigners might want to see.

2. Central Concepts and Previous Literature

2.1 - Scene: Definition and Relevance

The concept of “scene” helps to contextualize the notion of a community when looking at metal culture in relation to the people, institutions and activities that are relevant to the subjects I will be focusing on. Will Straw (1991, 373), one of the first to write about the concept of scene in the context of music academically, defines it as “a cultural space in which a range of musical practices coexist, interacting with each other within a variety of processes of differentiation, and according to widely varying trajectories of change and cross-fertilization”. Leaning on this, the following aspects are interrelated parts of the scene as understood in my research: the people, the places occupied by the people, and the things and/or events the people take part in. All these can be observed under one umbrella. Observing metal culture under this term makes my research more comprehensive than presenting these or similar attributes of the culture independently.

Though the definition of scene as cultural space has not changed much since Straw’s (1991) first definitions about the scene in relation to music culture and communities, there is one cultural development that now holds an equal significance that was not historically prominent enough to be included in Straw’s original notion of space. The Internet now provides a very prominent yet abstract space for scenic activity. In an updated version, Bennett and Peterson (2004, 6–12) break down music scenes into three subcategories: local, translocal and virtual. Since a majority of my focus is based on international fans of type of music that is defined by its location, Bennett and Peterson’s model will be more significant, mainly due to the relation they associate to the translocal and local, as well as the role online discourse and activity the virtual extension of the scene plays in the progression and evolution of the international scene of Finnish metal fans.

Though Bennett and Peterson’s (2004, 6–10) model is more relevant, Straw’s (1991, 373) definition of highlighting cultural space, practices and processes of the scene is still relevant when looking at the activity of a scene. Scenic activity and the spaces these activities take place in, physical or virtual, are a key element in the architecture of a scene. Scenic activity could include anything from simple discourse to consumerism, production, distribution, promotion, and various other types of activity.

Scenic institutions, such as places to consume, produce, promote, support, discuss and experience the music with other members (Levine and Wallach 2013, 119) are also essential to the understanding of a scene, especially when ethnographic work is conducted.

In relation to the local aspect of the metal scene and the activity related to the notion of “local”, institutions include but are not limited to physical locations where activity may occur. Such places might include shops that sell metal merchandise and music, bars that cater to metal fans (i.e. play only metal music, host metal gigs, have a metal themed decor, etc.), concert venues and most importantly, festivals. TYRMY as a community could be considered an institution in itself. Not only did they also utilize other previously existing institutional settings such as gigs/venues and bars to gather its members for club related events, they created their own institutions and community spaces by hosting events and parties in locations such as areas designated to student socialization provided by the university¹¹ to the common area of the student housing neighborhood.

When it comes to translocal and virtual scenes, the notion of scenic institution becomes a bit more abstract. Bennett and Peterson (2004, 9) point out that one of the characteristics of the translocal scene is the ability to have a sense of community over a scattered space while still having the ability to be grounded to a geographical location. They use the image of the music festival to convey the idea of such a space. People who share the same desire to be part of the given scene are able to congregate from different geographic locations to the central location of the festivals. This is one of the main reasons I chose festivals as my main location to conduct fieldwork. Though I considered the entirety of Finland as the location the translocal scene existed in, I felt, especially since my research topic was formulated from attending a festival, that the research would be best conducted where the activity is most concentrated.

According to Bennett and Peterson (2004, 6), institutions related to the virtual scene include anywhere people can communicate with each other or take part in scene related activity online, such as music and band related forums, social media, webzines, web shops, music streaming services and whatever else is out there. The virtual aspect of the scene is a bit more abstract compared to the concrete geographic locations or concepts of local and translocal, but no less important. Since Bennett and Peterson published their model, the virtual space has changed significantly. These days, social

¹¹ Recreational areas such as club houses, saunas and sports halls.

media websites and apps dominate the virtual world, while platforms such as forums and email are fading away. The digital music world has also changed significantly since their model was formed. Streaming music from apps, websites and programs such as Spotify and Deezer as well as YouTube are gaining popularity, while mp3 downloading and file sharing has lost popularity. These music streaming apps and websites typically also serve as a social media platform where fans and friends can connect and engage in discourse in a context where the main purpose revolves around the act of listening to music. This provides another significant example of why ethnographic research is relevant. Barz and Cooley (2008, 94–95) consider how classic ethnomusicology research questions can be applied when utilizing virtual ethnography in ethnomusicological research. Such questions regard creation and maintenance of community within a music scene and whether or not the mode of communication within the community influences the cultural practices themselves. Barz and Cooley (2008, 92) state:

Challenging the polemic binary between “virtual” and “real” in the way we conduct our fieldwork, we seek to understand technologies constructions that are as real as any other human cultural experience virtual fieldwork as an organic part of our real people that we may or may not actually meet face-to-face. of communication as human production. In that context, we communicative research process with.

Within ethnomusicology, virtual ethnography can be considered just as relevant as more classic types of ethnography such as physically going to a location and observing and taking part in a culture or conducting interviews with individuals who are part of the scene. The more modern forms of cultural activities that include the internet and abstract spaces such as apps and platforms are just as important to observe aspects such as communication and forms of community within a culture.

This displays another reason why research similar to mine is necessary. An academic study conducted ten years from now could focus on the same subject matter, but the scenic institutions as well as other cultural aspects might have a completely different relevance or definition. Being able to read literature written at this specific time might be of use in the future to observe how relevant or irrelevant certain aspects

of a culture are and have been, and how it has evolved.

These days, social media is probably the most widely used outlet in relation to music scenes for promotion and fan connection, while back in 2004, outlets such as music on television and radio were still holding a significant spot in music culture. Social media also had a significant role in my own research methodology. It provided an ease of access to observing unique aspects of scenic activity (specifically in relation to festivals and events), discourse between fans as well as immediate contact with individuals who contributed to insight and interviews via Facebook messenger.¹²

My own research is focused on three categories similar to Bennett and Peterson's (2004) model, but not exact. In relation to the people who make up the scene I am including in my research, I will utilize their model as follows: the concept of the local scene will focus on the metal scene within Finland. This includes any activity relating to metal, locals who are active members within the scene, as well as scenic institutions all within the confines of Finland as a geographic location. The concept of translocal will focus on foreign fans of metal from Finland who displace themselves from their own culture to experience Finland and the metal scene in Finland, thus taking Finland as a whole to be the translocal location. There is a gray area in relation to those who might both be considered local and translocal members. Defining this is not essential to my research though it is important to take into account. In most cases, but not all, the Finns included in my research are considered local scene members. However, there are Finns included in my study who are currently living abroad, thus not active within the local scene. There are also some cases of foreigners who would identify more as a local than a translocal member based on the fact that they either have been living in Finland for a significant amount of time and have a permanent residence here, or did not consider themselves a member of the international scene when they were living outside of Finland¹³. Although I could consider myself a local member based on my activity within the local scene as a patron and contributor due to my various positions as photographer, journalist and metal club board member, due to my foreigner status and my years experiencing the scene both translocally as a visitor in Finland and internationally as experiencing the scene from the US, it was hard to place myself solidly in one category.

¹² For example, there were a few occasions where I had questions that arose as I analyzed data, regarding interview answers or scenic activity and was able to get immediate feedback.

¹³ For example, they were not fans of metal from Finland before moving here or did not consider themselves active scene members before moving to Finland

Though the virtual scene proved to be more substantial and relevant in my ethnographic work than originally expected, in relation to the model, I will be replacing it with the notion of the international scene. The international scene will encompass the presence of Finnish metal on a global scale. It will emphasize the notion that the fans who are traveling to Finland from abroad consider themselves part of a global fan base of Finnish metal and originate from a fan culture outside of Finland. This typically is focused on the fan culture they experience when they are in their home country. Although this concept is not elaborated on much in my thesis, it is significant enough to utilize as a background to put into context the origins of the individuals who construct the translocal presence I am focusing on.

Though there are concrete definitions provided by academics such as Bennett and Peterson (2004) and Straw (1991, 2002), discourse analysis provides examples of diverse uses of the word “scene” in relation to other terminology also used in my paper such as “community” and “subculture”. As previously mentioned, I had to elaborate on my own definition of the word scene when conducting my research, since individuals based their own definitions on the personal scenic relevance. In his book *Extreme Metal: Music and Culture on the Edge*, Keith Kahn-Harris (2007, 13–14) provided examples from multiple interviews of various metal fans and their use of the word “scene”. He mentions the interviewees refer to a scene in relation to institutional space, text and socializing, and emphasizes the notion that their definitions are used neither all in the same context nor completely separately.

Other terminology such as community, underground and subculture, has also been synonymously used, though criticized, in the realm of academic discourse of music scenes. Bennett and Peterson (2004, 3–4) explain the use of the word “subculture” not only implying a common derivative of a greater culture, but also more standardized actions of the members, whereas the use of the word “scene” paints a more unstructured image as well as a community more detached or independent from mainstream or popular culture.

The term scene, and all of its inclusions, is a key aspect in my research. The “local, translocal and virtual/international” model (Bennett & Peterson 2004) helped to organize my research focus and construct a more comprehensive approach to my methodology and research topic. It also helped me take advantage of my ability to conduct my studies in Finland and aided in forming the research subject in a more approachable context. It was also made apparent to me in the early stages of my

research that the term “scene” is very malleable and can be interpreted differently based on the individuals experience and role within a scene, thus deserving an in-depth explanation in relation to my studies.

2.2 - Clarification of Other Terminology and Central Concepts

Aside from the concept of scene and its definition in relation to my studies, there were a few other concepts and terms that needed a more in-depth look and clarification. One example is differentiating between “metal from Finland” and “Finnish Metal” in relation to my studies. Occasionally, these two terms could be interpreted differently or used interchangeably. For the purposes of my research, the term “metal from Finland” refers to any metal band or musician who originates from Finland. The term “Finnish metal” is used more in relation to the brand (Karjalainen and Sipilä 2016, 209–210) or umbrella term that the global fan base, or previously mentioned Finn-o-files, uses to group metal bands from Finland together.

In my own definition, Finnish metal could also include metal bands whose sound or imagery have themes in Finnish culture and history but are not necessarily from Finland. One example is the band Kalevala, a Russian folk metal band whose themes relate sonically to Finnish folk and Sámi music as well as modern Finnish folk metal bands, and lyrically/thematically to Finnish folklore and mythology. Another example is a Spanish folk metal band called Pimeä Metsä whose music is also sonically and thematically reminiscent of Finnish folk metal. Although the entire band is Spanish, they also incorporate Finnish language in their lyrics. These bands could be considered Finnish metal since they use Finnish inspired themes, sound and language in their music, but they are not from Finland. Thus, defining such terminology proves to be important but at the same time not entirely black and white.

While writing this thesis, I also faced this terminological issue when posting my gig photography on Instagram. I found myself debating whether I should tag the band as Finnish metal or metal from Finland. I noticed the hash tag “#finnishmetal” had over 20,000 hits while “#metalfromfinland” only had about 8,000. However, I could not bring myself to tag bands as “Finnish metal” if they were simply from Finland with no Finnish culture themes or imagery related to their identity. Also, grouping some bands such as more underground or extreme metal bands under the same hashtag as bands that had a more global identity as “Finnish Metal” did not seem right.

This need to differentiate between terms also applied to the phrases “Finnish metal scene” and “metal scene in Finland”. The phrase “Finnish metal scene” encompasses metal from Finland in a global context (including Finland), much like the example of the two non-Finnish bands with Finnish music themes. An example of the global Finnish metal scene could include Suomi Feast, which is a festival/tour held annually in Japan which only includes bands from Finland in the lineup. Another example is also the “Finnish Metal Tour” that existed in the US for two years and, as the name might suggest, only included bands from Finland. On the inverse, the notion of the metal scene in Finland encompasses the global metal scene as it exists within Finland and Finnish culture. This includes fans of any kind of metal and any metal related events or activity that occur within Finland.

I also use the terms “international”, “foreign”, “from abroad” and “non-Finn” or “non-Finnish” quite interchangeably throughout the thesis. I personally have not assigned any specific relevance to the individual terms in relation to my research besides the use of “international” in relation to the “local, translocal and international” model (Bennett & Peterson 2004). At times, the term “from abroad” might be more fitting to use when differentiating between those who are traveling from outside of Finland and foreigners/non-Finns who live in Finland. Typically, I chose one term over the other simply to create a smoother linguistic flow and more comprehensive text. There are also some terms that do not require more elaboration than simply defining them in a footnote, such as “Finn-o-file” and “natural attitude”.

2.3 - Previous Literature: Metal

In recent days, the popularity of Finnish metal internationally is a prominent cultural phenomenon. Current research has looked at this from multiple angles. At the annual Modern Heavy Metal conference in Helsinki, the themes of Finland and Finnish metal are a commonly discussed. For example, Laura Laaksonen wrote her PhD (2015) as well as produced a documentary (*Metal Syndrome*, 2015) on Finnish musicians as international entrepreneurs. Though her work is relevant to my research as it also involves Finnish metal within the international scene, her research focuses more on this cultural phenomenon from the opposite side of the spectrum. Where my research question begins on an international level and focuses in on the local metal scene in Finland, her research begins in the local metal scene in Finland and expands focus on

its relevance internationally. Her presentation at the conference was titled “The Impact of Local Community of Practice on New Venture Internationalization: A Case Study of the Finnish Heavy Metal Music Scene” (2015). Other themes including Finland could be seen at these conferences such as Lordi’s Eurovision win (Hjelm), case studies of Nightwish (Strauss) and Moonsorrow (Vigeir) as well as various examples of the presence of Finnish identity and mythology in lyrics and imagery (Sipilä, Kärki, Doesburg, Grund, Frandsen). At the start of my own presentation at the conference in 2017 I brought attention to the fact that under presentation subject theme of Finland, only one out of five academics presenting was actually Finnish. Other presentations that included Finnish subjects were also conducted by non-Finns. This was a perfect and relevant example of how international the Finnish Metal scene can be, even on an academic level.

Toni-Matti Karjalainen, who hosted these conferences in Helsinki, has focused much of his own academic work on Finnish metal from case studies on Nightwish (2010) to the visual identity of Finnish metal bands (2012) and various other subject matters. One of his most recent and most relevant works to my own research, alongside co-author Eero Sipilä, is the article “Tunes from the Land of the Thousand Lakes: Early Years of Internationalization in Finnish Heavy Metal” (2016) that studies many similar topics which I touched on in my own paper. Their article begins with acknowledging that Finnish Metal is a global phenomenon and continues on to explore the evolution of the metal scene in Finland and elaborate on how this evolution lead to the path that created such a globalized recognition and branding of Finnish metal (2016, 209). Though the main function of the article is to bring to attention a similar concept that my research focuses on in regards to the international relation to Finnish metal, they provide a more in depth-analysis of the evolution of the metal scene in Finland which occupies a large portion of the literature. Though their account on the history of metal in Finland plays a significant role when looking at its current status globally, I did not find it necessary to include such an in-depth account in my own research since my ethnographic work is mainly focused on the current status of the scene. To sum up their findings, in relation to my own research, they state: “In our studies of Finnish metal bands and their fans, as well as the wider metal community, we have observed that the Finnish background of a band is almost without exception an issue of interest for the foreign fan” (Karjalainen & Sipilä 2016, 223).

Global attention was brought to the Finnish metal scene around the time Lordi won

Eurovision. Not only was the controversy behind this win an interesting topic of study, the phenomenon of metal becoming accepted as part of mainstream culture so quickly and widespread in Finland was a bit of a curiosity. As previously mentioned, Nestingen included Lordi's Eurovision win in his book *Crime and Fantasy in Scandinavia: Fiction, Film and Social Change* (2008). He utilizes Lordi's Eurovision win to exemplify the diversity and significance of popular culture in the Baltics and Nordic countries. In his article "'Roots?': The Relationship Between The Global and The Local Within The Extreme Metal Scene" (2000), Kahn-Harris also uses the Nordic countries and Scandinavia as a common thread in an example of the rise in national identity within extreme metal. His article focuses on Sepultura and the history of the Brazilian culture in their music, but also brings to light that themes of national culture and identity began trending within the Nordic extreme metal scene in the early 1990's, predominantly with the rise of Black Metal (2000, 20).

Metal in general has an active place in the academic world. Keith Khan-Harris, as mentioned before, is also widely known within metal academia. He has published multiple books, anthologies and articles on various aspects of metal such as *Heavy Metal: Controversies and Counter Cultures* (2013) that is an anthology of articles from various academics. The subjects analyzed range from feminist controversies to the relevance of race and violence in heavy metal aesthetics, and various other themes. In his book *Extreme Metal: Music and Culture on the Edge* (2007, 11), he mentions the thriving global focus on metal studies. Though a vast array of area studies such as Nepal (Greene 2001; 2012), Bali (Baulch 2003), Indonesia and Malaysia (Wallach 2003; 2012) and Brazil (Avelar 2003) are mentioned, it is made apparent that these studies lack the crucial connection between the global context and the activity of production and consumption (Kahn-Harris 2007, 11). Though production is not a focus of my research, my study brings more insight and provides more substantial literature on the impact of consumption and consumerism of metal on a global scale.

Andy Brown (2011) has published an entire article on the "genealogy" of metal as an academic subject. He mentions psychology as the origins of heavy metal as an academic subject and explores the existence of the "Metal Studies Bibliography Database" as well as many other founding themes of metal studies (2011, 214). In his article, Brown uses graphs to depict the evolution and history of metal in academia. According to his charts, between 1978 and 2010, activity in metal academia peaked around 2008 (2011, 221). Aside from overall activity, the charts also depict the type of

publications and subject matter.

The previously mentioned *Global Metal Music and Culture: Current Directions in Metal Studies* (Brown, Scott, Kahn-Harris & Spracklen 2016) is one of the more recently published works of literature regarding metal culture in a global context. The exploration of the existence of “metal studies” as well as its history and evolution are explored in the introduction chapter as well as a look at the vast array of sub-topics that are explored through out the book. The collection brings to light that heavy metal as a international cultural phenomenon is a fairly new concept in relation to popular culture studies, and has gathered momentum largely in part due to media exploitation and the interconnectedness of the internet (ibid.). In the introduction section, Deena Weinstein (2016, 22–33) reflects on the current state of metal studies. She looks at the relevance and evolution of metal as an academic subject and recounts her own experiences through out her years as a scholar. She expresses the validity of other types of metal studies outside the realm of printed text and strictly academic structure. These sources of information have also been influential in my on studies and exposure to metal academia. Such sources of information include the works of anthropologist Sam Dunn who has produced and directed two well known documentaries: *Metal: a Headbangers Journey* (2006) and *Global Metal* (2008). These documentaries look at the history of metal as well as its role in various cultures around the globe. Though they are not academic works, interviews and insight from metal academics such as Titus Hjelm, Deena Weinstein and Keith Kahn-Harris make up a good portion of the documentaries. These documentaries along with Sam Dunn’s academic background, initially drove me in the direction of Anthropology as an undergrad and inspired me to continue my academic career to focus on metal.

Though many aspects of metal, and even more specifically Finnish metal, have been explored academically, I believe the culture is currently evolving and the aspects that I focus on are significant in the current state of Finnish metal and metal as an international phenomenon, as well as a relevant example of globalization. Though there have been recent works written about similar topics, such as Laura Laaksonen’s PhD work including "The Impact of Local Community of Practice on New Venture Internationalization: A Case Study of the Finnish Heavy Metal Music Scene" (2015) or the article written by Toni-Matti Karjalainen and Eero Sipilä, "Tunes from the Land of the Thousand Lakes: Early Years of Internationalization in Finnish Heavy Metal" (2016), the perspective I offer is much different, based on the sole fact that these

academics are Finnish and would be considered locals, in the context of my research, while I am American and would be considered a member of the international and transnational population. In relation to previous and future literature, my own research is unique due to my ethnographic observations and experiences within the time frame of my studies and my previous knowledge of the scene, thus providing data that is exclusive to this research.

2.4 - Previous Literature: Methodological and Theoretical Approach

When researching methodology and theory, I focused on scholars that had a similar background and subject matter to my own research, whether it was ethnographic work at festivals or ethnomusicological research on extreme metal. In his paper “Utilizing Ethnography and Participant Observation in Festivals and Event Research” (2013), Dewi Jaimangal-Jones states how important ethnography is when including festivals and events in one’s research. He brings to light how research methods that encourage the researcher to engage with its subjects facilitate the researcher’s ability to see the culture from the subjects perspective and help construct a more wholesome research that emphasizes the importance of data which provides information beyond the quantitative.

Harris Berger had a similar perspective on the importance of fieldwork and ethnographic study. In his article “Phenomenology and the Ethnography of Popular Music”, Berger recounts his experience as an early scholar in the late 1980s and the progressing mentality towards fieldwork, ethnography and the study of popular music at the time. He paints a vivid picture of how popular music was originally not deemed authentic or complex enough to study academically. (2008, 4–11.) Popular culture studies were just becoming more legitimized in the academic world at the time. There was also the issue of how one could effectively express the more experiential and intangible aspects of music within a research setting, since Berger believed traditional theory could not accomplish such a feat (2008, 64). In his book *Metal, Rock, and Jazz: Perception and the Phenomenology of Musical Experience* (2011), Berger also delves into the significance of fieldwork in popular music studies and highlights concepts such as phenomenology and perception in ethnomusicology.

It was also necessary for my research to go back to the roots of popular culture and modern ethnomusicology and look at aspects such as the evolution of acceptance of

popular culture and ethnography as an academic subject. For example, in their introduction chapter to *Phenomenological Approaches to Popular Culture*, Michael T. Carroll and Eddie Tafoya (2000, 1–11) delve into the early acceptance of popular culture in academia. They go back to the days when English literature was still seen as more entertainment and not sophisticated enough to study academically. They follow the evolution starting from how Hugh Blair¹⁴ first demonstrated how to analyze English literature under an academic eye in the eighteenth century and how popular culture's acceptance in academia followed a similar path. They continue on to the mid nineteenth century when an interest in folk studies became affluent due to the rise in industrialism and influenced the emergence of area studies. Carroll and Tafoya (2000, 2) also look at a similar evolution of the phenomenological approach and present specifically how it can be used to emphasize experiential aspects of cultural studies. They explain how the “natural attitude”¹⁵ and the mundane aspects of culture are given meaning using phenomenology. Carroll and Tafoya explain phenomenology in the realm of cultural studies as a form of suspending belief, where the researcher alters their point of view so that "what ordinarily counts as actual is taken up without regard for its actuality" (Carroll and Tafoya 2000, 7). This provides the researcher with the ability to observe culture and activity within the culture with a less bias, more open eye which enables more critical interpretation of the activity being observed in the context of its culture.

Timothy J. Cooley and Gregory Barz (2008) propose the importance of focusing more on the experience of the researcher rather than the tangible aspects of research. They bring to light that participant observation and taking part in the cultural practices related to music are one of the most effective ways to observe and research the impact on a given culture by acting as part of the culture itself. Berger (2011, 24) also emphasizes how phenomenology and ethnographic research go hand in hand: “The interpretation of experience is a social process in ethnographic dialogue the fieldworker and the research participant can work together to bring experience into focus”. The experiential aspect that phenomenology highlights is significantly supported by the ethnographer's first hand observations collected while in the field. Capturing the experience of the research subjects is specifically important when conducting

¹⁴ Hugh Blair was appointed Regius Professor at the University of Edinburgh in 1780, Tafoya and Carroll imply he was one of the significant figures in bringing the study of literature and rhetoric to university curriculum (2000,2)

¹⁵ Our ordinary way of approaching experience which assumes an established realm of objectivity, inter-subjectivity, and self-hood. Carroll & Tafoya 2000, 188.

ethnographic research of a music scene, due to the fact that the individuals are the ones having the experience of the scene. It is a key element for the ethnographer to be able to properly observe and collect the data of the individuals experience and possibly have the opportunity to include their own experience in their data. (Berger 2011, 24.)

For Berger (2008), it was phenomenology that clicked his avenue of study into place; “What was needed was a deeper grounding that could tie the dynamics of structure and agency found in practice theory together with the questions of perception, meaning and experience that ethnomusicologists cared about”. Berger (2008, 68) argued that other forms of theory and methodology failed to really capture the experiential aspect of music. He believed the experience of playing and listening to music was just as relevant and important in research, specifically when placing these acts in a cultural context. He gives examples such as Steven Feld’s study of music of the Kaluli of Papua New Guinea (1982) and Thomas Johnston’s analysis of Tsonga beer drinking music (1973) where these scholars conducted fieldwork but essentially disconnected the individuality of the subjects and the meaning of the music within the cultural context due to their analytical and formal theoretical and methodological approaches (Berger 2011, 8). Berger (2011, 9) claims phenomenology enables us to utilize perspective in a spatiotemporal way to observe our research subjects within a time and place in the context of its surrounding culture and relevance.

Though Berger (2008, 65) makes it apparent that the use of ethnography explores aspects of music that musicology neglects, his research was still more focused on the music itself, in relation to sound, theory, and impact on the listener. Though my research is focused more on the culture surrounding the music, I, similarly to Berger, focus my research on the cultural experience rather than the experience of listening to the music live. Though my research focuses on the cultural experience of the scene members, it also looks at the culture itself as object having the experience. In this context, my research looks at how the metal scene in Finland is experiencing the international presence in relation to the influence it is having on the evolution of the culture and scenic activity.

It was in reading Berger’s literature on utilizing phenomenology as a theoretical approach when conducting ethnographic research that I began to consider the possibility of its relevance in my own research. Though my research incorporates the experience of people: foreigners within the metal scene in Finland, as well as the experience of promoters and others who took part in interviews, it focuses more on the

scene itself as the entity having the experience. Though phenomenology could be utilized to interpret the experience of both the actors within the scene and the scene itself, the latter, though more relevant to my research, is an abstract interpretation and usage of phenomenology.

Carroll and Tafoya (2000) explore how scholars such as Felicia Campbell, Peter Steeves, and Karl Simms, utilized phenomenology to research the human experience of places such as Disney Land, Las Vegas Casinos and Zoos. I decided to overlay this notion with the perspective of Finland or, more specifically, the metal scene, being the place the experience is occurring. Though I believe some aspects of the phenomenological approach might relate too much on the abstractness of experientiality, there seems to be enough grounding in its meaning to relate to at least some of my ethnographic work. Parts of my research take the experience of members of a scene, and puts it in the context of a geographic location, similarly to the previously mentioned works. However, since there are many other factors that play into my object of study and gathering the information needed to provide evidence supporting my theory, phenomenology can only be applied to some parts of my research.

Jeremy Wallach and Alexandra Levine's article "We Want You To Support Local Metal: A Theory of Metal Scene Formation" (2013) are relevant to both the "metal" and "methodological and theoretical approaches" categories of previous literature. . In addition to its topic, metal music, it explores the concept of scene, and two ethnographic studies, especially their theoretical and methodological approaches. Their article looks at six generalizations about the metal scene. Though all could be included to aspects of my research, three of them directly correlate to themes explored in my research. The generalizations include:

- All metal scenes begin with sites for collective consumption of extralocal artifacts.
- Metal scenes depend on institutions for their survival.
- All metal scenes are defined not just by their relationship to the global metal scene but by their relationship to other neighboring scenes and to overlapping scenes dedicated to other genres. (2013, 117–133.)

The notion that the formation of metal scenes through influences and "artifacts" from

abroad (Levine and Wallach 2013, 119) can be directly related to my research if one were to look at the global scene as the one experiencing the consumption and Finland being the source of the extralocal. This global scene of finn-o-files and fans of Finnish metal would not exist without this notion. Much like my example of the two non-Finnish bands that have themes relating to Finland, as well as the festivals and tours that exist outside of Finland showcasing only bands from Finland. On the contraposition, we could also apply this notion to the metal scene within Finland and its origins in importing metal from abroad. However, I believe the aspects of Finnish metal that are relevant to my thesis are not relative to the extralocal. They are aspects of the music that are unique to Finland and the apparent “Finnish sound” (Grund 2017).

Of course, my ethnographic work would not have been relevant if scenic institutions did not play such a huge role in the metal scene. How could a culture (more specifically a music culture) exist in the modern world without the space to consume, produce, promote, support, discuss and experience (Wallach and Levine 2013, 119) the music with other members? The institutions such as festivals and places of discourse were they key elements in my research and a major conduit of scenic activity.

Lastly, the statement of scenes being defined by their overlapping with neighboring scenes and genres is not a significant aspect of my research though it is relevant. Focusing on the genre aspect, as previously mentioned this notion of Finnish Metal as an umbrella term typically surpasses genre confines. Some of the bigger name bands from Finland that are at the core of this global scene are bands such as Nightwish, Children of Bodom, Lordi, Korpiklaani, HIM and many others. In these examples alone, the bands span sub-genres of symphonic metal, death metal, folk metal and “love” metal (which some would argue is not metal to begin with). It is not such a common thing, specifically in the metal world, for bands from such diverse sub-genres to acceptingly be grouped under a common theme. However, the idea that more “extreme” bands such as Children of Bodom or Insomnium are included in this umbrella that encompasses other bands from other sub-genres due to their relation to Finland, might lose authenticity in the eyes of the fans who are more attracted to the sub-genre rather than their identity as a Finnish metal band. One great example of the significance of the irrelevance of sub-genre confines within the Finnish Metal scene, is to look at the previously mentioned events that happened outside of Finland showcasing only bands from Finland. Suomi Feast and Finland Fest in Japan included bands from genres such as Viking Metal, Melodic Death Metal, Folk Metal and Heavy

Metal while the Finnish Metal Tour in the U.S. also spanned a more diverse array of genres, including Doom metal and Power Metal, Thrash Metal and Folk Metal in one tour.

3. ETHNOGRAPHIC WORK

3.1 - Introduction

As previously mentioned, my academic background is rooted in cultural anthropology and ethnographic methodology. As a member of the scene I chose to conduct my research on, as well as taking into account my extensive access to the main institution of fieldwork due to my position as a photographer, an ethnographic approach to the research seemed most fitting. I also wanted to take advantage of the opportunity I was given to conduct my research here in Finland. Cooley and Barz (2008, 8) explain:

Ideologically, the paradigm of ‘area studies’ that encouraged location-specific research is directly challenged by issue driven projects that focus on musical change, transnational and intranational musical fusions, polymorphic rather than circumscribed theories of identity, and ubiquitous commentaries on globalization.

Though this information might not directly relate to my research, it provides background to the notion that there is an evolving relevance to ethnography in music studies in relation to geographic location.

To study a current popular cultural trend, one of the best ways to conduct research is to engage with the people who are involved in the cultural trend. Ethnographic work provides a unique and extensive research process which emphasizes in-depth contact with a culture and its participants (Jaimangal-Jones 2013, 40). Participant observation of the events and scenic institutions gives insight to the researcher that simply reading previous literature or conducting structured interviews could not provide. For example, being able to hear individuals speaking in a different language besides Finnish, and using that auditory experience as a trigger for myself in the field to consider them as a possible interviewee is one aspect that is unique to ethnographic research. Such intimate research that relies on tangible experience cannot be equated to when simply reading literature or analyzing data. The ability to interact with these individuals and learn about their personal experiences as a scene member also provided the opportunity for new questions to arise about the culture which enabled the evolution and formation of my research focus. It was also inspiring to hear personal stories of individuals and their experience within the scene to reiterate to myself how prominent this culture is

and how it is having such a strong impact on the lives of individuals.

Though the title of their article " We Want You to Support Local Metal" (Wallach and Levine 2013) focuses on the local, which is only a sub-topic of my main research subject, they go on to suggest that the local scene could not exist without the influences of the global, and are sustained by the institutions. Though they do not mention it, the virtual scene as an institution is incredibly important aspect of generating extralocal artifacts that inspire the evolution of the current scene, as it is made apparent in my own research. In recent years, most of the global scenic activity can be observed virtually either online or through various social media websites and apps. Most activity between fans and artists such as promotion, news and other discourse utilizes social media, websites and email to maintain and sustain the scene in its entirety. Thus, virtual ethnographic research also came into play when observing the activity and logistics of certain events. An example of how ethnographic work at places such as festivals and gigs differed from observing scenic activity virtually, was the ability to observe, indubitably, people who were not Finnish by utilizing the aforementioned audible experience of language. Though, on social media platforms, one could note the language someone had typed in or recognizing their name and its possible origins, these were not always reliable signifiers that an individual was Finnish or foreign. Being able to hear how the individual spoke, the language and accent provided a more legitimate reason to conclude the individual was not from Finland. The anonymity of the internet made it more difficult to make such conclusions.

Though Bennett and Peterson's (2004) model focuses on the virtual scene equally as much as the local and translocal, their example of the relevance of the virtual activity within the scene is a bit outdated in this context. With this in mind, it is interesting to consider that the notion of local and translocal is somewhat timeless, and still relevant in the context they used it. While their explanation of the virtual scene refers more to the Internet as a place for fans to connect to each other, in my research, the virtual scene was utilized and observed more as a place for fans, bands and industry representatives to stay connected to each other on social media.

One example of how social media connects the fans to the promoters and musicians was that, on a few occasions, festival promoters (or myself) created polls in the festival event pages asking where people were coming from.¹⁶ This type of information had the potential to provide more quantitative data and would not have

¹⁶ See appendix 5-7.

been observable anywhere else besides from the promoters directly based on ticket sales. However, since I only took screen shots to be examined later, and did not further analyze the data from the polls at the time they were posted, much of the potentially usable information was lost. Other issues with the information collected from the polls included misinformation, and skewed data. Some individuals who were from abroad but lived in Finland voted for their home country while some Finns who lived abroad voted for the country they were coming from. Also, there were some instances where people commented on the post rather than voting, as well as many people creating voting options of fictitious locations.

Other international scenic activity within the event pages was also observed. Occasionally, I noticed foreigners commenting on posts that were only in Finnish, requesting the information be translated for them, or requesting specific information such as asking if anyone had a place they could stay or could recommend a mode of transportation. Such observations proved that virtual ethnographic work can be as beneficial as ethnographic work conducted at events or physically in the field. Bennett (2004, 232) states, “Local scenes are clearly bound in terms of physical location, but they are often small and quite select, too. Virtual scenes on the other hand are open to all those who know how to use a networked computer and can write in the language used by the scene.” Though his definition is quite simplistic when comparing the virtual scene to the local scene and their opposing limitations, the notion that linguistic communication is an important aspect of the flow of activity within the virtual scene, since reading and writing is the main source of activity, is directly relevant to my own ethnographic work.

Relating back to the point of significance in relation to Bennett and Peterson’s model (2004), being able to provide examples of how virtual ethnography provides a relevant source of data at the time of my research can be useful in the future to gauge the evolution of technology in relation to ethnographic work and popular culture studies.

My experience at Black Flames of Blasphemy festival in 2014 is a prime example of why ethnography was the most productive methodological choice to conduct my research. Before attending the festival, I originally was under the impression that it was a more underground, locally promoted event. However, once I arrived at the festival and was among the attendees, I was able to hear English and other languages being spoken prominently throughout the two days of the event. I was also staying at a

nearby hostel, and ran into five other festival goers staying at the hostel. They had traveled from Mexico, India, England and the US just to attend the festival and visit Finland. What really inspired my research topic was the fact that, despite the observable presence of foreigners and attendees traveling from abroad, the following year's promotional highlight was that there would only be one Finnish band in the lineup. This would appeal more to the Finnish audience who would be more interested in seeing bands that did not frequent Finland, rather than the international audience who would be more interested to see Finnish bands they might not be able to see in their home country.

Had I not been at this festival, interacting and observing, the inspiration for my thesis topic and question would not have come to mind. I would not have had this experience to compare the significant international presence at the festival to the fact that the promotional highlight for the following year mainly appealed to the local crowd. This unintentional fieldwork led to the formation of my research question, looking at the significance of the international presence in the metal scene in Finland as well as my desire to conduct my own research ethnographically. Once I realized the relevance of this festival to my research, I attempted to seek further information. However, at that time of attempted contact, the festival was no longer in existence and the people behind the festival were not accessible.

Of course, I was aware of this international presence within the metal scene in Finland previously. I, myself, have been an active member of the international presence in Finland dating back to 2007, when I traveled here for the first time, and continuing for weeks to months at a time between 2008 and 2013. However, it would have never been brought to my attention as something to study. Throughout my fieldwork, as previously mentioned, research methods included casual conversation, structured interviews, semi-formal interviews, physical paper surveys and online surveys. At various gigs, festivals and pre- or after parties for these festivals, I approached people who were speaking in English or languages other than Finnish. Throughout my observations at the festivals and numerous gigs, I was able to hear as well as observe the international presence audibly and visually.

Along with being aware of people speaking in English and other languages, at Nummirock Festival specifically, I noted hearing the phrase "Puhutko suomea/englantia?" (Do you speak Finnish/English?) in passing multiple times a day throughout the three days at the festival and camping areas. This both exemplified the

foreign individuals experience at the festival as well as the local's experience of the international presence at the festival. Though I did inquire with some Finns about their personal experience and observations of the international presence at these festivals I did not include this information in my research. Though it might have been interesting to look closer at the local's experience of the international presence within the scene, I was focused on the experience of the foreigners and the scene itself.

At the festivals and stadium gigs, it was also common to see foreigners walking around wrapped in their country's flag, or holding the flags up during the shows. I documented such observations with my cellphone or in a small notebook. Since I was typically also at these events as a photographer, with the permission of the individuals, I was also able to take photos of the people who were carrying their country's flags or donning any other visual clues that they were from another country. The notion that these individuals felt compelled to make their nationality known to others at the festivals suggested to me that they felt their presence as a foreigner in Finland was special. They felt their national identity as a non-Finn was something unique enough to advertise, which I interpreted as a tangible and observable example of the international scene making itself known within the local/translocal scene here in Finland.

Throughout my ethnographic research, it was crucial to take notes in the field to be able to justify my own observations by differentiating what conclusions I made in my own mind and what I gathered from participating and interacting with the surroundings. Berger (2011) mentions how important it is to provide such information when conducting ethnographic research. He gives the specific example of Dick Hebdige's lack of methodological detail in his work *Subculture* (1979). Berger (2011, 12–13) mentions Hebdige's inability to provide information on where his observations and conclusions of cultural meaning were formed from and what influenced his interpretations. In this sense, the data presented is similar to a math problem. If an individual can't provide the work that shows how they arrived at their answer, the answer has less legitimacy. Being able to provide examples of cultural observations and the data one's conclusion is based on is needed when justifying the research conducted in the field. It is also necessary to be able to sift through the data and apply the relevant information to the research and what is recorded. This is also another reason explaining how one collected and recorded data is crucial in ethnographic work. The method in which a researcher collects and organizes data gives more concrete insight to the ethnographic and data collection process.

3.2 - Main Ethnographic Focus

My main ethnographic work was conducted at Tuska Open Air Festival in 2015, where I handed out printed surveys¹⁷ while engaging in casual conversation with foreigners. I typically decided who to hand my survey to based on hearing them speaking in other languages besides Finnish or, in some cases, seeing them walking around with their country's flag. Since I was also there as a photographer, I was constantly on the move walking from stage to stage and through the crowd. Throughout my constant movement around the festival, I made it a point to engage with as many people I heard speaking in other languages as possible. If I didn't have time or was not able to reach an individual, I noted something about their appearance so I could find them later.

The materials I used included double sided survey sheets (to conserve paper), clip boards made from cardboard and paper clips, and small pencils. I had to prepare accordingly knowing I would be approaching people as they were walking around the festival, on the go, and most likely not sitting down or willing to stand and talk for a while. I also did not have much space to carry the materials around, and typically had my camera in one hand, thus consciousness of space saving material. It was also important to take into account when formulating the questions and the layout of the survey that time was of the essence. I focused on an easily readable layout and short questions that required short answers so it didn't require too much time to inconvenience people. As previously mentioned, the festivals did prove to be a bit problematic for data collecting due to the noise and attendees being constantly on the move. Though there were seating areas, the space was limited, and typically people were drinking with their friends or eating while in the sitting areas, thus making it an even less suitable location to conduct the surveys and talk with attendees.

Though Tuska 2015 was the only time I handed out printed surveys, I also conducted fieldwork at other festivals. Nummirock 2015 was the next festival that I collected the most data from, though the research methodology was less formal. I simply engaged in casual conversation with people I heard speaking in English or saw carrying a flag from another country. At Nummirock, I was also able to conduct more in-depth unstructured interviews since the campgrounds enabled me to spend more time in a laid back, quiet, conversation-friendly atmosphere. There were also multiple instances where campsites were displaying country flags, which provided me with the

¹⁷ See appendix 4 for visual representation

opportunity to inquire about it and at times, sit down and talk with whoever owned the flag. Tuska did not have a campground, though the after parties at local bars provided a similar opportunity to talk more after the festival was done for the day. Though Tuska and Nummirock during the summer of 2015 were my main focus when conducting fieldwork, I unintentionally continued to observe events through the researchers gaze when attending other events such as a Nightwish stadium gig in 2015 as well as Nummirock, Tuska and other festivals and events spanning the duration of my studies all though I did not intend on including them in my field research (2014–2018).

The event pages on Facebook also provided an easy way to have a visual representation of the international presence at the festivals. Besides the polls posted in Nummirock and Tuska event pages, I noted the promoters of Steelfest 2018 made a contest out of it by asking people to comment where they were coming from and how many times they've visited the festival for a chance to win free lodging for the festival at the local hotel. This suggested that the international presence from previous years at this particular festival was significant enough that the promoters felt a post and contest such as this would be relevant and possibly valuable to the festival's activity and appeal. However, it was almost impossible to collect and analyze the information from the post for my own research purposes. Since people were commenting on the post rather than voting in a poll, it was almost impossible to collect the information and analyze the data in a quantitative manner, as it was with the polls. However, I was able to browse as many comments as possible and get a general idea of the amount of people coming from abroad. I would have liked to gain insight from the promoters themselves, but they had already proven difficult to contact based on my previous experiences attempting to find out information in relation to my position as a media representative. There was no external contact information provided besides Facebook messages and those were only answered by an automatic response.

Throughout my ethnographic work, I was also able to gain insight from a few Finnish promoters as well as a few Finnish musicians, and other industry practitioners. The interviews ranged from structured interviews to casual conversation and a few short answer questions here and there throughout the writing process. For example, as I was writing the chapter on scene, I decided to ask multiple scene members I was in contact with what the word "scene" in relation to music meant to them. I also was in contact with promoters from Metallihelvetti (who promote Turku Saatanalle) and Nem Agency (who are responsible for many gigs and tours throughout Finland) and was

able to ask them questions at random via Facebook messenger as I wrote.¹⁸

Aspects of the festival dynamics also played into my research. I noted promotional aspects that appealed to foreign attendees such as information and news written in other languages besides Finnish, signs and schedules at the actual events written in English, as well as information on websites specifically for people coming from out of the country such as detailed transportation information, possible interesting destinations such as bars or stores, and even a few Finnish "survival phrases". Throughout the four years I attended these festivals consecutively, I noticed a significant increase in accessibility to foreigners. One example of this would be my observation of the activity surrounding Turku Saatanalle from 2015 to 2018. I noticed the promoters of Turku Saatanalle began making social media updates in English and Finnish as well as providing more comprehensive instructions for paying for tickets from abroad or non-Finnish bank accounts starting in 2017. The following year, most of the posts were in English and there was more extensive information provided for people coming from abroad.

Since my presence at these festivals included being a member of the press, I was also able to observe a significant international presence within the group of media and press representatives. When among the other photographers and media representatives in the photo pit or areas provided backstage strictly for media personnel provided at the larger festivals, I noted a majority of the media population consisted of foreigners either coming to document the festivals for foreign media or now living in Finland working for various Finland based media or media based in their own country. In their article, Karjalainen and Sipilä (2016) bring to light the important role the international media discourse played in the canonization of Finnish Metal on an international level. They state:

The historical trajectory of Finnish metal (...) has consisted of a continuous balancing between international expectations and cultural ideologies sustained by the media. Alongside the internationalization, the media-together with the bands, industry practitioners, and fans-has upheld a cultural discourse that seeks to canonize Finnish metal as something unique. (2016, 221.)

¹⁸ Such as asking what their observations were of the percentage of attendee's from abroad who were at their last event.

I took advantage of the observation of the significant international presence within the media personnel and decided to include these people in my research by passing out my surveys in the media area at Tuska 2015. Collecting this data was also a bit easier due to the fact that there were chunks of time that we were all sitting or standing in the same area at the same time. The areas provided to us, such as the photo pits or media tents, were situated a bit apart from the rest of the festival, so it was also quieter and easier to communicate inside these areas.

I also attended festivals and gigs that catered to other music genres besides metal¹⁹ mainly as photographer. I didn't originally plan on including these festivals in my research, but I later realized my observations of the lack of international presence at these festivals is also relevant data to reflect on and include in my thesis. At the mixed festivals, I mainly noticed Finnish press representatives, and in some cases I was the only foreigner in the photo pit. I also took note of the international presence among the festival attendees. Though there were a few foreigners in attendance, none that I spoke to were in Finland because of the music, or specifically to attend that particular festival, and they did not make up a significant presence within the crowds.

Aside from gigs and festivals, there are numerous aspects of the metal scene in Finland that show signs of a significant international presence. As previously mentioned, in 2014, the metal club at the University of Turku added an "International Representative" position to their board, opened a separate international, English language Facebook group, as well as started hosting their events in both English and Finnish. My ability to become a board member and take on the role of International Representative provided the opportunity to work closely with individuals who were coming to study from abroad and were interested in metal. This opportunity also provided an unexpected and unique contribution to my fieldwork that was able to illustrate a different example of scenic activity apart from gigs and festivals.

Most of the foreign students I met and spoke to who were interested in TYRMY, stated that music or, frequently, specifically metal was their main reason for choosing Finland as a place to study. A few individuals also mentioned that they were aware of TYRMY before coming to Turku, and were looking forward to taking part in the club even before meeting us. From 2014–2017, each semester TYRMY had anywhere from three to eight new foreign members join the club, most of which were Erasmus students, though occasionally a new degree student would join who remained active as

¹⁹ Such as QStock in Oulu and Ruisrock in Turku.

long as they were in Turku. As previously mentioned, there were a few cases where students from abroad who were once part of TYRMY came back to Turku and took part in TYRMY events after their studies ended or their exchange period was completed.

To attract foreign members, TYRMY always had a display table at the University's club and organization fair, which was held in the beginning of both Autumn and Spring semesters, specifically for Erasmus and exchange students, and held in accordance with their orientation seminar. This provided exposure to foreign students who were not aware of TYRMY's existence who might be interested to join the club. There were also a few instances where the individuals who were aware of TYRMY's existence and interested in our club were actively searching for our table at the club fair to be able to meet us in person and find out more information.

TYRMY's separate English Facebook group also provided easier access to those who might have been searching for a similar institution online but were not aware of the Finnish name or what to search for. The group is called "University of Turku Metal Club - TYRMY" which might be easier to find when using English search terms. The group also appealed to foreigners not only by posting in English, but providing information that might be difficult for someone not from the area to find such as upcoming gigs, and local scenic institutions that might appeal to those in the metal scene such as bars, shops, venues and festivals. I found it inspiring that not only was the international demand relevant enough to make these changes within the club, but that I was around to observe them and their impact on the dynamics of the club and include it in my own research.

There are many other cases, though not as legitimate as my own research, in which it has been made apparent that there is both an international community of fans of metal from Finland as well as a local culture of foreigners in the metal scene here in Finland. Over my years as an active member, I have taken note of various articles written about how foreigners not only desire to study in or travel to Finland but have proclaimed an interest in learning Finnish because of the music. For example, in 2013, The Wall Street Journal posted a report on their website titled "For Those About To Rock: Learn a Nordic Language". The video begins with a clip from a Hevisaurus music video and goes on to discuss various popular sub-genres of metal that have strong origins in the Nordic countries, as well as the common lyrical themes, and an elaboration on Nordic/Scandinavian languages (John Stoll, Wallstreet Journal Video

2013).

In relation to the tourism aspect, a Rock Tour existed in Helsinki up until 2015 (as per their Facebook page) and at one point there was a travel app called "Helsinki Headbangers Guide". Though it now only exists as a website, it still a relevant and useful example of the possible demand for such information. The website is dedicated to providing foreigners in Finland with the best places to experience the local metal scene. Aside from notable record stores, venues and tourist attractions, suggestions on the website include the "heaviest" places to eat and drink (such as metal or rock themed bars and restaurants), and accommodations with a history that might be interesting to a fan of metal, such as Hotel Katajanokka which used to be a prison, or Radisson Blue which boasts a room designed by Remu Aaltonen from Hurriganes housing rock paraphernalia from his time in the band. The website and app were created by Anne Salmela for her Masters thesis as a tourism student at Haaga-Helia University. After finding out about the website, I contacted her directly to find out more about the origins and purpose of the website. Though her subject and academic focus was based in tourism, her creation of the app supports the idea that there is enough of an international presence that such a thing would be useful to fans and promoters.

Tuska festival is one of the main draws for foreign fans of metal from Finland. Not only is it a well known event for people coming from abroad to sufficiently experience the metal scene in Finland, typically there are quite a few popular Finnish bands on the lineup that foreigners would be interested to see. There are many events and tourist attractions provided specifically catering to people from abroad who are in Helsinki for the festival. Another previously existing website called www.MetalFromFinland.com, whose main purpose was promoting metal from Finland, also provided a section dedicated to listing locations of metal stores, bars, venues and record shops, as well as a Finnish survival phrase book for non-Finnish speakers. This information was emphasized and promoted mainly during the weeks leading up to Tuska festival. However, as of 2018, this website has merged with another website that has grouped together "Nordic Metal". This could be another sign of the decline of this metal as mainstream culture in Finland, but that topic alone could make up another research topic.

Many of these examples have apparently ceased to exist or have evolved due to the current state of the metal scene. My knowledge of the existence of these websites and

tourist attractions as well as the ones that are no longer in existence or have shifted their original purpose stems from my years as an active member of both the international and translocal scene before my research began and I moved to Finland permanently. It is a great example of my self-reflexive position as well as my active participation within the culture I am researching and might give more legitimacy to my own personal observations since, although I was not researching this specific topic academically years ago, I was still a student and able to observe the culture I included myself in with an academic eye. Now I am able to recount these observations and utilize them for my current research.

3.3 - Exploration of Research and Interview Questions

As previously mentioned, as well as participant observation and other methods of observing the significance of the international presence, I prepared physical surveys to have filled out by foreigners attending metal events, had a list of questions in mind to casually ask people I came across who were from outside of Finland (if there wasn't enough time or ease of access for them to fill out the physical survey) as well as prepared a few questions to email to other scene members who might have significant insight to my thesis research.

The survey I handed out at the festivals included questions asking where the participant was from, where they lived, how many times they had visited Finland, what initially brought them to Finland, how they would rate the metal scene as well as contact information if they were willing to partake in further participation. These questions were easy to answer quickly and provided the basic information I was looking for to simply gather more quantitative data to back up my theory that there was a significant international presence within the metal scene in Finland, and that the music was a determining factor in the individual's decision to travel to Finland. I will now explore the questions more in depth and provide examples of their relevance as well as possible issues their execution encountered.

Asking where the participant was from might not have been as relevant but gave interesting insight to how far they traveled or how far away from home they were as well as how easily accessible Finland and Finnish culture might have been to them. For example, there were some individuals from Russia who had been able to study Finnish language in their hometown, and of course, geographically, Russia is close to Finland.

However, in the US, Finland and Finnish culture are not as common or accessible as it may be in other countries.

Of course, the question where they live also determined if they were just visiting the country, were living elsewhere besides their home country where Finland might be more easily accessible, or resided in Finland. As previously mentioned, during the festivals I had exclusive access to media areas which made it easier to observe the media representatives as a separate entity from the general crowd. A good portion of media representatives were from outside of Finland but had been living in Finland for some time either studying or working, and active as journalists or photographers for various metal media on the side. This is also a good example where the term “from abroad” is not synonymous with “foreign/international”. Though their presence counts in my research since they are active scene members in some form or another, and are not Finnish, they did not travel from abroad for the festival.

The question "How many times have you been to Finland?" included four answers to choose from: first time, 2–4 times, 5+ times or other. This might give insight into how integrated the individual was into the local scene or Finnish culture in general as well as how interested or invested they were in Finland and taking part in the local Finnish metal scene. People who had visited Finland multiple times before may have integrated themselves into the local scene by making friends or creating a tradition to attend certain festivals while those who had been here for the first time had yet to obtain such integration.

The question "What brought you here?" included a choice of six options to choose from or "other" and a line to explain. The options were friends, family, music, boyfriend or girlfriend or spouse, job, and school. This question was one of the key concepts in my research, not only finding out the international impact on the metal scene but also taking into account the influence metal has had on foreigners' decision to visit or live in Finland. As stated earlier, Finland being an uncommon destination, also makes the question why one decides to travel here extremely relevant to my research. The scene rating question asked the participant to rate the activity of the metal scene from 1–10, 1 being less active than expected and 10 being more active than expected. This question represents how the scene is perceived by a foreigner who might have had expectations of an active scene (possibly more active than in their home country) coming from abroad, and whether or not their expectations of the scenic activity were met. This could reflect the status of the current local scene in comparison

to past activity or how it is portrayed abroad. Though the findings would have been interesting, this question was problematic and did not yield much valid information due to misunderstanding of the question. It seemed some people understood the question correctly and rated the *activity* of the scene based on their expectation, but many people seemed to rate the *quality* of the scene instead. Rating the scene a 10 meant to them that the quality of the metal scene was excellent rather than the scene was much more active than they expected.

The questions asking how many times the individual had been to Finland were also proven to be, at times, problematic. If the participant lived in Finland, many of them simply wrote "I live here" to answer how many times they had been here though I would have liked to know how many times they had visited Finland before moving here, if at all. Specifically for those who answered "I live here", knowing how many times, if any, they had traveled to Finland before they moved here would have provided insight such as how integrated they were in Finland, how interested they were in traveling to and spending time in Finland, as well as whether or not their earlier time in Finland had an influence on their decision to move here.

I also provided the surveyors with the option to provide an email address and asked whether or not they were willing to be contacted for more information. I proceeded to contact a few of the ones who specified they were open to further questioning, but never received a response. This supports my presumption that after the individuals went home, their mentality towards their experience might have changed, i.e. their willingness to participate and share their experience while at the festivals changed to a telling lack of response once they were back home.

When conducting interviews with other scene members, questions such as who they were and their connection to the scene, terminology questions such as "what does the word 'scene' mean to you", how the international presence impacted their position in the scene and their personal observations on the relevance of international presence, and possible specific questions based on their role within the scene provided a skeleton of framework for the interviews. Other scene members I interviewed included festival promoters, gig promoters, band members, employees of scenic institutions such as shops or bars, as well as musicians and patrons.²⁰

I preferred to conduct the structured interviews in person or via Skype to make the

²⁰ Could be used synonymously with the word "fans", implies the individual has no other role in the scene but as a consumer.

conversation flow more freely. This would not only enhance the possibility of the participant bringing up a topic or aspect I might not have considered, but provide me the opportunity to clarify my point of focus if the interviewee veered off topic or didn't understand the question. However, due to lack of availability and scheduling issues, the few people I was able to get in contact with made it apparent that sending questions for them to answer on their own time was more efficient. Interview questions were then compiled and sent via email or Facebook message. I found it interesting that a few professionals preferred to be contacted via Facebook message rather than email. This is also another example of how technology and its relevance are constantly evolving.

I sent a short list of interview questions via email or Facebook message to various scene members, including musicians, promoters and industry practitioners. The interview questions were the following:

- What would you say your role(s) is/are within the metal scene in Finland?
- Do you consider yourself a member of the metal scene, if so, for how long, if not, why?
- In your opinion, what have been the most apparent ways the metal scene in Finland has evolved over the years?
- Have you noticed a significant impact from the international presence within the metal scene, if so, how has it changed over the years?
- How has the international presence influenced your role?

The last question was, whether or not I could use their name in my thesis or if they preferred to remain anonymous. Though multiple individuals agreed to answer questions, I only received answers from two people; Titus Hjelm and Iiro Laitinen. Titus Hjelm is a member of a prominent Finnish metal band as well as a respected metal scholar and lecturer at UCL. Iiro Laitinen works for a Tampere-based promotion agency called Nem Agency as a promoter and “mentor” to up and coming bands. Their answers were quite diverse and in depth. However, at times, they strayed a bit from my own research focus due to unclear questions/subject matter. This was one of the reasons I would have preferred to conduct interviews in person, or at least, by phone or Skype. With the ability to answer and review the questions at one's own convenience, it created a time gap which I felt exceeded the ease of ability to reiterate points or revisit answers with the individual.

The question regarding whether or not they've noticed a significant international presence proved to be the most insightful. Hjelm gave an extensive answer which included bringing to attention both his experience within the metal scene and his experience as a scholar:

TH: Now of course, Finland has become this sort of Mecca for a lot of metal fans, so you can see the internationalization in the fan base as well. Personally, the epitome of that is that I have an American PhD student who wants to get a degree from a British university (where I teach) with a study on women in the Finnish metal scene. Doesn't get much more international than that!

His mention of Finland as a "Mecca" for metal fans, of course, directly supports my research question. His multinational example of the American student attending the British university desiring to study Finnish metal both relates to the concept of metal from Finland in an international context and the desire to take part in the translocal scene as an American researching the metal scene in Finland. In previous questions he also touched more on the alternate angle of metal from Finland in an international context. Of course, he also mentioned the significance of Lordi's Eurovision win to the international scene, as well as his own experience as a Finnish musician and the demand for his own band's music internationally.

Laitinen's answer was originally more focused on how Finns are more interested in the metal scene outside of Finland and that it is becoming more common for Finns to travel abroad for festivals as well as the increase in demand for foreign acts to come to Finland. This is an interesting perspective to include in my own observations, but I decided to delve further and follow up with Laitinen to see if he could also contribute his thoughts more along the lines of my own research question. I sent him a message on Facebook asking, when he had time, if I could get a more in depth answer to a few of the questions. He almost immediately agreed to discuss the questions further. I went on to specify that, aside from the topic he had addressed, I was also interested in his perspective of foreigners who are active in the metal scene in Finland and what impact he has observed from his position with Nem Agency.

His answer confirmed many of my own observations, such as promoters in Finland becoming more conscious of writing in English, specifically when posting in social media which, he mentioned, has had a large role in foreigners' desire to visit

Finland to attend gigs and concerts. He also touched on the subject of his observations that students are utilizing the Erasmus exchange program to have the opportunity to visit Finland and be involved in the local metal scene, he states:

IL:I have occasionally tried taking this into account as well [when promoting] by using Erasmus programs' channels (Facebook groups e.g.) or contacting & co-operating with local (academic) metal music associations such as HYRMY, TYRMY, JYRMY & TTYkitys since their membership also contains a good number of international students.

This was also reiterated by the activity I observed myself through my role in TYRMY, as a member and later member of the board, acting as the international correspondent to stay connected to these foreign students who were mainly coming from the Erasmus exchange programme. Though Laitinen made it apparent that it was important to keep the international presence in mind when promoting gigs, he also stated reasons why he does not focus on appealing to the international crowd and why:

IL:At the moment I am not personally focusing too much on the international people in Finland in terms of marketing shows, promoting bands or so on, but I am not saying I shouldn't. For now, for me it seems that I can easily reach international people through locals and social media. Also I have a feeling that the international metal heads are actively following Finnish metal media outlets so by promoting and marketing through these outlets, I am able to reach (not always necessarily with 100% effect) international audience as well.

This information brings to attention how social media, on its own, has enabled the ease of access between countries, cultures and languages. In recent years, Facebook has integrated Bing translator on their interface (though it more often than not cannot translate from Finnish to English efficiently) and, on occasion, posts made in other languages are automatically translated into the language the individual's Facebook is set to. Also the intricate connectivity between friends on social media provides visibility to scenic activity. People being able to see when their friends like posts or respond they are "going" or "interested" in certain events is a good example of Laitinen's claim that the locals themselves are also helping circulate information.

Music media websites also provide promotion in English. There are various media based in Finland that are staffed by people from all over the world, thus typically posting about local and international news and events in English. These aspects would definitely put less pressure on having to be conscious of promoting to various demographics.

Aside from these structured questionnaires, as previously mentioned, I was in contact with Jussi Helenius. His activities in the scene include promoter at Metallihelvetti, a local promotion agency, as well as a manager of Levykauppa Äx (Record Shop X) in Turku. Since I was able to attend one of Metallihelvetti's events, Turku Saatanalle, consecutively for four years, I included this event in my ethnography, though most of the data gathered was from virtual ethnographic work. As previously mentioned, this was one of the prime examples of my personal observation of a festival evolving from not using English at all to not only posting in only English, but also providing in-depth information for those coming from abroad such as payment methods, accommodations, and suggestions to visit the local metal bar before and after the event. Spontaneously, I engaged in a casual conversation via Facebook messenger with Helenius. I asked him questions as they came to mind instead of creating a more structured interview setting since, in previous years, he proved to be hard to reach at times. He mentioned that the demand for information in English has gotten higher in recent years, which made it simply easier to switch from posting in Finnish or both Finnish and English to just English. The first year I attended this festival, most of the information was in Finnish and foreign attendee's were not accounted for. Helenius stated:

JH: For [Metallihelvetti], Turku Saatanalle has been the first 'major' thing people are coming to attend from abroad...some people from Sweden or Estonia might have attended some special shows, like Esoteric and Skepticism back in the days but nothing bigger.

I also asked if he had a vague idea about the percentage of individuals coming from abroad for the 2018 festival, he simply mentioned there was a significant international presence and that they might post a poll in the event since this kind of information is also relevant to them. I noted the evolution of the festival lineup had increasingly become more diverse and included more foreign and well known acts throughout these four years. I wondered if the lineup choices reflected the increase of foreign interest or

if it was the other way around. However, I was not able to gather more information on these subjects in relation to Turku Saatanalle. It seemed information regarding the more extreme or underground scenes was quite elusive, which was problematic since three black metal festivals provided me with quite important ethnographic findings based on my own observations both in the field and online.

4. CONCLUSION

4.1 - Findings

My most relevant findings could be grouped into two main categories. The first category includes the fans, the individuals who made up this international presence which I based my research on, or, the people who took part in my physical surveys as well as who I engaged in casual conversation with to gain insight on the portion of my research that focused on the foreigners and their significance here in Finland. The second category includes the scene in Finland and how it has or has not adapted and evolved to acknowledge the international presence, based on my observations and data collected so that it would support or oppose the notion that the international presence is significant enough to have an impact on the logistics of scenic institutions and activities.

The most concrete data I collected was from the 30+ surveys I handed out during Tuska Festival 2015. It allowed me to (briefly) interact with as many non-Finns that were attending the festival as I could, and gain insight from their perspective utilizing a five question survey which consisted of fill in the blank short answers and questions where the answers were provided and the survey taker could circle one. From the data I gathered, quantitative data is shown in graph form in Appendix 1. Though a few of the questions were a bit problematic and did not contribute much to my research, there were three questions where the information I gathered proved to be substantial and provided a solid quantitative visual of the percentage of foreigners that were in Finland because of the music. "Music" proved to be the reason with the highest percentage as to why the individuals who took the survey were in Finland. Out of these individuals, exactly half of them said they lived in Finland and aside from those people, "5+ times" was the answer with the next highest percentage regarding the number of times the individual had traveled to Finland.

Aside from the surveys, my observations of non-Finns taking part in various scenic activities also proved that there was a significant and observable international presence in the scene. Black Flames of Blasphemy festival in 2014 was where the idea to research this scene took shape. Initially, I was expecting the festival to be mainly attended by Finns, however, once at the festival, I was surprised to hear English and other languages being spoken almost as frequently as Finnish. I also met festival goers

staying at the same hostel as I was, hailing from five different countries. The curious thing about this festival was not just that there was a much more significant international presence than I expected, but that the following year, the festival promoters attempted to appeal more to the Finnish attendees than the foreigners with the promise of only one Finnish band being on the lineup. This turned out to be one of the few instances where a festival/promoter seemed to disprove my theory that the international presence was having an impact on how the scene was evolving. Other similar instances might include promotional agencies or smaller festivals which had not yet started providing information in English, or were not considering individuals who might be traveling from abroad. The Black Flames of Blasphemy experience was a perfect example of the two previously mentioned categories that my findings could be divided into. It demonstrated how the significant international presence I unexpectedly observed at the festival did not correlate with how the international presence had an impact on the festival itself.

Data collected more relevant in the second category focused on the scene in Finland and its response to the international presence. Observing festivals like Steelfest and Nummirock not only displaying a consistent evolution in becoming more accessible to foreigners, but taking their acknowledgment of the international presence a step further by creating polls in their Facebook event asking where people were coming from, as well as creating contests for those coming from abroad to win festival tickets plus accommodation. These festivals as well as other larger festivals and even a few smaller festivals also made significant enough changes that I was able to observe a difference within the four years I conducted my research. Other instances in becoming more accommodating to foreigners included the way they provided information for people from abroad such as providing transportation information, payment information, as well as information about the area the festival was in. In a few instances, such as Turku Saatanalle, I noted this was not the case in the beginning of my studies. I attended this festival for the first time in 2015. At that time, there was very little information in English, however as the years went by, more and more information was provided in Finnish and English and by 2019, everything was posted in English and there was significant information provided for those traveling from abroad.

At the larger festivals, I also noted Finnish bands and announcers occasionally switching to English when talking to the crowds from the stage during festivals, and even making a special shout out to the people who were there from abroad. There also

seemed to be much more of an international presence within the media representatives at the metal festivals than other festivals I attended through out my studies. This supports the idea that metal has a much more significant international fandom than other music hailing from Finland.

Aside from the international presence at festivals and gigs, I observed a significant international presence within the university's metal club. This was an aspect of the metal scene I was not very familiar with upon arriving in Finland. TYRMY's existence was brought to my attention by a German exchange student who I quickly befriended during my first semester at the university. We recruited other foreign students we found who seemed interested in metal and became active in the scene ourselves. From 2014–2018, TYRMY had a significant enough international presence to warrant a board member whose sole job it was to make sure there was sufficient information and activities provided for foreigners. I noted that there were similar incidents happening within the metal clubs of other universities such as in Tampere and Helsinki. This contribution to my ethnographic research provided a whole new level of data and research that I was not even aware of in the beginning of my academic career in Turku. Other instances which supported the idea that there is a significant international presence and it has an effect on the metal scene here were finding websites such as www.hellsinkiforheadbangers.com and the existence of the Helsinki Rock Tour for tourists interested in seeing iconic rock related destinations around Helsinki. I also came across other news stories and Internet articles such as John Stoll's "For Those About To Rock: Learn A Nordic Language" which report the growing interest in Finnish (among other Nordic countries) culturally and linguistically due to the music.

I was also able to take part in the Modern Heavy Metal conference in 2017. Due to that year being Finland's 100th year anniversary of independence, the theme of that year's conference was "music and national identities". The first half of the first day had the subject theme of Finnish Metal of which myself and five other academics gave presentations on their research relating to the Finnish Metal theme. Out of the six of us, only one person was actually Finnish. Though that observation does not directly support the notion that the international presence within the metal scene in Finland is significant, it gives insight to the fact that metal from Finland is an internationally acknowledged entity on its own and has peaked the interest on an international academic level as well.

4.2 - Final Thoughts

Deciding to conduct my research primarily in the field proved to be substantial. Ethnography as the chosen methodology was fitting for the type of question I asked and information I sought. Not only was I able to observe the culture I included myself in from a new perspective, I came across aspects of the culture while in the field that would have never been brought to my attention had I chosen a different methodology. It was also an unexpected outcome how substantial ethnographic work in the virtual scene became. Not only was I able to observe activity on a more quantitative scale, social media became the main mode of contact between me and the members of the scene I interviewed or needed to speak to directly to obtain more in-depth information.

Of course, the ability to take advantage of my surroundings and conduct most of my research out in the world, among the individuals that construct the culture I studied, was the main focus of my research. I believe this also makes it certain that my research is unique. Though other individuals could have access to the data I collected virtually, no one else could have taken the same observations, had the same conversations, and made the same conclusions about the same field I conducted my research in. It was also necessary to incorporate my observations and experiences as a scene member from before my research began. Being able to take self-reflexivity into account and apply observations and information gained from my time as a scene member during various stages of activity (such as early years of being a fan, to more exclusive activity as a photographer/journalist) before my research also make my research and findings irreplicable. Berger expresses how ethnographic fieldwork produces a unique result in the realm of research, “And most important, understanding fieldwork itself is an attempt to partially share experience, the phenomenological ethnographer places her/himself on the same plane as the research participant, thus forwarding the dialogic agenda of the new ethnography” (Berger 2008, 70).

Though I was able to come to a conclusion based on the data I collected, initially, I would have liked to obtain a more substantial viewpoint. I would have liked to have been able to express the international impact more significantly, possibly with a more quantitative representation. This could have been achieved by gaining more insight from individuals such as promoters or record label employees and those who worked intimately behind the scenes of large festivals or other scenic institutions. Insight from these people and access to their information might have provided more solid and

tangible evidence from aspects such as ticket sales and the amount of information requested from foreigners coming from abroad. Even with the ability to be in contact with individuals who might have this information, it seemed they were not as willing to share it with me, or simply did not consider my request legitimate enough to respond to.

Despite the apparent issues with attempting to include information from interviews with scene members, I still pushed through and was determined to include any information I could from scene members with a more holistic viewpoint. The information gathered from these people was not only useful to help collect evidence to help answer my research question support my own findings, it was also crucial to gather data from those who were able to observe the scene in Finland before I lived here. It was significant to take into account the evolution of the scenic activity before the time I included in my own research. Aside from this, it provided a unique perspective for me, and enabled me to compare what these individuals were experiencing here in Finland at the same time that I was experiencing a different side of the culture from the US.

I found it amusing and relevant that Keith Kahn-Harris (2007, 25) mentions his observations throughout his early years as a metal scholar. He recounts his experience of similar struggles regarding gaining access to members of the scene who might have substantial insight, and how his activity and status within the scene impacted his research abilities. He recalls:

In writing for the magazine, I held a position of power within the scene and gained ‘subculture capital’ [Thornton 1995]. This helped give me access to those who might otherwise have been hard to reach, particularly the more famous bands. A number of interviewees specified that they had only consented to be interviewed because I wrote for *Terrorizer*. (Kahn-Harris, 2007, 25.)

Though I, personally, was on staff at multiple media outlets throughout my Masters studies, I was mainly working as a photographer and press representative for smaller media. I did have the opportunity to interview a few musicians and bands throughout my studies, and was able to sneak in a few Thesis related questions, but mainly had to focus on content relating to the band. Therefore, I did not have such status in the metal

media world as Kahn-Harris did working for *Terrorizer* magazine, and was not able to gain insight as in-depth as I initially intended to. I considered if I had worked for a more influential media, or held a more substantial position in the scene, would the individuals who I lost contact with along the way have been more enthusiastic about keeping in contact with me? Would those who I was in contact with been more willing to share information had a held a more legitimate position in the music scene?

Despite the ability to gain access to more crucial information, the amount of insight I was able to obtain was still useful. The two interviews I completed with Iiro Laitinen and Titus Hjelm as well as the ability to have random questions answered from other members of local promotional agencies and institutional practitioners did provide a small portion of evidence that was substantial enough for this level of research. They were all able to confirm my theory by providing personal accounts of their experience with the relevance of the international presence and how they observe it in their own positions within the scene. This information alongside my own observations and data collection suggest that there is an observable international presence within the metal scene in Finland, and it has had an impact on aspects of scenic institutions and activity, some of which I was not initially aware of. The information gathered from the perspective of other individuals also provided me with the background and insight into earlier years within the scene that I was not around to observe. I was able to construct a more vivid timeline of how the metal scene in Finland has evolved and how the significance of the international presence has evolved in relation to this.

Aside from the specific occurrence that inspired my research question at Black Flames of Blasphemy in 2014, the most prominent example I was able to take note of and include in my observations throughout my research was the increase of information available in English for foreigners, such as instructions for those coming from abroad on travel, accommodation and ticket payment as well as local institutions of interest. This included foreigners attending festivals and events coming from abroad or already residing in Finland, as well as the more specific finding of the consideration of community of students that were active in TYRMY. Just over the course of four years, there were at least two festivals that went from posting and advertising only in Finnish, to posting in both English and Finnish and acknowledging people coming from abroad on various levels. Similar observations were also taken note of over the years regarding evolution of information acknowledging the foreign presence within

the context of TYRMY, as well as various other observations such as at the Modern Heavy Metal conference and other scenic institutions and their acknowledgement of foreigners in their midst.

As an example from my interviews, Laitinen's observance of the possibility to reach Erasmus exchange students by promoting events through academic institutions such as University metal clubs also helps support my own experience of the prominent international presence in general within the student population. Though I did not observe a significant presence of metal fans among Erasmus students when tending to the TYRMY info table at the bi-annual club fair, those who did approach us and showed interest in joining the club typically stated their main reason for choosing Finland as a study destination was because of the music. However, my own observations of TYRMY's evolution becoming more considerate of the international scene do still support Laitinen's account. They both provide different institutional examples outside the realm of the live music scene, observe the impact a foreign presence might have on a local scene, and help put my research into a broader perspective.

Though I was only able to collect a few examples of this, it helped diversify and solidify information to include real life accounts relating to my research aside from my own observations. The accounts of Laitinen and Hjelm along with information gathered from Helenius and other promoters such as the percentage of people traveling from abroad to a specific festival, demand of Finnish bands to appeal to foreign festival attendees, or awareness of demand for information posted in English, provide examples outside my own observations that support my original research hypothesis, that there is a significant international presence within the metal scene in Finland that it has an affect on the local metal scene. Levine and Wallach (2013, 103) state: "We also think that understanding the cross-cultural aesthetic properties of popular musics and their iconic, non-arbitrary relationships to the experiential condition of modernization is necessary to fully assess popular music as a global cultural phenomenon". Understanding and taking this into account is necessary when observing metal culture on a global scale.

Berger (2008, 63) argues, in relation to the validity of popular music as an ethnographic subject, that music's value is inherent only to the people of that society or culture, and that as an ethnomusicologists, it is our job to bring understanding of its meaning through the perspective of these people rather than critique or criticize the

music. Aside from bringing to light the significant international presence as well as its impact on the metal scene, in my ethnographic work, I observed, recorded and portrayed the importance of metal from Finland to these individuals who feel the desire to travel to Finland to be an active part of the local metal scene, to explore Finland and to experience the culture their favorite music comes from.

Finland, Finnish metal and the metal scene within Finland provide a unique case study of sub-cultural activity. The location, though considered part of the EU, is on the fringes of Europe. The language also sets it apart and creates more of an isolation than other neighboring countries such as Sweden, Norway or Denmark that are not only considered belonging to Scandinavia, but also share common linguistic traits. The Finnish climate was also apparently something that contributed to the notion that it was unimaginable why someone would desire to travel to or move to Finland (as I personally experienced multiple times when admitting I was from Florida). As mentioned in the introduction, the skepticism foreigners are met with when asked why they are in Finland was a key influence in the formation of my research topic. In more common destinations such as England or Germany, it is not such an unfathomable notion that someone has chosen this location to travel or move to. Thus, these locations might not provide as interesting or unique object of study as the fandom surrounding Finland and its influence on its fans globally.

Kahn-Harris (2007, 13) claims that, in relation to the metal scene (more specifically, the extreme metal scene), it is not uncommon to find the core of activity situated in geographic locations that are less populated and not near centralized flows of global capital. The idea is that, since these locations are largely inhabited by individuals and cultural constructs that do not associate with sub-cultures or counter-cultural systems, the scenic activity is less common. Though Finland might be considered one of these global locations that are not in the center of global capital flow (Kahn-Harris 2007,13), it seems the heightened scenic activity here has created a similar effect. Hjelm touched on this in his answer to the interview question about his observations of the international presence within the metal scene in Finland:

TH: It's great to see that Finland—which many tours skipped in the 1980s—gets pretty much the same artists as anyone else. It's not London, but not a complete periphery anymore either. And it's great of course that the metal fans, the community, is more diverse than ever.

Through casual conversation with various members of the metal scene in Finland both Finnish and foreign, a popular consensus is that since the metal scene in Finland has become so active and gained such popularity, people have lost interest in it. Multiple people spoke from personal opinion or speculation that metal gigs and festivals have become so common, it has lost its appeal, thus, the activity has decreased since its peak around the beginning of 2000. This could also relate to Laitinen's account of the heightened demand for foreign acts to come to Finland as well as Finns desiring to experience the metal scene outside of Finland.

This notion supports one of my original topic ideas for research which asked, "Is the international presence helping sustain the metal scene in Finland?" International Finnish metal fans, specifically ones who come from places that Kahn-Harris considers "high capital flow" (2007, 98) areas, have a desire for the high amount of activity occurring in Finland that they cannot experience in their own corners of the world. Thus, creating a fan culture that has a will to travel and experience Finland and Finnish culture. Though this question is still relevant to the subject I focused on, looking into the question of one scene sustaining another would have most definitely required more quantitative data and access to information that I, as it was, was not able to obtain. It also most likely would have required the ability and time to observe information from previous years and compare quantitative information. Some ethnographic work might have been useful, but this kind of research would have mainly focused on looking at amount of foreign attendance at gigs and festivals as well as tourism aspects. Since I wanted my research to focus on the ethnographic methodology, it was a better choice to focus on simply collecting data and observations of the international presence in the current scene.

Since my research is focused on the current status of the scenes in question, it can provide a unique documentation for research conducted in the future. Of course, the data collected and presented will also be unique to my own experiences both in the field and as a long time member of the scene being studied. Previous literature and research, such as Will Straw (1991, 2002) and Andy Bennett and Richard Peterson (2004) provided a great framework for my studies, but had already become obsolete due to the rapidly evolving use of technology in the music world. The research conducted by academics such as Laura Laaksonen, Toni-Matti Karjalainen and Eero Sipilä are closely related to my own research in regards to time frame of data collected and subject matter. In reading Karjalainen and Sipilä's (2016) article on the evolution

of internationalization within the Finnish metal scene, I almost felt my own research was redundant, and they had already covered the topics that constructed my theory and research question. However, I was able to realize that my research would indeed be unique despite the similarities. Not only are my points of view varied based on the field of observation, but my background as an American conducting this study puts my research aside from these examples in particular, due to the fact that they are all Finnish, and have not experienced the scene as I have.

In this thesis, I researched the international presence within the metal scene in Finland. I first questioned whether or not it was relevant enough to be observed, after realizing it was indeed significant enough to provide an interesting research topic, continued on to attempt to find out just how significant it was. I then researched how it has affected the scene in Finland in various ways. I took into account the different reasons people from abroad travel to Finland and how significant the music is to the individuals who contributed to the data utilized in my research, which included the people who took part in my surveys at Tuska, those who contributed to casual conversation, as well as those who participated in more structured interviews.

The majority of my findings came from data collection participant observations at scenic events such as Tuska festival, Nummirock and Black Flames of Blasphemy as well as observations made from virtual scenic activity such as noting the increase in information available for festival attendees coming from abroad to observing non-Finnish activity within event pages on Facebook. As visible in the charts provided²¹, the surveys which were answered by attendees of Tuska Festival 2015 gathered the quantitative data that out of the people I interviewed, the highest percentage claimed they lived in Finland (rather than just visiting) and that music was the reason they came to Finland.

Through my own observations and interviews, it was also found that the international presence has indeed become significant enough that promoters and other industry practitioners have had to begin considering more often that the information provided and possibly even the content of their events, must attract and accommodate those coming from abroad and those who do not speak Finnish.

Future research might be able to apply the research I have done to the current (future) state of the scenes in question. My research could contribute to the observation of how the scene in question has evolved as well as the relevance of the individual

²¹ See appendix 1 figures 1-3

aspects I, myself, had to update in relation to previous models and literature. My observations and research of specific scenic institutions and activity (such as festivals and university metal clubs) could also be used to gauge the evolution and status of the relevance of such aspects of culture. Though research focusing on past data is still incredibly important in academia, the ability to create new research and provide new findings about the current state of culture is also very important. Without this type of research, there would be noticeable gaps in cultural studies in relation to scenic activity. There would also be an experiential gap and a lack of diversity regarding the various perspectives researchers can provide based on their academic background as well as their perspective of the world stemming from their personal interests, ideologies and participation within a culture.

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Appendix 1

Figure 1

Where do you live?

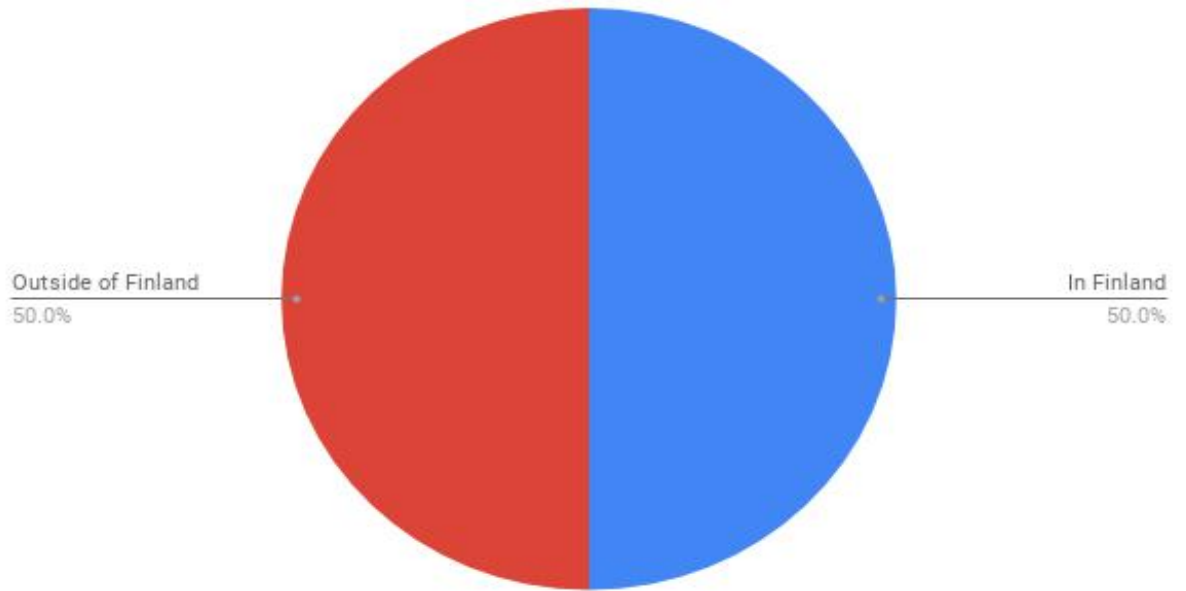


Figure 2

How many times have you visited Finland?

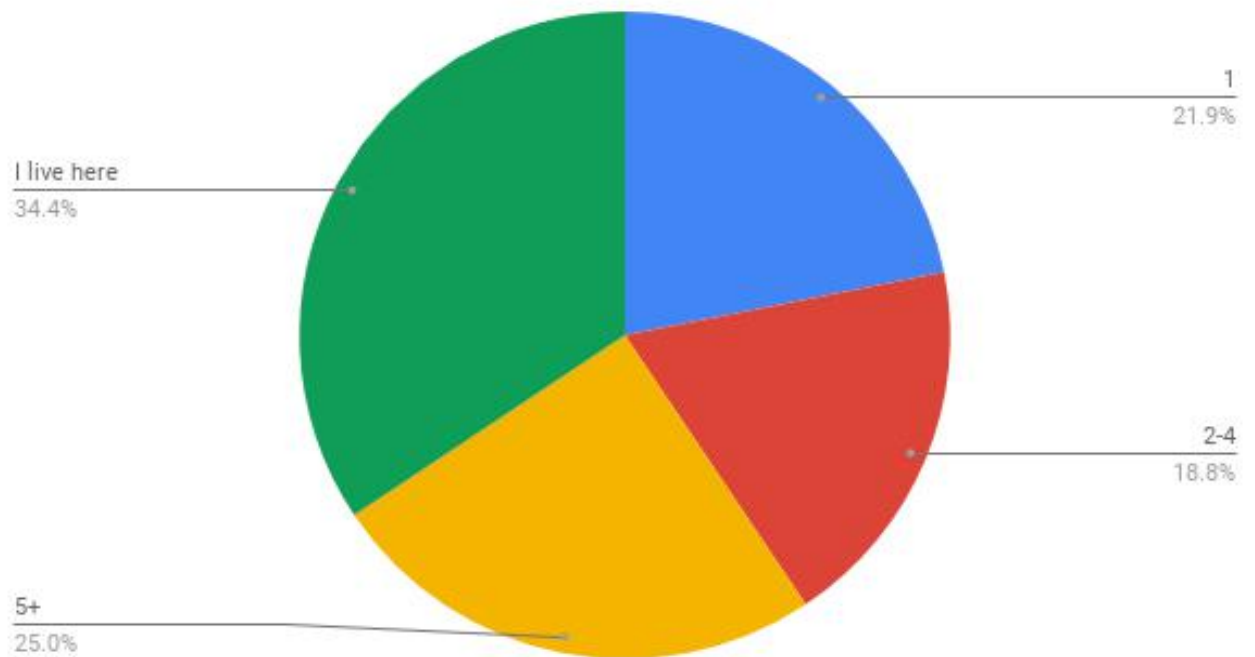


Figure 3

What brought you to Finland?

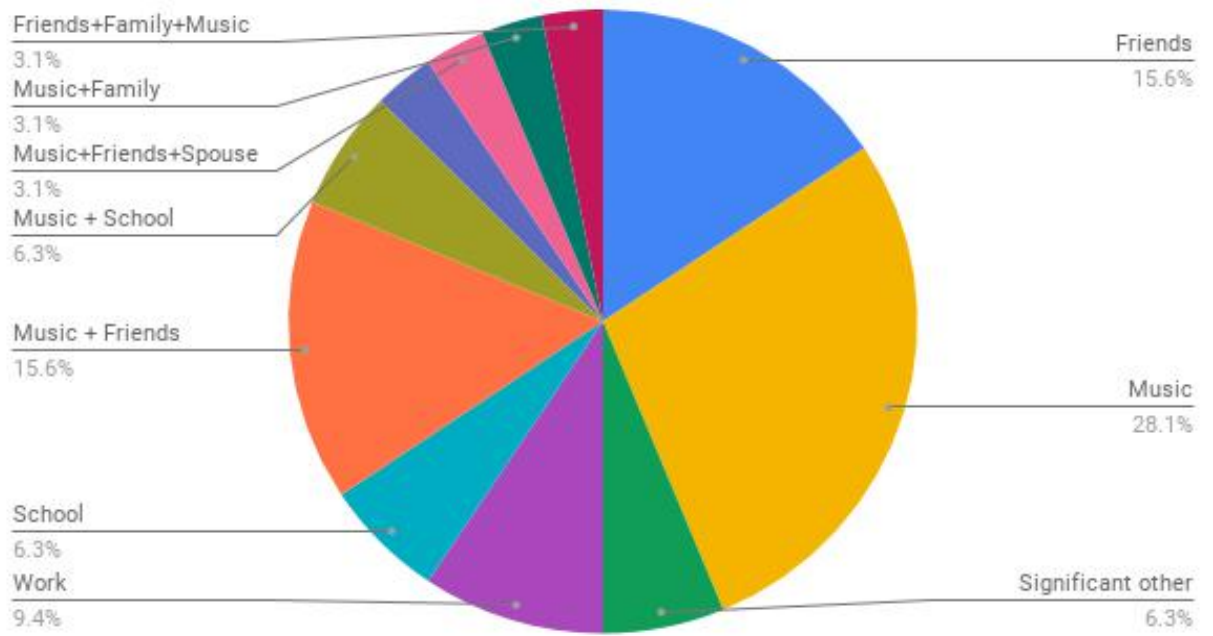


Figure 4

What country are you from?

Where do you live?

How many times have you been to Finland?

First time 2-4 times 5+ times

Other _____

What brought you here?

Friends Family Music Boyfriend/Girlfriend/Spouse

Job School

Other _____

How would you rate the metal scene activity in Finland on a scale from 1-10?

(1 being less active than expected, 10 being more active than expected)

If you would be willing to answer more questions, please put your contact info (email/skype/facebook).

Name: _____ (facebook? Yes No)

Contact: _____

THANK YOU 

Figure 5



Figure 6

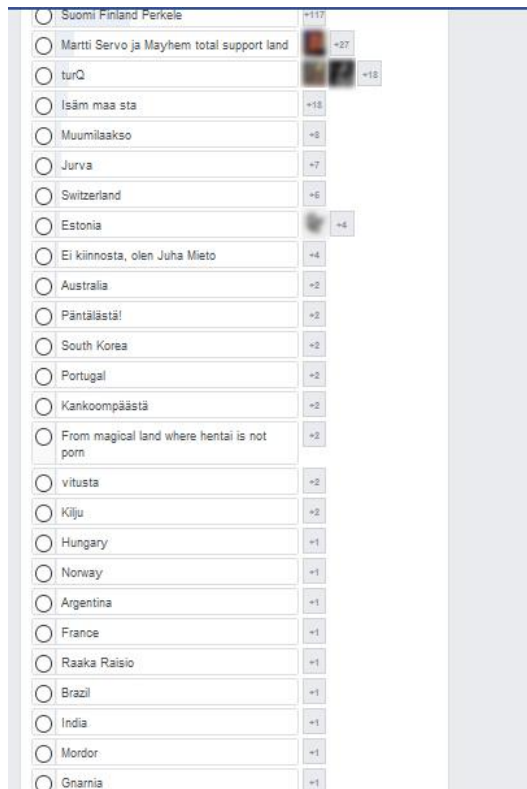
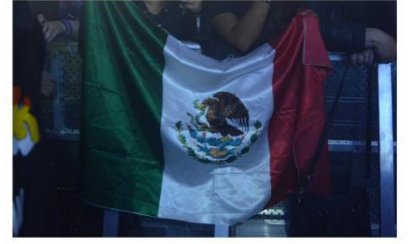
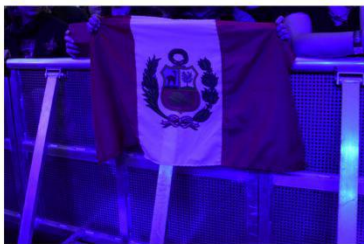
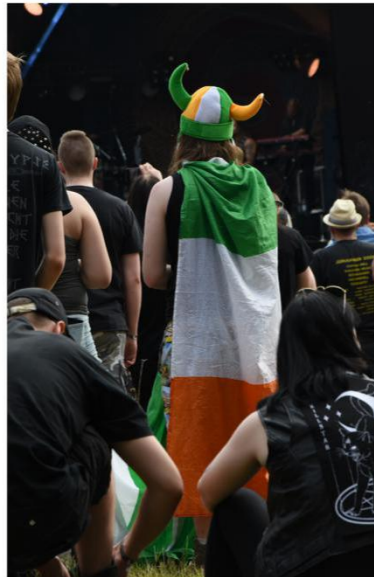


Figure 7



Figure 8



Appendix 1 Description

Figures 1-4 were taken from the results of the surveys handed out at Tuska Festival 2015.

Figure 1- Pie chart depicting the quantitative survey results from the question “Where do you live?”

Figure 2- Pie chart depicting the quantitative survey results from the question “How many times have you visited Finland”?

Figure 3- Pie chart depicting the quantitative survey results from the question “What brought you to Finland?”

Figure 4 - The actual survey layout and questions provided to festival attendees

Figures 5-7 are screen shots of the polls posted in the Nummirock event page for the festival years 2015 and 2016

Figure 5 - screen shot of the status of the poll posted in Nummirock 2015 (posted by me)

Figure 6 - screen shot of the status of the first half of the poll posted in Nummirock 2016, valid answers are checked with a red check mark. (posted by the promoter)

Figure 7 - screen shot of the status of the second half of the poll posted in Nummirock 2016, valid answers are checked with a red check mark.

Figure 8- photos taken of various festival attendees presenting or wearing their countries flag.

Appendix 2

Interview 1: Answered by Titus Hjelm - Lecturer at UCL on Finnish Society and Culture, respected metal academic, member of Finnish band Thunderstone

1) What would you say your role(s) is/are within the metal scene in Finland?

I'm a member of a relatively well-established band, and most people in the metal scene probably know me in that capacity. Certainly the musician colleagues do. It's a small scene, so everybody tends know everyone else. I have another, smaller role as a metal scholar—although I don't consider myself primarily a metal scholar. But no one in the broader scene knows (or cares?) about that!

2) Do you consider yourself a member of the metal scene? If so, for how long? If not, why?

Sure. I started listening to metal when it was still a statement and controversial. Even my otherwise open-minded parents tried to talk me out of it. Growing my hair long at 11 in the early 80s was a big deal in Finland. Before the internet, I sought out every bit of information about bands I could. I was a walking encyclopedia. Paradoxically, now that I have a role as a performer, I've lost pace with the developments. I still kept up with the scene in the early 2000s when we started the band, but I wouldn't know a band that was established since then. No offence. ☺ I also realized that when recently interviewed about the 'playlist of my life' (or something similar) for a metal website, I inadvertently gave a lot of answers that weren't very metal at all. I still listen to metal, of course, but almost exclusively the very old stuff.

3) In your opinion, what have been the most apparent ways the metal scene in Finland has evolved over the years ?

The mainstreaming that culminated in Lordi's Eurovision win was a big change. Suddenly there was a metal bar on every corner in Helsinki, and even bars that were not metal bars as such played metal. I found it a bit boring, actually. Things have calmed down since, but Finland is still pretty special compared to, say, the UK where I live and where metal is decisively fringe still. And I don't say this to flaunt my

authenticity credentials—that means nothing to me—but when you go to a metal gig you don't feel similarly that you're among a community that you used to. I'm not a fan of exclusive communities (and I don't think metalheads have ever been like that), so perhaps it's all good, but the sense of brother/sisterhood is not there perhaps as much as it used to be. The other change is that the scene has diversified internally, which also means that there is sort of internal differentiation: previously you went to a metal gig, and that meant both Slayer and Skid Row. You don't see many black metal fans at my band's gigs nowadays.

4) Have you noticed a significant impact from the international presence within the metal scene? If so, how has it changed over the years?

There was little impact from the international scene before the late 1990s, when Stratovarius, Amorphis, COB, and later Nightwish made their breakthroughs. There was HIM of course as well, but they went directly to big label fame, so it was different, more distant. But suddenly most of the bands were signed to German labels, as was my band. So certainly, the scene has internationalized, if you will, in the last 20 or so years. In my musician role, it has been the norm. Now of course, Finland has become this sort of Mecca for a lot of metal fans, so you can see the internationalization in the fan base as well. Personally, the epitome of that is that I have an American PhD student who wants to get a degree from a British university (where I teach) with a study on women in the Finnish metal scene. Doesn't get much more international than that!

5) How has the international presence influenced your role?

I'm not 100% sure if I'm getting the idea behind the question right, but initially it was a big deal when we worked with a German record company. Since 2009 less so. But of course it's great to see that Finland—which many tours skipped in the 1980s—gets pretty much the same artists as anyone else. It's not London, but not a complete periphery anymore either. And it's great of course that the metal fans, the community, is more diverse than ever.

6) Would you prefer to be anonymous or can I use your name in my thesis?

Feel free to use my name.

Interview 2: Answered by Iiro Laitinen - Promoter at Nem Agency

1) What would you say your role(s) is/are within the metal scene in Finland?

To be honest, I do not personally think that I would have a role or wonder about my status within the metal scene. In the end, I am involved in the scene for the sake of love for metal music and because I truly enjoy doing these things I do.

However, if you consider the role perspective based on my working history and where I am today, I would say I am acting as a sort of a medium for underground acts to establish themselves in Finland, mostly in terms of live shows. What drives me forward, is the positive feeling I get from a band's music and through that I often end up working with the band and so on. All in all, I want to present the consuming audience bands I personally enjoy and consider are definitely worth checking out, just like with Harakiri for the Sky for example. Ultimately it always comes down to the actual music and content, and when it's solid and interesting, it should be heard and discovered. Besides the medium aspect, I am currently also mentoring a few bands and organizing a couple annual indoor events. In this sense, I believe it is also about supporting the scene both through bands' success and good customer experiences: the scene is doing well when the bands are doing well and customers are enjoying music & attending shows.

2) Do you consider yourself a member of the metal scene? If so, for how long? If not, why?

Yes, I do actually. I've been a metalhead since I was 15 years old (so now for 12 years) and the last 7 years I've been growingly involved with the metal scene by arranging and producing live shows around Finland.

3) How long have you been involved with Nem Agency? Other festivals/event coordination?

I started at Nem Agency in February 2016, so two years ago. Before that I ran my own business, Northern Solitude Entertainment, and did about 40-50 shows around Finland during 2014-2016. In 2012-2016 I was also an active member of Jyväskylän raskaan musiikin yhdistys ry (JYRMY) and arranged, marketed and produced several shows in Jyväskylä aside with being the chairman of the board in 2015 and 2016. Besides these I do not have any other experience from the industry really and back in 2012 basically started everything with 0% experience about the industry.

4) Could you give a brief history of Nem?

Nem Agency as it is today originally started as Nem Booking somewhere in the end of 1980's. In 2012 the current company CEO Rowan Rafferty bought the business and the name was changed to Nem Agency. During the years Nem have worked with a wide range of domestic and foreign artists varying from adult pop and blues to punk rock and extreme metal. As of late, the "focus" has slightly and accidentally shifted to heavier music and we have been working closely with a big number of metal acts. In 2017 we worked with such foreign metal acts as Pain (SWE), Amaranthe (SWE), Thyrfing (SWE), Arkona (RUS), Rotting Christ (GRC), W.A.S.P. (US), Harakiri for the Sky (AUT), Ghost Bath (US) and many, many more. Annually Nem Agency arranges approximately 500 shows around Finland and brings in about 40-50 foreign acts. The biggest productions are SaariHelvetti, SaariBlues and Valteri Festival.

5) In your opinion, what have been the most apparent ways the metal scene in Finland has evolved over the years?

There are several ways, but the most apparent in my opinion is the digitalization of music consumption in general: as all the content has become more easily available, the whole music industry has gone and is still going through drastic changes. For example, printed magazines are struggling, and people browse the content through online medias; past's music magazines such as Sue and Miasma have more or less vanished and online medias such as Kaaoszine and Metalliluola have kind of taken their place. In overall, the content has become more rapidly disposable and the consumers want everything immediately; therefore, in today's music world the quality and the distinctiveness of the content has a higher value than ever before.

With easier access to music and content comes also the competition. Comparing to the golden years of metal music back in the first decade of the new millennium, metal music in 2018 is not doing that well. The competition is tougher as lots of metal-oriented venues have closed their doors and the big number of metal bands is fighting for the same chances to perform in a small number of venues. Resultingly the number of customer attendance can be very fluctuating and even the venues might not know whether people show up. Due to the easy access and disposability of the content, the customers expect more worth to their money and time than ever before hence being more selective. Despite the fact metal music is not the trendiest music genre at the

moment, there are indications for a better future as the overall turnout with metal shows is increasingly better and for example we've sold out a lot of metal music shows & events during the last couple of years. Furthermore, there are several new smaller operators who are actively organizing underground shows in Finland and I personally think it is vital and beneficial for the whole metal scene.

In addition, metal music is still quite popular based on the album sales charts. Metal music fans still buy music, especially physical recordings, and in general metal has become more "suitable" for the big audience: it is daily played on several radio channels and a wide range of documentary films, concerts etc. are broadcasted in TV on a weekly basis. In this sense, the metal scene in Finland has evolved quite a lot over the years.

6) What are some significant ways the "industry" (aspects pertaining to your job) has evolved over the years?

As stated also above, the general digitalization of the whole industry is maybe the biggest factor influencing my job at the moment. The audience is more and more online, so I need to find ways to reach the suitable target audience. From an opposite perspective, it also takes a lot of time to go through all potential bands that might have chances in Finland due to massive number of bands and content that is on offer. While in the past industry professionals sent out their talent scouts to see a band perform live, nowadays we easily make the judgment based on the numbers the band has on social media channels such as Facebook, YouTube, Spotify etc. There is more up-to-date data available than ever before and professionals are taking an advantage out of that. While in the past you might have trusted your gut feelings and general appearance of the band, today you make the call based on the numbers, achievements and the current success of the band.

Furthermore, the overall dynamics of the music business have changed quite a bit. Back in the day a band might have got a pile of money from a label to make an album, nowadays it can be the opposite and the band would need to pay the label to get the album released. Generally, labels are very careful with their money and investments as the physical album sales are unpredictable and consumption behavior is difficult to foresee. Additionally, the labels are still trying to get accustomed to the digitalization and go through the reformation. The unwillingness of the labels to invest their money on bands has lead the industry to the point where bands need to establish themselves

and gain merits on their own before big commercial success. As a result, the bands need to handle numerous tasks all the way from promotion and production to financial accounting and career development, the tasks the record labels and background organizations have taken care of in the past.

7) Have you noticed a significant impact from the international presence within the metal scene? If so, how has it changed over the years?

That's quite a complex and broad question. As a result of the aforementioned digitalization and metal music becoming universally more suitable for big audiences, I would say Finnish metalheads also follow what's happening outside of Finland as well: there's plenty of information available in foreign media outlets and, consequently, people know more about what kind of events are taking place and what kind of bands are popular – whether it is in Europe or the US. Not just the audience but also the whole metal scene has become more interactive and, in a way, more unified. For example, while in the past people travelled from Finland to Sweden or Estonia for summer festivals, now they are also attending more and more festivals in Central Europe (Wacken, Hellfest, MetalDays etc.) and possibly in the US as well (70 000 Tons of Metal for example). In this sense, the consuming audience is more price and quality aware than maybe 10-15 years ago and this also affecting the Finnish metal scene: famous and successful foreign events create pressure for domestic organizers not just in terms of bands but also by establishing other activities and increasing the general attractiveness of the event by innovative ways. People want more worth to their money and in today's world a solid line-up of bands does not necessarily guarantee a financial success.

8) How has the international presence influenced the way someone in your position might go about their work?

Frankly, I follow quite a bit what's happening outside of Finland: what the European festivals & other professionals are doing, which bands are touring and which places, how people are reacting to upcoming bands, what is going on bands' social media channels and so on. It is not just about mapping out business opportunities but also acquiring knowledge and fresh ideas to my own doings. Therefore, I usually think about how I am going to present an event or a band in social media, what is the best approach from media's point of view and what is appealing to the audience, how I can

engage potential customers and, more importantly, how I make sure they attend the event or follow the band in the future as well. So international presence brings a lot of pressure and I need to come up with ways to offer interesting content besides the bands.

For example, I think the international presence affects also domestic festivals: when people have a limited amount of money at disposal and a limited number of holidays, they might consider between attending a 4-day festival in France with all-inclusive accommodation & a top-notch band line-up and small local festival with their favorite band and terrible Finnish weather. In this sense, the festivals need to ponder about the extra content and how they can engage and commit customers: ultimately it's about the whole experience. In the end, it can be the whole experience that appeals to the bands as well: as there are often several festivals taking place at the same time around Europe, a big band might choose the festival based on the overall experience and promotional value although the fee might be smaller than the fee the small local festival offers. Thus, it is extremely important to enhance and improve the overall experience again and again.

9) Would you prefer to be anonymous or can I use your name in my thesis?

Feel free to use my name, I have no problem with that.

Follow -up interview: March 1, 2018

"So for the questions 'Have you noticed a significant impact from the international presence within the metal scene? If so, how has it changed over the years?' and 'How has the international presence influenced your role?' You answered more in relation to Finn's interest in the international metal scene, like how Finns are traveling abroad more and the demand for foreign acts in Finland. I was wondering also about the foreign presence within the metal scene in Finland, like people who are in Finland from abroad and their activity in the metal scene here... what you've noticed and how it might impact your 'role' or your position."

Aaah, so how the foreign people are affecting the Finnish metal scene? Like I put it with Finns, I think it also works the other way around: international people are visiting more and more concerts and festivals in Finland - and I believe social media has a huge role in this as more information can be shared and more quickly. For example, I know

people coming all the way from the UK or Germany for shows in Finland, last year I had one Norwegian media person at a show in Helsinki: he flew all the way from Oslo to see one show at Nosturi. A small thing I have also noticed is that some foreign metalheads might apply for an exchange program in Finland due to the fact Finland is considered as a metal country and these metalheads are then actively attending metal shows and being otherwise involved in the local metal scene. In my "role", I have occasionally tried taking this into account as well by using Erasmus programs' channels (Facebook groups e.g.) or contacting & co-operating with local (academic) metal music associations such as HYRMY, TYRMY, JYRMY & TTYkityys since their membership also contains a good number of international students. For the sake of the international presence, I quite often write social media updates also in English in order to reach the international audience. Recently I have not been able to spare enough time for translations, but when I have time, I certainly do so. And whenever you are taking things to the next level, you need to be sure you are offering content for a much wider audience which usually means taking into account their demographics, spoken language, age, gender etc. In this sense, you need to be more aware of your customers and need more data about their background: as the population is slowly becoming more internationalized, it is important that you act accordingly. At the moment I am not personally focusing too much on the international people in Finland in terms of marketing shows, promoting bands or so on, but I am now saying I shouldn't. For now, for me it seems that I can easily reach international people through locals and social media. Also I have a feeling that the international metalheads are actively following Finnish metal media outlets so by promoting and marketing through these outlets, I am able to reach (not always necessarily with 100% effect) international audience as well.