Jenny Liebkind

"I started to think more open-mindedly…"

Promoting interfaith harmony with a joint music-making approach

Abstract

Prejudice and hate crimes towards people from different religious and ethnic minorities are increasing almost all over the world. In this study, I am exploring how engaging in interfaith music-making may reduce prejudice and transform beliefs among people from different cultural or religious backgrounds. The aim of my research is to examine the potential of joint music-making for interfaith dialogue and to promote interfaith harmony.

A diverse group of participants from different religions and cultures participated in two 90-minute musical workshops in May 2022, where interfaith music was taught by musicians from the Middle East Music Company. The study mainly focused on presenting the music of Jews, Muslims and Christians. The teachers, as well as the participants, also represented these religions. After the sessions, four of the participants were interviewed face-to-face in a semi-structured interview, and others answered a questionnaire describing their experiences of the interfaith music-making workshops. The research is a qualitative empirical data-driven case study, and a thematical analysis method was used to analyze the data.

The findings explicate that the interfaith music-making experience strengthened the participants' sense of belonging, transformed beliefs as well as enhanced their overall wellbeing. A longer intervention and a wider sampling would be needed to effectively examine reduction of prejudice. However, the participants' experiences showed the potential interfaith music-making has in transforming beliefs and strengthening sense of belonging. In conclusion, in an increasingly diverse society, interfaith music-making should be implemented in the Finnish schools to enhance social inclusion and reduce prejudice.

Keywords: interfaith relations, joint music-making, prejudice reduction, sense of belonging, social inclusion, transforming beliefs

**

Contents

**

**

**

**

1 Introduction

"Weapons win wars, but it takes ideas to win the peace."

- Jonathan Sacks

The world is increasingly polarized, and in many ways divided which can often result in aggression and even violent acts (Penubarti and Asea, 1996, p.19; UN survey, 2021). The quote above is from the late and great rabbi Dr. Jonathan Sacks' book Not in God's name: Confronting Religious Violence (2017, no page number), suggesting that there is value in approaching conflict with softer measures to succeed in generating a meaningful change. Violent acts against religious and ethnic groups, conflicts between different groups, antisemitism, racism, and hate-speech have all increased rapidly in the last five years (Statista Research Department, 2018; UN Strategy and Plan of Action on Hate Speech, 2019; The European Commission, 2021; The Antisemitism Worldwide Report, 2021; Rauta, 2022). Michelle Bachelet, the United Nations' high commissioner for human rights (UN news, 2022), is concerned about the alarming rise of xenophobia, racism, and intolerance – including rising antisemitism, anti-Muslim hatred, and the persecution of Christians. The UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres launched the United Nations Strategy and Plan of Action on Hate Speech on the 18th June 2019 to draw focus on the worrying phenomena. How beneficial this strategy plan has been is not evident and more genuine efforts are needed.

In a rapidly changing and globalizing world, people are increasingly having to interact with others coming from diverse backgrounds. Pre-existing attitudes and stereotypes may influence these encounters in a negative way. The unbalanced state of the world has led to many refugee crises and, also Finland, along with other Nordic countries, have taken in asylum seekers fleeing from war. When a large number of refugees and immigrants come to another country, tension may build up between the immigrants and the native population.

The prime minister of Sweden, Magdalena Andersson, is concerned that Sweden has failed in integrating their refugees, which has fueled gang violence and segregation (Reuters, 04/2022). The head of European Confederation of Police, Jonne Rinne, raised concern by stating that Finland is moving two steps behind Sweden in gang-related criminal activity, which may be a threat to

**

democracy (Iltalehti, 10/2022). Ujuni Ahmed, born in Somalia, says that shadow societies, exclusive societies that have their own rules, exist also in Finland and not enough is being done about the worrying phenomenon (Helsingin Sanomat, 11/2022). Measures are needed to integrate the newcomers into the society to prevent social exclusion, which may lead to criminal activity.

The Finnish Police University College issued a report about increasing hate crimes in 2021 in Finland. According to the report, the number of reported offences had risen for the first time since 2017, with the majority of reported incidents targeting a person from another nationality or an ethnic minority (Rauta, 2022, p. 5). The increasing prejudice, especially towards the Jews in Europe, the US and Britain, is extremely concerning. The Anti-Semitism Worldwide Report 2021 stated, that in 2021 there was: "a significant increase in various types of antisemitic incidents in most countries with large Jewish populations". In France there is a 75% increase in antisemitic incidents comparing to 2020. According to the report also the US, Canada, the UK, Germany, and Australia had a sharp rise on the incidents. Reasons for this radical rise was found in left- and right political views spreading mostly through the social media (The Anti-Semitism Worldwide Report, 2021; Swartz, year, page). Christians are believed to be targets of 80% of all acts of religious discrimination or persecution worldwide, according to the International Society for Human Rights. With millions of Christians facing persecution and violence in many Islamic and Communist nations (World Watch 2020, Open Doors), it is vital to promote interfaith harmony and take measures to insure freedom of religion for all religions.

Music may serve as a way to connect people (Steinbeis and Koelsch, 2008; Tarr et al., 2014) from diverse backgrounds, even without sharing a common language (Odena, 2016). In recent years music and arts have paired up with projects aiming to enhance intergroup relations, which has caught the attention of musicians, practitioners and scholars (Bergh and Sloboda, 2010). Several successful projects, where participants from different ethnic or religious backgrounds participate in making music together, have been shown to be effective in promoting intergroup harmony (Barenboim, 1999; Skyllstad, 2000; Lichman, 2000; Lichman and Sullivan, 2006; Robertson, 2010; Thomson, 2022).

To contribute to enhancing intergroup relations and reducing prejudice with music, my research project explores how joint music-making in an interfaith context may enhance interfaith harmony and reduce prejudice between people from different religious and/or ethnic backgrounds. The goal of the study is to promote interfaith dialogue and seek ways to enhance peace education using interfaith music as the method. A conversation using music as a way to communicate could be easier than

**

having a traditional conversation. To create, produce or learn music, one must open their mind and listen. Music promotes the ability to take in to account, and understand another person's mental state, known as theory of mind (Premack and Woodruff, 1978). Theory of mind and musical abilities are closely linked to empathy. Music may help to connect to another person's state of mind, and to understand how they are feeling (Rabinowitch et al., 2012; Greenberg, 2015). Additionally, listening to or making music activates the part of the brain that involves empathy (Steinbeis and Koelsch, 2008), which is helpful when attempting to enhance intergroup relations. Furthermore, one may possess musical abilities if their personality was open to experiences, even if they never played an instrument before (McCrae and Greenberg, 2015).

2 Conceptual Framework

In this chapter I will introduce the conceptual framework for this study. The chapter is divided into five sub-chapters: Prejudice; Music in transforming beliefs; Enhancing intergroup relations; Music in strengthening social bonds; Aspects of music-making in a group setting. This chapter will demonstrate the need for enhancing interfaith harmony and the effect of music-making in promoting theory of mind and social cohesion between people coming from different religious and/or ethnic backgrounds.

2.1 Prejudice

Prejudice is defined by having negative thoughts or emotions toward an out-group or a member of an out-group (Brown, 1995; Mcleod 2008). It is a pre-determined and negative perception of another based on their looks, ethnicity, religion, sexuality, gender, social status, nationality or political views. They can also be based on stereotypes. Stereotyping, according to the social identity theory, is a normal cognitive process, where people magnify the similarities in the group and the differences between groups (Tajfel and Turner, 1979; Mcleod 2019). There can be prejudice individuals, but the target of their judgment or even hate is often projected to an entire group. Prejudice can be discriminatory when acted upon. Therefore, someone can have prejudice thoughts toward a group or an individual, but does not discriminate in practice (Mcleod, 2008).

Belonging to a group can promote positive feelings of belonging and self-image and this social cohesion is something humans naturally seek (Tarr et al., 2014). However, if one's close circle involves people that are for example radicalized, this may lead to them attaining radical attitudes as well (Fokus ry, 2021). According to social identity theory by Henry Tajfel (1979), it is natural for people to divide other people into groups to enhance their self-image. However, this social characterizing may lead to an in-group and out-group mentality where the out-group may be considered as inferior or a threat (Tajfel and Turner, 1979), which is one explanation for prejudice attitudes. The in-group feels familiar and people identify with it, whereas the out-group may seem different with less or no similarities and may be the target of the in-group's discrimination (Mcleod, 2019). Changing prejudice attitudes is difficult, which many researchers (Crisp and Turner, 2009;

**

Paluck and Green, 2009; Ward and Kagitcibasi, 2010) who have tested methods aiming to reduce prejudice, have concluded.

There are both challenges and possibilities that come with diversity and the integration policies. Meeting people with different backgrounds, may serve as a challenge to think differently and observe matters from another viewpoint. Challenging ways of thinking and previous attitudes, may be a motivation for innovative solutions and progress. Sometimes it is difficult not to be defensive when you are put into a situation that makes one question their beliefs. These situations may be the cause of conflict between others.

2.1.1 Racism and antisemitism

In order to differentiate and identify what is racism, xenophobia and antisemitism, it is beneficial to understand the differences. *Racism* is a concept that refers to how another group is perceived to be inferior to others based on ethnicity, nationality, culture, skin color, or religion. Racism often includes the belief that one's in-group is superior than others (Finnish Red Cross, 2022).
Xenophobia is the rejection and fear of all foreigners or strangers or of people and cultures that are perceived of being strange or unknown. (Merriam-Webster).

> "*Antisemitism* is a certain perception of Jews, which may be expressed as hatred toward Jews. Rhetorical and physical manifestations of antisemitism are directed toward Jewish or non-Jewish individuals and/or their property, toward Jewish community institutions and religious facilities as well as holding Jews collectively accountable for actions of the state of Israel". (International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance, 2016.)

The respondents of the EU Minorities and Discrimination Survey, executed by the EU Agency for Fundamental Rights, reported high levels of discrimination because of their ethnic, immigrant or religious backgrounds. Even though Europeans are becoming increasingly diverse, the respondents reported feeling that discrimination has increased since 2012 (European Commission, 2019). Moreover, another survey, conducted by the European Parliament Research Service report, indicated that anti-Muslim hate crimes rose from 12% to 25% from 2010 to 2016. The European Commission (2019) issued a report titled Countering Racism and Xenophobia in the EU, which accentuate the

relation between the normalization of islamophobia to online far-right networks, and hate crimes against Muslims.

At the end of 2021, 69% of Finland's population was Christian, of whom 97% belonged to the Evangelical Lutheran Church, 1.6% to the Orthodox Church and 0.4% to the Catholic Church. At the end of 2021, 0.4% of the Finnish population belonged to Islamic churches and 0.02% to Jewish churches. In total, only 0.4% of the Finnish population belonged to non-Christian churches, Islamic or Jewish congregations. The proportion of people not belonging to a religious community was 31%. However, these figures do not reflect the actual number of people of different religions in Finland, as a large proportion of Muslims or other smaller religious communities, for example, do not officially belong to any religious community. (Statistics Finland 2022.)

In a review, launched by the Police University College, a total of 55 reports of suspected hate crimes against Muslims or Muslims were registered with the police in Finland. The number of suspected cases was 16 more than in the previous year. A total of 40 crime reports against Christianity or Christians were found for 2021. The number was higher than the previous year, when there were 28 reports. There were 17 reports of suspected crimes against Jews and Jewish people in the year under review. (Rauta, 2022, pp.61–63.) Altogether hate crimes against religions increased 23% from the previous year (authors details p.5). Furthermore, the review showed that relative to the number of Jews in Finland, the number of hate crimes committed against Jews was ten times or higher than against other religions addressed in the review.

When prejudice increases toward one group, history has shown that it will spread to other groups as well, and therefore the fight against prejudice and discrimination is a common one. The UN Special Rapporteur on freedom of religion or belief, Ahmed Shaheed said in an online event in 2020: "Muslims and Jews have much in common, in religion, in history, and in culture. It is politics, feeding off ignorance, that divides us".

Media has the power to increase or decrease prejudice with what and how much news exposure is given to outgroups. Antisemitism relating to Israel called antizionism is a form of Jew-hatred that is spreading wide in many social media platforms (Schwarz-Friesel, 2019, pp.322–323; EU strategy on combating Antisemitism, 2021). There also seems to be a link between media exposure and anti-Muslim prejudice. According to research, greater news exposure about Islamic terrorism reduced warmth toward the Muslims, and increased anger. (Shaver et al., 2017.) Additionally, when the news about terrorism reminds viewers of their own mortality, it may increase prejudice toward the out-

groups (Das et al., 2009, p.453). This first edition of the European Islamophobia Report (2016) showed that Islamophobia can exist even without the presence of Muslims, as it plays a role in the politics of many European countries with small Muslim populations. The phenomenon is present also in other "mystic" minorities, where the stereotypes and media are molding the attitudes of people against groups or members of groups they have possible never met.

As antisemitism has reached historical levels in the world, it is important to examine the cause and effect. Attitudes toward especially Jews was affected by political movements and the media coverage. The Antisemitism Worldwide Report (2021, p.17) stated that in the beginning of the COVID pandemic in 2020, conspiracy theories spread around the world which blamed Jews and Israel for spreading the virus. The Anti-Semitism Worldwide Report 2021 by the Center for the Study of Contemporary European Jewry at Tel Aviv University's Faculty of Humanities, is based on the analysis of dozens of studies from around the world, as well as information from law enforcement bodies, media and Jewish organizations.

Anti-racism movements, built on the critical race theory, have gained substantial momentum in corporations, school systems and police departments trying to hunt for systematic racism (Washington post, 2021). At the same time antisemitism is widely and openly on the streets in the form of chants, posters and t-shirts denouncing Jews and Israel. Whoopi Goldberg, a famous African-American actress argued in a popular tv-show, The View, that Jews are not a race and there for Holocaust was not about racism, while talking about a book about the Holocaust that was retracted from schools in the U.S (Reuters, 02/2022). Recently, also a popular rap artist, Kanye West wrote several antisemitic remarks on his social media platforms, which have over 18 million followers, about the Jews controlling the media, and having power over financial institutions (Time, 2022). Continuing to reinforce the same message comedian Dave Chappelle on Saturday Night Live (CNN, 2022) accused Jews of controlling the show business. Professor Glenn C. Loury, from Brown University, and Bari Weiss, a journalist and author for The Wall Street Journal and The New York Times, discussed on an online event if anti-racism ideology, which tends to blame high-achieving ethnicities for the circumstances of their less prosperous counterparts, is one culprit for increasing antisemitism (Manhattan institute, 2021).

Persecution and discrimination based on one's religion or ethnicity are acute problems that are affecting the lives of many. According to the non-Governmental organization, Open Doors, 260 million Christians are being persecuted for their religious beliefs in many countries in the world, North Korea being the most extreme. "If North Korean Christians are discovered, they are deported

**

to labor camps as political criminals or even killed on the spot." In all statistics and reports, Islamic and Communist oppression compile the majority of the nations that are responsible for the global persecution of Christians including Afghanistan, North Korea, Iran, Syria, Pakistan, Nigeria and Yemen. (World Watch List 2020, Open Doors). In the 2020 report, Open Doors estimated that attacks on churches have risen 500% from 2019 to 2020. In January 2020 the UK Government stated that improvements were being done that will help those persecuted because of their faith or belief.

A Finnish study by Pauha et al. (2020) examined the attitudes that atheist or nonbelievers have toward religious groups. The study mainly focused on Christians and Muslims. The results suggested that deconverted atheist had more positive attitudes toward religious groups than lifelong atheists (pp. 246–248). As atheism is increasing rapidly in the world (Zuckerman, 2007; Pew Research Center, 2015), atheistic prejudice may be a future challenge that needs addressing.

2.2 Music in transforming beliefs

Daniel Barenboim's Jewish–Palestinian West Eastern Divan Orchestra is a great example of how music and music-making, even between groups that are described as advisories, can be an effective way to overcome prejudice. Barenboim stated in 1999: "This summer I created an orchestra in which young Jewish and Palestinian musicians play together as though they had been doing so forever. Through music we drove away hostility" (no page number). Other examples include an interreligious choir in Sarajevo, Bosnia-Herzegovina (Robertson, 2010) and an Israeli–Palestinian children's choir (Skyllstad, 2000) and the cross-community school visits in Israel for Palestinian and Jewish children (Lichman and Sullivan, 2000; Lichman, 2006).

Accordingly, to contribute to the reduction of prejudice a six-month cross-cultural musical program, including Cape Verdean songs, was implemented in a Portuguese school with adolescent pupils to examine the effect of music on national prejudice, especially toward Cape Verdean people. The results were positive as they showed a clear reduction of prejudice towards the Cape Verdean people within the group that was introduced to a cross-cultural musical program versus the group that was not. (Neto et al., 2018.) In this study attitudes for other groups (Brazilian and Portuguese) were not altered which indicates that using the music of a specific group will have an effect on attitudes specifically to this group but not reducing prejudice altogether. In a similar study by Neto et al. (2015, pp. 388–389) a few years earlier examining the reduction of anti-dark-skin prejudice in children after a cross-cultural music program was introduced, showed a decrease in anti-dark-skin prejudice after

**

the intervention. The effect of the intervention, measured after three months and after two years, showed that the results were enduring (pp. 393–394).

Another study by Bodner and Gilboa (2009, pp. 85–89) showing the possibilities of using music as a tool to reduce prejudice, examined the effect of national music on intergroup relations. One hundred and ninety-one undergraduate students volunteered to participate in the study without monetary reward. The results showed that listening to crisis songs had an effect on the participants feelings toward their out-groups, generating communality among contradicting groups. The study argued that carefully chosen songs can be used to promote a common identity between opposing groups but further socio-musical research is needed in the future (author details p. 107), for example how interfaith music or multicultural music would work in a similar setting.

Furthermore, music may also be used to generate negative feelings in a person or a group. Listening to violent rap music can raise aggressive feelings and sad music can bring tears to one's eyes. Until the study of Bodner and Gilboa (2009) was published, it was widely considered that national music mainly promotes in-group favoritism. Music can promote in-group behavior and increase prejudice but when using it the right way it can have the opposite effect (Greitemeyer and Schwab, 2014). Dr. David Greenberg, a psychologist, musician, and researcher at Bar-Ilan University and Cambridge University, suggests in his research (2015; 2022) that you can affect a person's state of mind with the type of music they are listening to. For example, a neurotic person would get more anxious and stressed out if they would listen to highly intensive music. The importance of how and what kind of music is used in the attempt to enhance interfaith dialogue, cannot be over-looked.

A few similar studies argue that there is a link between music-making and attitude-change whether being an active participant in making music together or just actively listening to specific music (Sousa et al. 2005, p. 312; Bodner and Bergman, 2017; Neto et al., 2018). A study done in Israel examined whether national music can enhance people's theory of mind and reduce prejudice among two groups described as being in conflict, Jews and Arabs in Israel. In this study the participants were listening to specific national songs sung by an Arab or a Jewish singer. The results demonstrated that also national songs, which are usually a tool to enhance in-group favoritism, can be used to promote theory of mind in adversarial groups (Bodner and Bergman, 2017). The findings in these studies (Bodner and Gilboa, 2009; Bodner and Bergman, 2017; Neto et al., 2018) indicate that musical activities may be introduced to any group regardless of age, gender, ethnicity, religion to promote understanding and intergroup harmony.

**

However, the challenge with many of the previous research (Bodner and Gilboa, 2009; Bodner and Bergman, 2017), is that they examine the effect of music-making in short-term but not so much "real-world" contact interventions. In the study by Felix Neto (2018) the results showed that after several months the participant still experienced less prejudice toward the Cape Verdean people than before starting the program. Nevertheless, these longitudinal studies examining prejudice are rare. There are some studies examining prejudice in on-going intergroup contact rather than the effects after contact has ended (Maras and Brown, 1996; Abrams et al., 2006; Brown et al., 2007; Dhont et al., 2012). The lasting effect of these interventions that have stopped is still unexplored and studies exploring the long-lasting effect are needed.

2.3 Enhancing intergroup relations

Enhancing intergroup relations is a complex endeavor. The contact hypothesis of Allport (1952) suggested that intergroup contact is a way to improve intergroup attitudes, when it involves common goals, institutional support, similarity and equal status. This idea has been developed to a full theory and expanded for decades because of the need for enhancing intergroup relations is enormous. Nevertheless, it is important to keep in mind that the type of contact and other aspects of interactions are known to be important and taken in to account. Unfortunately, because of the huge demand of enhancing intergroup relations the supply is not always qualitative and can do more harm than good. If an intergroup contact does not result in a positive outcome, this may deepen the divide of an in-group and out-group. (Renko et.al, 2012, pp. 80–83.)

These optimal conditions of people from different groups sharing common goals, equal status, similarities (Allport, 1952) rarely exist. Moreover, the frequency and quality of contact is important to distinguish between. If the intergroup contact is frequently unpleasant, it will most likely not promote harmony. (Abrams, 2010.) The most important contact in promoting intergroup relationship is through a friend one trusts and is considered as part of their own group. The figure below is a summary of current research evidence on the routes from contact to reduced prejudice by Abrams (2010).
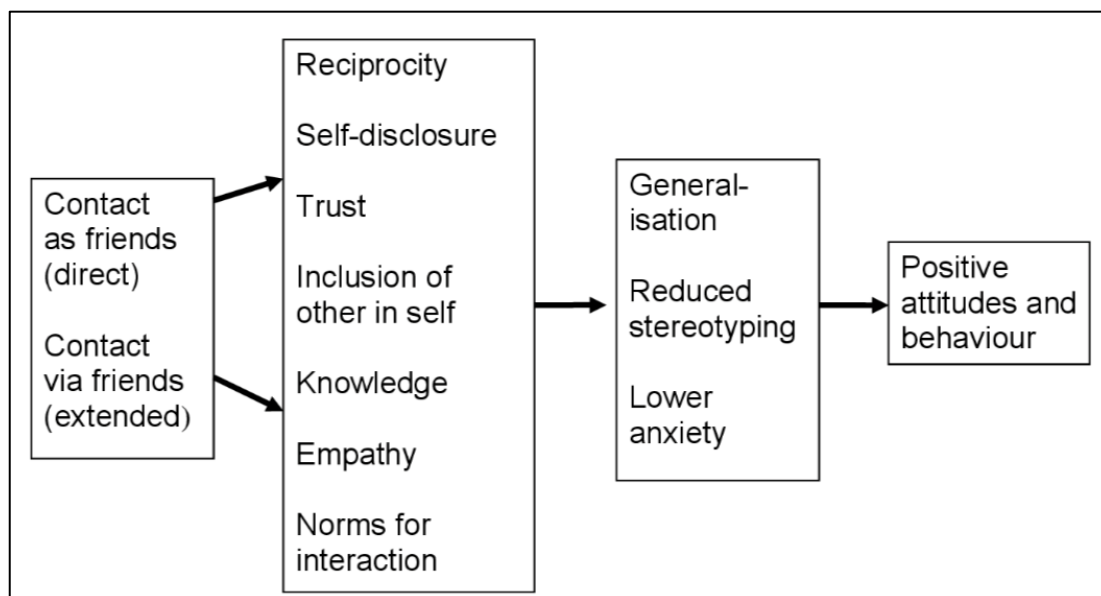
Figure 1. Routes from intergroup contact to lowered prejudice (Abrams, 2010, p. 35)

Social networks are important for the wellbeing of an individual and for society to work in a productive way. A basic human need is to connect with others. Social capital theory, referring to the social relationships one has and the connection among individuals as well as how social contacts affect the productivity of an individual and groups (Coleman, 1990; Putnam, 1993). Social capital theory has been invented and evolved several times during the decades. Already mentioning the concept in 1916 by practical reformer from West Virginia, L.J Hanifan who felt that community involvement is an important factor in creating successful schools (Putnam, 2000, p. 22).

According to Putnam, who is widely credited for popularizing the term among social scientists, social capital can also be directed negatively to antisocial purposes. Bonding glues groups together and reinforces in-group mentality as opposed to bridging which links an individual to a different network than their own. Bridging social capital can broaden identities whereas bonding social capital may result to a narrower self. (Putnam 2000, pp. 19–22.) Bonding social capital may reinforce strong in-group loyalty which may result to prejudice toward out-groups which is why enhancing intergroup and interfaith relations is in the center of reducing prejudice.

> We come from all the divisions, ranks, classes of society…to teach and to be taught in our turn. While we mingle together in these pursuits, we shall learn to know each other more intimately; we shall remove many of the prejudices which ignorance or partial acquaintance with each other had fostered…In the parties and sects into which we are

divided, we sometimes learn to love our brother at the expense of him whom we do not in so many respects regard as a brother…We may return to our homes and firesides with kindler feelings toward one another, because we have learned to know one another better. (Thomas Greene, 1829 in Putnam, 2000, p.23.)

One aspect that is vital in enhancing intergroup relations is education. Even the awareness of the other group, of their music and/or culture may promote theory of mind and result to the reduction of prejudice attitudes. The basis for knowledge, beliefs, attitudes and behaviors is rooted in strong interfaith interactions to build positive relationships with people from different religions - he concept of interfaith learning (Rockenbach et al., 2020; Mayhew and Rockenbach, 2021; Wielzen and Avest, 2017). Empathy is also a learned attribute as is suggested by a study by Tal-Chen Rabinowitch (2012) and her team who exposed a group of primary-school-age children to musical games for an hour every week lasting for one academic year. Two other control groups were exposed to either no-games or games with drama instead of music. After given various of empathy measures before and after the intervention, a significant growth in empathy scores were only seen in the music group which suggests that music has an important role in empathy development. Furthermore, empathy used correctly can be greatly beneficial in enhancing intergroup relations, however it may have a negative outcome as well. One may identify with another less fortunate than them so greatly, they may fear that similar misfortune could strike them (Stephan and Finlay, 1999, p. 739).

Children may learn prejudice at a very young age, which suggests that continuous and early efforts are required by the society to prevent prejudice attitudes and enhance theory of mind. It also seems that group activities are more effective in reducing prejudice in children, than direct discussions of racism and prejudice. Which suggests that music-making in an intergroup environment is beneficial in enhancing intergroup relations. Additionally, encouraging empathy and theory of mind seems to help reduce prejudice among children. (Abrams, 2010, p. 82.)

Greenberg (2022) along with other studies (Vuoskoski and Eerola, 2011; Vuoskoski et al., 2012) suggests that the music one listens to predicts their personality also globally. He claims that an introvert regardless of where they live listens to similar kind of music and this can be used as a bridge to connect people from all over the world. There are huge possibilities here to harness this theory in practice not only to tackle one of the biggest health crises in the world- loneliness, but to bring together people from different cultures and faiths. (Holt-Lunstad et al., 2015.) Greenberg (2022) argues that because people use music to show their personality it would possible help to address also

social division, even in conflicting groups. If music affects your personality and personality affects your musical preferences could musical preferences and prejudice be linked as well? This is also a very interesting question and would need further studies to help examine all the aspects that affect prejudice and help in reduction of prejudice.

There is a great need for enhancing better understanding between different groups and methods for this are also needed. With the present research I will attempt to demonstrate that the method of interfaith music-making may be easy to implement and effective in promoting interfaith dialogue and transform beliefs. In my study I combined the intergroup contact and interfaith music in an educational setting to enhance interfaith dialogue to reduce prejudice. The literature supports (Bodner and Bilboa 2009, Neto et al. 2015; 2018) that music-making in a group using targeted (carefully chosen songs and music styles) music, which in this context is interfaith music, may have the ability to transform beliefs and reduce prejudice even in groups that are described as adversaries.

2.4 Music in strengthening social bonds

Social bonds are unwritten agreements with family, friends and the wider social Network (Carnevale, 2022). In social bond theory, Hirschi (1969) arranges social ties into four elements: attachment, commitment, involvement, and belief. *Attachment* expresses how strong are the bonds and relationships with one's family and friend. Especially the relationship with parents in the most important in predict one's future actions. *Commitment* describes the dedication one has in pursuing their goals and how this affects their ability to follow social norms. *Involvement* means the when one is involved in socially accepted activities, the more self-discipline one has to reject impulses of negative behavior. Being involved for example in school and hobbies strengthens one's ability to stay out of trouble, sort of speak. *Internalized belief* in the norms of society is the fourth factor in social bonding. (Wickert, 2022.)

There are various ways through which music-making may strengthen these social bonds and sense of belonging. Music enables people to come together, either listening or creating music, and have a shared experience that serves as a connecting force. Additionally, music has a strong influence in one's wellbeing and self-image. Steinbeis and Koelsch (2008) argue that music affects how people connect with each other because music has an impact on the part of the brain that involves empathy, trust and cooperation. Music has connected people already from the ancient times as they gathered

together to hear live music. This served also as a possibility to connect and coordinate with others, generating trust and cohesiveness, which was also important for survival (Tarr et al., 2014). As people listen to music together in a concert or a festival, they tend to feel more connected to those who are sharing the experience.

When performing music with others one also needs to connect with the other player or players. According to research, when making music together it brings positive social feelings towards those they are playing with because the attempt to harmonize with another, keep the beat and tune requires connecting (Tarr et al., 2014) even if the one they are playing with is not in the same room (Launay, 2014). Cooperation increases trust and even listening to happy music increases cooperative behavior (Kniffin, 2016) that increases social bonding and societal firmness. Theory of mind, which refers to understanding another persons' state of mind and predict their behavior was evolved from the need to gain social interactions where emphasizing played a substantial part (Seyfarth and Cheney, 2014). As music has the ability to increase empathy, (Rabinowitch et al., 2012) which is an ability that helps form strong social bonds, arguably it generates a favorable atmosphere to enhance interfaith relations. As previous research (Steinbeis and Koelsch, 2008; Tarr et al., 2014; Kniffin et al., 2016) demonstrates people have a need to connect and sync with others and music has provided the opportunity to come together. Music as a way of communicating has served as a platform for psychological theories (Stern, 2004; Malloch and Trevarthen, 2009). Communicative musicality describes how the human body communicates emotionally using expressions of the body and voice and timing these gestures with the other person much like the process of making music (Malloch and Trevarthen, 2009).

In a study by Steinbeis and Koelsch (2008) participants brain activity was measured by fMRI machines to see if their brain reacts differently when they were asked to listen to music composed either by a human or a computer. Both pieces were actually the same but when the participants thought they were listening to the piece composed by a human, the part of their brain that involves theory of mind, activated. The same did not happen when they listened to the piece thought to be composed by a computer. This suggests that the brain tries to also understand what is being communicated and not only process the sound. (Steinbeis and Koelsch, 2008.)

In an attempt to tackle social exclusion in Britain, a study by Welch (2014) and his team of researchers measured the correlation between singing development and social inclusion in children. Regardless of age, sex and ethnicity, the results showed that the higher the singing development score was the

better their sense of being socially included and positive self-image was. It is getting more difficult to deny the power that music-making has in various aspects of the human experience. In regards to the present study, music-making in a group to enhance social coherence and tolerance between different religious and cultural groups, is justifiable.

Several researchers have found that listening to music and making music increases social cohesion (Kivijärvi and Poutiainen, 2013; 2019, pp.9–14; Boer and Abubakar, 2014) in schools and students feel more satisfied with the climate of their school and overall had more positive attitudes (Spychiger et al., 1993; Eerola, 2013). Additionally, group music-making may have an effect on feelings of social inclusion (Minguella and Buchanan, 2009). A national study done in the UK (Welch et al., 2009) examined two-thousand children who were relatively more skilled and developed musically were also more likely to feel socially included. A similar kind of study done on the UK and Finland, (Rinta et al., 2011) that explored the connection between musical background and feelings of social inclusion, also came to the same conclusion that children that played an instrument or sang with their friends felt socially included especially when the activity was reoccurring.

In the scoping review issued by the World Health Organization (2019) on the evidence of arts improving health and wellbeing, several benefits were presented in the findings. In addition to art being helpful in preventing, treating and managing several health conditions (autism, dementia, Parkinson, diabetes, cancer, lung disease, stroke), according to the report, arts also serve as a way to reduce social inequalities and develop social cohesion

2.5 Aspects of music-making in a group setting

When making music, especially in a group, it offers opportunities to bond with others, gain cultural experiences, help social adjustment which may reduce prejudice and encourage social ethics to develop (Hallam 2012). Music-making may increase the production of our "happy hormones" and when one feels good in themselves and about themselves, they are less likely to think negatively about others. The benefits of actively making music are well known. Music-making has been linked to increased development of empathy and emotional sensitivity, psychological well-being, reduction of stress and anxiety, treating pain and other health conditions, enhancing self-development, and it offers opportunities for social bonding and cultural cohesion (Hallam 2012; Edekman and Harring, 2014; Fancourt D, Finn S., 2019). Social inclusion being a hot topic at the moment in Finland

(Opettaja, 19/22), interfaith and multicultural music-making may serve as a tool to support social cohesion and adjustment that has been shown to be successful also in refugee children (Marsh, 2012). To summarize, there are possibilities in joint music-making that support positive changes which may enhance several aspects in one's development and situation.
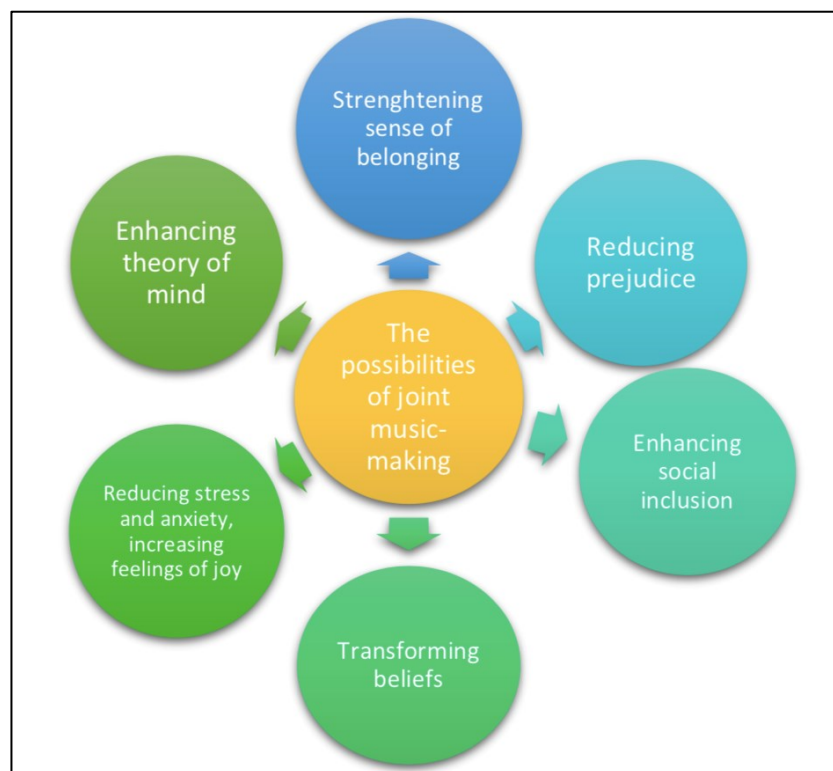
Figure 2. The possibilities of joint music-making.

When making-music in a group setting there are aspects to be considered from the viewpoint of the facilitator. How specific should the instructions be, and how much does the activity lean on the facilitator. Is the facilitator one with the participants when immersed in the activities or directing the activities. In music-making, by giving the participants the possibility to draw on their individual resources, and at the same time working together enables creativity (Henley, 2015, p. 4) as well as generating music that is in line with their abilities (Fautley, 2005). If an activity given to the participants is a task too difficult for them, this may result to the participants to feel unsafe and possibly not included in the group. Especially if other members "perform" better. When attempting to enhance intergroup relations by making music together in a group, it is important for the facilitator to keep in mind that the focus should not be in developing musical abilities.

**

Activities that use the participants names may enhance feelings of safety. Building a sense of togetherness, the facilitator should focus on creating encounters and interactions between the participants, using games and movements. (Huhtinen-Hildén and Pitt 2018, pp. 33–34.) A music teacher may use methods that they are not aware of. These are so-called silent methods and they can be beneficial or not. That is why it is important to understand and reflect on what choices one makes when facilitating a group and why. How a student teacher will interact with students is related to how they are able to reflect upon their beliefs about teaching and about themselves (Fallona and Richardson, 2001, p. 725). Developing pedagogical choices and actions as well as forming a professional identity relies on continuing reflective practice (Huhtinen-Hildén and Pitt, 2018, p. 196).

The atmosphere created in a classroom depends strongly on the relationship between the teacher and student (Toom, 2006, pp. 254–255) as well as between the facilitator and participant. In the teacher-student relationship the most important thing that can happen is that the student feels included and seen. Music has in itself the same basic elements than are present in a dialogue – different sounds, rhythms, dynamic changes and reciprocity. (Jordan-Kilkki et al., 2013, pp. 18–19.) The way a teacher or facilitator encounters their students or participants affects greatly how the individual feels belonged. Stopping to say hello and showing curiosity toward the participant, listening with patience, using eye-contact and first names, all affect the relationship between the facilitator and the atmosphere of the session. (Jordan-Kilkki et al., 2013, pp. 20–22.) Moreover, these elements also play a role in the effectiveness of music-making in reducing prejudice. When talking about interfaith dialogue, the word dialogue contains certain principles. In a dialogue one aims to create new ways to think and view matters. The goal is to achieve a common understanding and to acknowledge others. The central aspects of a dialogue are reciprocity, respect, equality and openness. (Haarakangas, 2008, pp. 25–26.)

The leader's role is to make sure that everyone from the group are invited to the dialogue to assure fairness (Huhtinen-Hildén and Pitt, 2018, p. 34) and to insure inclusiveness. However, while the responsibility leader in creating an excepting and inclusive atmosphere lies in the, it is not achieved by holding too tightly on the reins. The participants ownership of their experience and learning may affect feelings of inclusion. If the participant is an active participant, this may help generate feelings of inclusiveness more than being a passive participant. By active participant, I mean one who is actively immersing in the musical activity, whether singing, playing, moving, listening or tapping. Participating passively means that one might restrain from actively participating in the musical activities and contributing content of their own. This may be caused by the lack of confidence one

**

has in their abilities, shyness, concerns of criticism or a lack of need to contribute (Lev-On and Adler, 2013). To ensure safety, trust and inclusiveness, it is beneficial to allow the participant to choose their level of participating while ensuring to include everyone in the activities. The Finnish culture is often described as reserved and the Finnish people as shy, which may influence how a person from a different group feels included in the Finnish society. This may also be a challenge, when working with an interfaith group where the participants come from different cultural backgrounds and are used to certain ways of interacting. How to break the barriers while ensuring that everyone feels comfortable?

Additionally, the role of the facilitator or teacher is crucial for the method of interfaith music-making to actually enhance intergroup relations and promote interfaith harmony. The teacher's authentic enthusiasm to enhance intergroup relations affects the efficiency of the intervention. (Mäkinen et al., 2022.) Students observe their teachers' intergroup attitudes and behaviors both at the spoken and un-spoken levels (Castelli et al., 2008; Greelings et al., 2019) and what interestingly found by Ülger et al. (2008) was that when interventions aimed to reduce prejudice were conducted by teachers were usually less effective than interventions conducted by a researcher. This suggests that the perceived engagement or disengagement has an effect on the impact of the intervention and should not be over-looked (Mäkinen et al., 2022). Going forward if attempting to integrate an interfaith music-making program to the Finnish basic education, this factor or problem should be examined thoroughly.

Liisa Laitinen (2017) defines the links between culture and well-being in her book Vaikuttavaa, and examines how to measure the impact of art. According to Laitinen, the question of well-being is essentially related to what is considered to be a good life and what it consists of (eudaimonic well-being). However, Laitinen notes that the definition of well-being is socially and culturally bound and thus the debate is always based on some values and norms. (Laitinen, 2017, pp. 18–25.)

It is difficult to measure the impact of art or music, however according to research by Grape (2003), singing for even thirty minutes increases oxytocin levels significantly. In this research the oxytocin levels were measured both in amateur and professional singers and even if the experience did not generate feelings of joy, oxytocin levels increased in both groups. Music and singing have been used to promote health and wellbeing in many ways. According to research by Nilsson (2009) also listening to music increased oxytocin levels and enhanced relaxation in patients coming from surgery. The patients listened to relaxing music for thirty minutes one day after the surgery and only this short exposer to music promoted their overall wellbeing and enhanced recovery.

**

To help women in coping with birthing pains, singing and music have been important tools in reducing the pain of contractions. According to music therapist Lilah Pittmann (2020) labor pains can be reduced by using music as a stimulus, tricking your brain to perceive pain less. There is already a lot of previous research (Bergh and Sloboda, 2010; Greitemeyer and Schwab, 2014) supporting the use of music-making especially in a group setting to be beneficial when enhancing intergroup relations. Some research also found that using targeted music to reduce prejudice and affect attitudes may be even more effective, (Bodner and Gilboa, 2009; Neto et al., 2015; 2018) however this has been examined much less than the overall effect of music or music-making supporting intergroup relations. Research examining the effect of interfaith music-making in reducing prejudice and affecting attitudes are rear and arguably needed. The current study explores the factors that affect interfaith relations when using interfaith music-making as an approach.

3   Implementation of the study

In this chapter I will go through the implementation of the study. I start with the research task and question and continue examining research methodological starting points and the methods of data collection and data analysis in the project. The research ethics and the researcher's position will also be presented in this chapter.

3.1   Research task and question

The aim of my research is to examine the potential of joint music-making for interfaith dialogue and to promote interfaith harmony. The context for the study is a diverse group of adults consisting of people from different religious and cultural backgrounds. The purpose of the study is to promote intergroup harmony in and through interfaith music-making. My research question is: "How engaging in interfaith music-making may reduce prejudice and transform beliefs among people from different cultural or religious backgrounds?"

3.2   Methodological approach

Methodologically, the research is an empirical qualitative case study, where the participants' experiences are in focus. In a qualitative case study, one explores phenomena by identifying different elements that are interacting with each other (Baxter and Jack, 2010; Leavy 2017). Qualitative research interprets phenomena of the world in a naturalistic manner (Creswell, 1998). In the current study the participants experiences were in focus and examining what factors within the interfaith music-making group sessions may affect attitude-change and prejudice reduction.

Using the qualitative case study as a research method enabled me to explore the effects of interfaith music-making in relation to prejudice. In addition to being the researcher, I was also a teacher and observer of what generated during the workshops and after. Methodologically, a qualitative case study is a suitable approach for this research as the participants experiences were explored when using interfaith music as a way of communicating in an interfaith group and how this may have influenced in transforming beliefs. Inspired by research examining the possibilities of using music as a way to promote intergroup relations and reduce prejudice, (Bodner and Gilboa, 2009; Bodner and Bergman,

**

2017; Neto et al., 2018) I wanted to explore what kind of experiences would a short exposure to interfaith music generate in people coming from different religious backgrounds.

During November and December of 2021, I wrote my research plan and started to invite participants to the workshops through different networks, including social media, religious communities and interfaith organizations. Searching for literature that would support my topic, started in the fall of 2021, and has been continuous throughout the writing process. The conceptual framework started to mainly take its form after data analysis, however in the early months of 2022, I already started the writing process of the Thesis as well as the planning of the interfaith workshops. I invited the Middle East Music Company musicians to teach in the workshops and started to plan each part of the two 90-minute workshops with the teachers. Before the sessions, participant information sheet was sent to all participants, and before the sessions started, all of the participants signed a consent form.

3.3 Data collection

The data for this research was collected in form of questionnaires the participants answered before and after the workshops as well as interviewing four participants in a semi-structured interview that was conducted face-to-face. These interviews were also recorded.

Inviting participants

I was aware that it could be challenging to find participants from different religious backgrounds for this kind of a study, especially as I wanted participants with little or no previous musical studies. Musicians are usually open to experiment with music, and this openness to experience correlates also with how they relate to other people in an approachable way (Greenberg, 2015). Without any prior musical training, the music-making factor of the experience, would be equally new for the participants.

Along with wanting participants with little musical background, I was also hoping to find participants that were not so much involved with people from different religious backgrounds. I felt that this selective method would give a more of an honest picture of underlying prejudice and how interfaith music could reduce these kinds of attitudes. What I was faced with was that people were either shy about the fact that they would have to sing or play something, or conscious about the interfaith context. I first started trying to invite participants from different organizations, for example the

**

Evangelic Lutheran Church, the Jewish Community in Helsinki, as well as Muslim communities and organizations, to reach the right audience that could participate in the workshops. Both Jewish and Christian associations were willing to pass on the information to their members, and a few participants signed up from these communities. I also posted a Facebook advertisement in various of international groups, and some participants joined this way. I contacted the Young Muslims in Finland organization, but they were adamant of not giving the information forward to their members. They responded that music is not allowed in Islam, and although they are aware that Muslim individuals make their own choices, they will not as an organization go against the law of Islam. The response was on the other hand expected, but on the other hand not. I was aware that in some interpretations, music was not allowed in Islam, but what I did not take into consideration was that a Finnish organization, not seemingly religious, was so strictly under the religious regulations. Some Muslims believe that Islam forbids music. It is an issue that is debated and has interpretations (Rashid, 2022).

Nevertheless, it was disappointing as the absence of Muslim participants would, in my opinion, undermine the relevance of the study. Since the main idea of my thesis was to promote interfaith dialogue, if I am lacking participants from one of the main monotheistic religions, and a community that is considered to be exclusive, the experience would be shallow. Fortunately, word to mouth was more successful, and I managed to find two Muslim participants to attend the workshops. In the end eleven participants from Jewish, Christian, Muslim and non-Faith backgrounds participated in the interfaith music workshops on May 2022. The Jewish and Muslim participants were a minority in the group, majority being Christian or of non-Faith. Although some of the participants did not consider themselves as part of a religious community, everyone had some religion attached to their upbringing, even if they did not actively practice or described themselves as being of non-Faith or deconverts. The participants were male and female adults, in a range from thirty to sixty years old.

3.3.1 The workshops

The two ninety-minute interfaith music workshops were led by the Middle East Music Company musicians, who are also experienced teachers. The Middle East Music Company consists of two Muslim musicians originally from Syria (Burhan and Mouafak), an Evangelic Lutheran cantor, opera singer and music pedagogue (Matti) and myself, a Jewish singer and a music pedagogue. During the workshops the participants were taught religious and cultural music from Jewish, Muslim, Christian and Finnish traditions.

**

The workshops were held in Helsinki in May, 2022. The space was an auditorium with tables and chairs in rows facing a canvas that was on a platform. Because of the nature of the workshop, the space was organized so that the participants were sitting next to each other in the shape of a half-moon. The teachers were on the far-right of the half-moon facing the participants. In the middle there was a clear space which made it possible to stand and move a little bit with the participants. Placing the teachers on the platform and the participants lower on the floor would have possible been less intimate, and maybe even intimidating for the participants. Setting the chairs next to each other on the same row and on the same level created a more intimate and inclusive atmosphere. There was also a beautiful Grand Piano in the corner facing the participants chairs where one of the teachers, Matti, would play and facilitate his part of the sessions. The workshops were mainly conducted in English with some translations in Finnish and Arabic. All of the participants spoke English, so it was a natural choice. The songs that were taught in the workshops included songs in Arabic, Hebrew, Yiddish and Finnish.

As the participants were coming to the space one by one Matti and Mouafak started improvising with the piano and violin, setting the mood with relaxing and comforting Middle Eastern style music. I welcomed the participants personally, gave them the material for the sessions and led them to choose their own place in the circle. The session started with a brief recap on the structure and the aim of the sessions and the introduction of the teachers.

In the beginning of both the sessions, I lead a warm-up with breathing exercises, some physical activities like stretching and a vocal warm-up with vocal slides using different vowels. The aim of the warm-ups was to root the participants to the moment, create a relaxing moment to decrease possible anxiety the participants may have felt in this unknown situation. Before starting to familiarize with the songs of the workshop, we did a round where everyone shared their first name and an adjective that started with the first letter of their name, describing themselves or how they felt in this moment. After this I introduced some of the melodies by humming them together or using vowels. Each one of the musicians from the Middle East Music company took the lead to teach songs from their culture. Burhan and Mouafak taught two songs from the Arabic culture – a secular song called Lammabada and a religious song called Tala'a Al Badru 'Alayna. Addition to this, they introduced the participants to some of the harmonies used in Arabic music which are different from Western music. Arabic music comes from different parts of the Middle East and it is secular music. Matti taught Evangelic Lutheran hymns, 916 and 918, as well as some folk songs from the Finnish culture. He also opened up the meanings of the hymns and their history. Christian music is religious

music, because Christianity is a religion and not a culture or an ethnicity, however Matti also taught a few Finnish Folk songs to introduce a piece of the Finnish culture which is closely linked to the Evangelic Lutheran Church.

During the sessions I taught Hebrew songs, Kol Haolam Kulo and Shalom Alechem, that welcomes angels into the home on Shabbat – the day of rest. Another Jewish song, Chiribim Chiribom, that I introduced during the workshops is a secular song from the East European, Ashkenazi Jews. This song is in Yiddish which was, and in some places still is, the language of the Ashkenazi Jews. Judaism is a religion, but also a culture because the Jews are a nation and an ethnoreligious group. There are Ashkenazi Jews with an East-European ethnicity, Sephardic Jews who originate from Spain and speak Ladino, as well as Mizrahi Jews who come from the Middle East and North Africa, and share Hebrew as their language. Jews are not a homogenic group, but share a language, a culture, music, traditions and even a religion which is the definition of an ethnicity (Britannica). The Jewish blessings and prayers are often sung in the religious services because it is believed that music brings one closer to G-d. Even though instruments are not used in the religious services some of the songs and blessings that Jews sing in the Synagogue are also sung in a secular setting.

3.3.2 Questionnaires and interviews

Because of the sensitive subject I pondered whether I would get more honest and open responses via e-mail or in a face-to-face situation. In the end I decided to send a questionnaire before the workshops started, and then one after the workshops had ended. Prior to the workshops the participants were asked to write a few thoughts about their expectations for the workshops, and how they felt this interfaith music-making approach could help to reduce prejudice (Appendix 1). The answers were sent to the Metropolia University of Applied Sciences outlook and deleted after analysis. The participants received the questions in two languages, Finnish and English, and they could choose in which language to respond in.

Additionally, the interviewees could also choose the language in which the interview was conducted. The responses came in both languages and one of the interviews was conducted in Finnish. The rest were in English. I interviewed four participants face-to-face. The interviews were semi-structured and conducted in a time span of two weeks after the second workshop had ended. I recorded the interviews. The participants that were interviewed face-to face represented all three monotheistic religions- Judaism, Islam and Christianity.

**

One interview lasted from thirty minutes to sixty minutes and there were fourteen questions altogether. First questions were introductory questions, where the participants were able to share about their background and ethnicity, as well as their views on other groups, if they wished to. The second part of the questions dived into the workshops and the participants experiences, the last part was about the broader aspects, and how the interfaith music-making approach could work or not in reducing prejudice, in the participants point of view (Appendix 2).

3.4 Data analysis

The study is data-driven and so the process started by first organizing the data and transcribing the audio tracks of the interviews. The method chosen for this study to analyze the data is inductive thematic analysis. Inductive thematic analysis approach is suitable for this study since no preselected theoretical categories were brought into the analysis process. (Creswell, 1998; Taylor and Bogdan, 1998; Tuomi and Sarajärvi, 2018.) The process of coding and grouping is introduced in the code scheme.

Table 1. Code Scheme. This demonstrates how the data-driven thematic analysis process was conducted, what codes were used and how they were grouped together.

"Expecting accepting atmosphere, new rhythms, new ways to express myself." "To learn about the cultures and music styles that are not familiar to me."	Participants were expecting to learn about new cultures and music styles as well as expressing themselves in an accepting atmosphere	Curiosity Open-minded Group activities Learning about cultures and music	EXPECTATIONS
"Before we didn't think music can bring the different religions together, now after we see that music can affect the culture and religions, it can bring them together." "Before I thought that you can't sing in languages you don't speak, but it was good to see that you don't always need to	Participants didn't think that music could bring different religions together or that you can sing songs without knowing the language but these beliefs changed after the workshops	Prejudice Views widening New perspectives Prior beliefs Change Unite Surprising experiences	TRANSFORMING BELIEFS

**

understand all the words and just try to sing."			
"There was something totally common that connects everybody and maybe I don't get the language totally but it doesn't matter because I felt the same as others were feeling." "The second workshop was somehow very empowering. I can't specify why, perhaps some kind of "teaming" happened since it was the second time."	Participants shared common feelings with others without a shared language and felt that the collaboration within the group was empowering.	Teaming Togetherness Collaboration Connecting Empathy Theory of mind Cohesion Respect Trust Evoking emotions	SENSE OF BELONGING
"I felt a good energy and all the muscles are relaxing." "That day something like nasty happened to me and I was so happy when we did these basic breathing and I was like ooh this already feels nice."	Participants felt that the experience was relaxing with good energy as well as breathing exercises helped in shifting the mood after a difficult experience	Joyful Stress reduction Relaxing Exhilarating Grounding	HEALTH AND WELLBEING
"Now after experiencing this I can say to someone being negative that I know these people and it's not true." "This could be a national program, kindergartens schools, high schools. If you don't fill the kids head with good stuff it will be full with negative stuff."	Participant felt that after the sessions they would stand up against racism and prejudice. Another suggested, that this kind of a program would be beneficial in schools to reduce prejudice	Snow-ball effect Subjective experience "Defending" others Taking responsibility to tackle racism Reducing prejudice and racism Needed in schools	"SPREAD THE LOVE"

After transcribing the interviews, notes were made on the first thoughts that came to mind while listening to the interviews and reading the transcript. Some participants also answered the interview questions via e-mail. These responses were analyzed in the same matter as the interviews. Keeping the research question in mind, I started coding the passages that best responded the research question. After coding the passages, I categorized the group of codes and gave them titles which are examined in the Findings chapter.

**

3.5 Research ethics

Research ethics are a set of common rules that are in relation to participants, colleagues, investors, employer and the general public (Vilkka, 2021). A research process is tightly connected to research ethics and following guidelines for ethical practice. In an ethically sound research the researcher commits to follow the guidelines of responsible conduct (Tuomi and Sarajärvi, 2018). These guidelines follow the research process all the way from the start to the finish.

The Finnish Advisory Board on Research Integrity (TENK), appointed by The Ministry of Education and Culture, guidelines for ethical research were published in 2012 in co-operation with the Finnish research community. The aim of the guidelines is to enhance responsible conduct of research and to make sure that any violations are handled ethically. (TENK, 2012.)

Guidelines for responsible research according to the TENK (2012) guidelines:

1. The research follows the principles that are endorsed by the research community, that is, integrity, meticulousness, and accuracy in conducting research, and in recording, presenting, and evaluating the research results.
2. The methods applied for data acquisition as well as for research and evaluation, conform to scientific criteria and are ethically sustainable. When publishing the research results, the results are communicated in an open and responsible fashion that is intrinsic to the dissemination of scientific knowledge.
3. The researcher takes due account of the work and achievements of other researchers by respecting their work, citing their publications appropriately, and by giving their achievements the credit and weight they deserve in carrying out the researcher's own research and publishing its results.
4. The researcher complies with the standards set for scientific knowledge in planning and conducting the research, in reporting the research results and in recording the data obtained during the research.
5. The necessary research permits have been acquired and the preliminary ethical review that is required for certain fields of research has been conducted.
6. Before beginning the research or recruiting the researchers, all parties within the research project or team (the employer, the principal investigator, and the team members) agree on the researchers' rights, responsibilities, and obligations, principles concerning authorship, and

**

questions concerning archiving and accessing the data. These agreements may be further specified during the course of the research.

7. Sources of financing, conflicts of interest or other commitments relevant to the conduct of research are announced to all members of the research project and reported when publishing the research results.

8. Researchers refrain from all research-related evaluation and decision-making situations, when there is reason to suspect a conflict of interest.

9. The research organization adheres to good personnel and financial administration practices and takes into account the data protection legislation.

National Board on Research Integrity (TENK) updated the guidelines in 2019 focusing on how to conduct an ethically sound research involving human participants. The ethical principles of research with human participants and ethical review in the human sciences in Finland (TENK, 2019) stated:

1. The researcher respects the dignity and autonomy of human research participants. The rights laid down in the Finnish Constitution (1999/731, Sections 6–23) are held by everybody. These include the right to life, personal liberty and integrity, freedom of movement, freedom of religion and conscience, freedom of expression, protection of property and the right to privacy.

2. The researcher respects material and immaterial cultural heritage and biodiversity. In accordance with Section 17 of the Finnish Constitution, the Sami, as an indigenous people, as well as the Roma and other groups, have the right to maintain and develop their own language and culture.

3. The researcher conducts their research so that the research does not cause significant risks, damage or harm to research participants, communities or other subjects of research.

Participants in the current study were adults so parental permission was not needed. The research process followed research ethics guidelines of the National Board on Research Integrity (TENK, 2012). Data collection and research permits were signed before the workshops by all participants. Participants were informed that they had the right to leave the research process at any time without explanations. The data was collected to Metropolia University of Applied Sciences' secured cloud service. All permits were kept in a secure place. Participants had anonymity throughout the process. The workshops were inclusive, free and anyone over 18 years old could attend, from any ethnicity and/or religion. Facilitators were prepared to conduct the workshops in three languages (Finnish, English, Arabic). The research aimed to be respectful of the different ethnicities and religious groups

participating in the research. Additionally, when selecting the dates for the workshops, the religious holidays of all participants were taken in to account when planning the schedule. The participants were informed in detail about the process to ensure that all participants felt comfortable about the process.

Additionally, there were no conflict of interests or commitments relevant to the conduct of research and the research was conducted with integrity and respect for the research community as well as the participants. The literature of the current study was chosen by focusing on scientific research as well as other quality publications to familiarize with all research relating to music enhancing intergroup and interfaith relations, music in a wider social context, the history of prejudice and the state of racism and antisemitism today. Furthermore, literature that contained information of all the groups involved with the research, was chosen to support the ethicality of the research.

3.5.1 The researcher's position

When a researcher is part of the community they are examining, it is natural that their values and beliefs affect the choices made during the process. (Tilkka, 2021). According to Tuomi and Sarajärvi (2002, p.133) when the trustworthiness of a research is being reviewed impartiality perspective should be considered. Transparency builds an ethically sound research which is why my own position as a researcher, is important to address. A researcher's personal interests, values, experiences and previous research are the driving motivations behind the topic chosen for a research (Leavy, 2017, p.54), which is very natural. In order to describe my position in relation to this research, I want share about my own background and why I ended up choosing the subject of enhancing interfaith relations using interfaith music-making as the approach. A driving motivation for this research has been the fact that I am a Finnish Jew and a musician specialized in Jewish music. Addition to being Finnish, my father's family comes from Latvia and Belarus and we are Ashkenazi (East European) Jews. My grandmother's family was killed by the Nazis in Latvia during WWII. My grandmother had five siblings, but she was the only one who survived. My grandfather's family came to Finland already in the 19th century, hence our family is one of the oldest Jewish families in Finland.

The horrors of the Holocaust are known and present in the lives of many Jews to this day. Some gave up Jewish practice altogether in fear of persecution, some leaned on the religious practices even more. Even in Finland, many Jews do not openly live Jewish lives or share their Jewish background, partly

because they fear it will lead to discrimination and prejudice. A fear that, worryingly, seems to be a rational one as antisemitism is on the highest levels in centuries, in most parts of the world.

One might ask if my view of this subject is narrow because of my own experiences and background. This is something that I kept in mind during the process and reflected with colleagues. It is important to be aware of your own prejudices, especially those you are not aware of, and understand that they may exist. On the other hand, I feel my understanding of belonging to a minority, having been the target of antisemitism and racism, helped me keep an open mind and give an understanding to the viewpoints of another minority, and the struggles they might have. Addition to this, being Finnish and being able to relate also to the culture of the majority of participants in the research, was beneficial in my opinion, in promoting intergroup relations. I feel that the fight against prejudice is a common one and should be confronted in unison.

My own work in promoting interfaith relations with music started in 2009 and continues to this day. I started with my band, SHEINE ITE, that creates music using old Jewish texts and musical styles as a basis. Addition to this, the music is influenced by Arabic music, Finnish music and is a mixture of music styles and languages all coming together in harmony. A few years ago, I joined the Middle East Music Company in which three musicians from three religions come together to make music and promote interfaith harmony.

There is a lot of work yet to be done to enhance intergroup relations. The more I work with people from other religions and cultures, the more I feel a connection, and find that there are more similarities than differences between us. The more one gains positive experiences of interfaith dialogue the more similarities there is to find. As there are challenges in bringing people from diverse backgrounds together in a meaningful way, being respectful and open will help in the process. Additionally, music-making in its self is a practice that may generate trust and openness, which makes it a great method to achieve a purposeful result. These reflections guided me through this research process in reaching an ethically sound research process.

4 Findings

In an increasingly diverse world, enhancing intergroup relations enhances inclusiveness and sense of belonging. The aim of my research was to examine the potential of joint music-making for interfaith dialogue as well as promoting interfaith harmony. The context for the study was a diverse group of adults consisting of people from different religious and cultural backgrounds. In this Findings chapter I will attempt to answer my research question which was: How engaging in interfaith music-making may affect attitudes and reduce prejudice between people from different cultural or religious backgrounds?

The participants' experience during and after the interfaith music-making workshops are in focus. The passages of the data analysis were sorted into five themes: Participants expectations and backgrounds; Transforming beliefs; Sense of belonging; Health and wellbeing; "Spread the love". I will be using pseudonyms for the participants instead of real names to respect anonymity. The pseudonyms are all Finnish names to insure, that also the participants ethnicity and backgrounds stay anonymous.

4.1 Participants expectations and backgrounds

The participants had mainly a native Finnish background, with two Muslim participants and one Jewish participant originally from Israel. One participant was originally from Russia, but mainly the group had a Finnish speaking majority. The Finnish participants had an Evangelic Lutheran or Laestadian background. The participants who were not born in Finland had different experiences when asked how included they felt in the Finnish society. One participant felt that there are unspoken rules in Finland and that integrating is hard even though they study the language and have a Finnish passport. They felt that Finland is a homogenic society and even though they are making the effort to integrate, they are not feeling included.

Some participants who had fled from war felt Finland gave them new possibilities:

> In Finland there is freedom to say what you want and do what you want inside the rules, you can learn a lot of things. When we came to Finland it was green and nice and the Finnish people were nice. (Mikko)

**

Another participant felt that in their workplace, they were received positively and with curiosity as well as people wanting to help them to find their place in the Finnish society. Additionally, many Finnish participants expressed honestly that their circle of friends is homogenic and includes of mostly other Finnish people, their in-group (Tajfel, 1979).

However, many participants expressed that they would like to have friends from other cultures and religions to richen their environment: "My inner circle includes only people who belong to the Evangelic Lutheran church or have resigned from it. I have a positive attitude towards other people and have found my circle of friends to be one-sided." (Paula)

A few participants described having been a target of prejudice and antisemitism. Both a Jewish participant and a non-Jewish participant, with a "Jewish-sounding" name, had faced antisemitism before (Mcleod, 2019; Rauta, 2022; Antisemitism World Wide Report, 2021). One participant thought that there is hidden antisemitism in Finland as well as, the accepting of Nazi flags in demonstration was disturbing to them.

The participants answered a questionnaire before the workshops to express their expectations for the upcoming group sessions. The word *curious* occurred several times in the responses of the participants both before and after the workshops. Additionally, the word *together* occurred twenty times in the responses of the participants. Before the sessions many participants expressed curiousness to the different musical styles that would be taught during the sessions as well as meeting the facilitating musicians with diverse backgrounds. The participants expressed that they were enthusiastically awaiting musical activities that would be done together: "On top of curiosity I like making things together and I think I can safely expect that." (Iiro)

For many participants, connecting with others and creating something as a group was clearly an important expectation for the workshops. The workshops were held at a time after COVID-restrictions were lifted and people were again starting to gather and this was also present in the participants answers as they were longing to connect with others and being a part of a group (Tarr et al., 2014). Many were expecting to learn new things, to make music together and to have fun. Most of the participants described coming to the interfaith music workshops with an open-mind, wanting to learn from others and about the different cultures as well as to connect with other people: "Together we are world citizens who can enrich each other's world of experience." (Aaro)

**

Several participants described being curious to meet the teachers who all represented a different faith and/or culture: "I would like to meet musicians from different backgrounds, listen to their life story, learn some new insights form them and above all listen to them play and collaborate with other musicians." (Jaakko)

4.2 Transforming beliefs

The study explored the participant's experiences on the potential of joint music-making in an interfaith context and how the approach could reduce prejudice. Many of the participants expressed a softer attitude and curiosity toward the other groups involved in the interfaith music-making workshops and started seeing people and not the stereotypes (Tajfel and Turner, 1979; Mcleod, 2019): "When you get to see with your own eyes that not every Jew or Muslim hate each other, you start seeing people and not just politics or culture." (Kaija)

Many felt that their personal experience in the interfaith music-making sessions and interactions, expanded their outlook on the groups involved in the sessions (Wielzen and Avest, 2017; Neto et al. 2018; Rockenbach et al., 2020; Mayhew and Rockenbach, 2021). Several participants described being surprised several times during the sessions, when learning about the different music styles and cultures. One participant was surprised that Jewish music was so joyful and fun as their prior belief was that Jewish people were more of a serious group of scholars: "I have wondered regarding Judaism, about the meaning of the Old testament in modern times and also concerning Islam, how these old texts are alive in the lives of these people. This has been strange to me." (Sari)

The media coverage of Israel and the Middle East seemed to have affected some of the participants views especially towards Jews (Das et al., 2009; Shaver et al., 2017). Several participants felt that the exposure of Israel related news enhanced negative feelings toward the Jewish people (Schwarz-Friesel, 2019): "The media coverage of what is happening in the Middle East somewhat affects how I perceive also the Jewish people. Although I know it should not, but it does affect."

Several participants mentioned that news exposure about outgroups affected their perception of those groups in a negative way. A participant expressed that watching TV and reading negative news about groups that are in conflict over and over again, affects the way they feel and talk about these groups. (Das et al., 2009; Shaver et al., 2017.) During the interviews some of the participants felt that they had faced prejudice attitudes before, even without a "reason". One participant, who was not Jewish

but nevertheless a target of antisemitic remarks because their maiden name sounded Jewish, described feeling like: "Being bullied for something that isn't even true". (Kaija) The participant also said that they do not use their maiden name anymore even after divorce because they fear discrimination.

Although, most participants expressed coming to the workshops with curiosity and described being open-minded, were still surprised how the experience made them question their prior beliefs about some of the groups and cultures involved. Some participants expressed that the experience made them think differently about especially the Jews and the Muslims and their views softened in result of the interfaith music-making group sessions (Bodner and Gilboa, 2009; Odena, 2016; Bodner and Bergman, 2017; Neto et al., 2018). Feelings of surprise occurred also in another participant who noticed how much they enjoyed learning the Arabic songs even though they thought before that it would be too hard for them to learn. The participant felt that they wanted to continue learning about this style more in the future.

Moreover, a few participants thought it was nice and somehow empowering to sing together with the Muslim participants, since they felt that the portrayal of Muslims in the media was also mostly negative (Das et al. 2009; Shaver et al., 2017): "In a way, the media's image of Muslims in particular is sometimes quite negative for Finns, so somehow singing with them was good in that sense." (Johannes)

After the group sessions some participants started to question their prior attitudes, also the unknown ones, and *Sari* expressed that the interfaith music-making experience made them "think more open-mindedly" (Wielzen and Avest, 2017; Rockenbach et al., 2020; Mayhew and Rockenbach, 2021). Addition to this, almost all participants thought that interfaith music-making approach was an effective way to reduce prejudice and racism (Bodner and Bilboa, 2009; Neto et al., 2015; 2018; Odena, 2016).

In the participants experiences the style of the music and the songs chosen made a difference in the way they felt. Starting the workshops with happy songs seemed to have a bonding effect (Kniffin et al., 2016). During the workshops, I observed how singing these joyful songs were bringing the group together and generating communality (Hallam, 2012; Tarr et al., 2014). After these songs they looked at each other more and laughed together, some participants even leaned towards others or moved closer to the person next to them. Going forward in the second workshop and while singing emotional Finnish folk songs, some participants were empathizing with others as they shared how they were feeling the same emotions as others in the group (Premack and Woodruff, 1978; Steinbeis and

**

Koelsch, 2008; Rabinowitch et al., 2012): "The Finnish women looked sad singing the songs and that made me feel sad." (Kaija)

Many of the participants also felt music was non-discriminatory and a good way to learn about other cultures (Odena, 2016) as well as suggesting that an interfaith music-making should be implemented in schools to reduce-prejudice (Marsh, 2012; Neto et al., 2015; 2018). Almost all participants thought that the sessions were a good start to enhance intergroup relations but for the method to reduce prejudice or change attitudes, a longer period would be needed.

4.3 Sense of Belonging

Inclusiveness is an important factor when aiming to enhance interfaith or intergroup relations. To enable the participants to feel like they belonged to the group, creating a welcoming atmosphere was essential (Jordan-Kilkki et al., 2013). As the participants entered the space, the musicians were already playing background music, it was improvised and not planned in advance. It set the mood nicely and also shifted the focus away from the participants coming to the space one by one and the all participants reported feeling welcomed. Clear instructions and stating expectations helped enhanced trust and sense of safety according to several participants: "Instructors created a safe atmosphere saying that everything will be done with the group and explained what was expected." (Kaija)

Some participants were afraid that musical abilities would be expected, even though the instructions beforehand stated clearly that previous musical training was not needed. One participant mentioned that with the clear instructions and music-making that was in-line with their abilities (Fautley, 2005), they felt comfortable and relaxed to join the musical activities with the rest of the group. During the group sessions, the participants and the teachers communicated mainly through music, which helped to strengthen mutual respect and understanding between the participants (Haarakangas, 2008). Without sharing any other information about themselves, the participants joined in a game where they shared their first names and an adjective that started with the same letter as their name. This activity helped to enhance feelings of safety (Huhtinen-Hildén and Pitt, 2018). Creating a safe and trusting atmosphere was important for the participant to start opening up for the experience.

Especially the Muslim and Jewish participants stated that it felt good when others were singing or trying to sing "our" music (Bodner and Bergman, 2017). The participants felt respected by the "in-

**

group" which strengthened their sense of belonging (Minguella and Buchanan, 2009): "It was beautiful when others were singing the Arabic songs". (Ari)

Additionally, many of the participants reported thinking that music and music-making together is an effective approach to reduce prejudice and transform beliefs (Bodner and Gilboa, 2009; Neto et al., 2015; Bodner and Bergman, 2017) since it connects strongly with an individual's emotions (Steinbeis and Koelsch, 2008; Kniffin et al., 2016).

The word *feel* occurred thirty-one times in the responses of the participants and especially in the interviews and questionnaires after the workshops, as the participants described emotions that the sessions brought up. Even though many participants did not necessarily understand the lyrics of the songs (Odena, 2016), several expressed feeling the same emotions as others while singing the songs in the workshops (Premack and Woodruff, 1979; Rabinowitch et al., 2012). As music is shown to increase empathy, trust and cooperation (Steinbeis and Koelsch, 2008), participants expressed that singing together in an interfaith environment was empowering, opening and a transformative experience: "Music speaks to our emotions. If we express and share our feelings through music, we open up ways to understand each other as individuals and as a group. Music connects to our identity and habits". (Sari)

The participant felt that singing and making-music together generated feelings of empathy (Steinbeis and Koelsch, 2008; Rabinowitch et al., 2012; Seyfarth and Cheney, 2014) towards others and participants were showing theory of mind when describing feeling what others were feeling even without a common language (Odena, 2016).

Addition to music-making enhancing interfaith harmony, some participants thought that making-music in a group setting was important in bringing positive feelings toward one another (Tarr et al., 2014) and enhancing sense of belonging (Minguella and Buchanan, 2009) as well as developing empathy towards. The participants were not musicians, some had musical hobbies, however almost all participants felt music was a powerful way to impact emotions others (Steinbeis and Koelsch, 2008; Rabinowitch et al., 2012;) in a way that would reduce prejudice and promote interfaith harmony.

Observing the participants as they were attempting to learn a song that at first was difficult, they started to lean on the other participants. Listening, swaying in the same direction and "performing a

**

task" together without words. The participants were moving in the same way when doing the singing exercises, they were observing others and listening carefully in an attempt to sync. (Mallorch and Trevarthen, 2009.) This generated feelings of trust and familiarity towards one another (Tarr et al., 2014; Kniffin et al., 2016). Music seems to be the center piece that enables others to safely, without being the focus of attention, to gather around it together and engage, if they are inclined to do so: "Music is like a campfire where it's safe and enchanting to gather around". (Anton)

Several participants felt that one of the most important factors in the music-making sessions was the feeling of cohesion and connection with the other participants (Minguella and Buchanan, 2009; Kivijärvi and Poutiainen, 2019) as well as the interfaith environment. Some participants had never been in the same room with a Jewish person or a Muslim, although all had some knowledge of all of the groups. There are many countries in the world where different religions cannot interact together or are in conflict with each other (European Commission, 2019; World Watch 2020). For some, even the possibility to sing together with a member of another religion was meaningful: "We were together three religions singing and listening and it was so beautiful." (Mikko)

The word *different* occurred twenty-three times in the responses of the participants. However, some pointed out how similar the energy was in the Jewish and Arabic songs compared to the more serious and sad Evangelic Lutheran hymns. In many responses the Jewish and Muslim portion of the sessions were regarded as one as the Evangelic Lutheran part was another. There was a division between these styles and cultures in the eyes of the participants, especially the Finnish participants. In some way some of the participants seemed to categorize the minorities (Jews and Muslims) to another group and the majority to another, searching for similarities and differences (Tajfel and Turner, 1979; Mcleod, 2019). However, the categorizing seemed to come from positive curiosity and willingness to learn from the other groups.

The searching of similarities and differences continued when the participants were describing the different music. The Finnish participants described the Jewish and Muslim portions to be more uplifting in comparison to a more serious or authoritarian style of the Evangelic Lutheran portion. In the participants' point of view the styles of some of the teachers and music styles helped them engage in a deeper level (Toom, 2006; Jordan-Kilkki et al. 2013). As the majority of participants were Finnish with a background and familiarity with Christian traditions, this may have had an effect on the way they felt when singing Evangelic Lutheran hymns and the Finnish Folk songs as well as the style altogether. Nevertheless, "the new" was interesting to all participants. The Muslim participants felt that it was interesting to learn about the Christian hymns which were unfamiliar to them before.

**

Whether the unfamiliar culture or religion was the Jewish, Muslim or Christian, participants expressed positive curiosity toward the music of the out-group.

There was some contradiction on the experiences of the participants when they expressed what and how to speak about certain things. As one participant would have been even more careful of not pointing out any cultures or being very careful when doing so, another participant would have hoped that the facilitators would not "walk on eggshells", but talk about also controversial subjects: "Say Israel, not Westbank, say Jews, say Muslims. To say yes there are issues but there are a lot of good. People are collaboration and doing business together." (Jaakko)

4.4 Health and Wellbeing

There is multiple research on the benefits of music for overall wellbeing and health (Grape, 2003; Nilsson, 2009; Hallam, 2012). However, the health benefits of music-making were not exactly the focus of my research since my research question aims to find factors that support using music-making as an approach to enhance interfaith and intergroup relations. Nevertheless, as the spontaneous comments of several participants describing how the sessions affected their overall wellbeing were so dominant throughout the interviews and responses, it is an aspect that felt appropriate to explore in the research. The mood of a person is one factor that may affect how the participants related to others in the sessions as well as the music they listen to that affects their mood and personality altogether (Vuoskoski and Eerola, 2011; Vuoskoski, et al., 2012; Greenberg, 2022).

Several participants expressed feelings of joy, reduced stress, relaxation when doing the singing and breathing exercises and felt uplifted after the sessions (Grape, 2003; Nilsson, 2009): "I felt really nice after the first workshop". (Ari)

Some expressed that when they had a stressful day, their mood shifted during the sessions and afterwards felt calm and relaxed (Hallam, 2012). Participants came to the session from their busy days carrying their emotions from the day with them. Several participants reported that the warming exercises helped ground them to the moment and singing together enabled feelings of stress to decrease. Actively making music is linked to psychological well-being, reduction of stress and anxiety, treating pain, increasing empathy and emotional sensitivity, (Hallam 2012) to name a few. A participant shared a meaningful experience from the second workshop that expresses beautifully how music and singing together may help even in times of deep personal grief:

**

My mother passed away three days before the second workshop. Usually I have the tendency to turn inwards to grieve, but I decided to attended the workshop and felt the singing circle to be comforting, opening and at the same time emotionally deepening. The main factor in my opening experience was the connection I felt from different people and the songs. It strengthens my belief than in the things that matter we are more together than a part, if we would just realize it. (Anton).

This experience describes many of the factors that are involved in transforming beliefs and reducing prejudice in the interfaith music-making group sessions - music and singing evoking emotional empathy (Rabinowitch et al., 2012; Greenberg, 2015) that leads to the feeling of togetherness (Kivijärvi and Poutiainen, 2013; 2019; Greenberg, 2022) with others sharing the experience and generating communality (Tarr et al., 2014; Kniffin et al., 2016).

4.5   "Spread the Love"

The aim of the research was to promote interfaith harmony and to demonstrate how by using interfaith music, it is possible to generate a shift in the way the participants perceive others. An elevating factor that rose from the responses of several participants was the driving motivation to "spread the love" forward in their wider networks. The participants felt that after they personally experienced and saw how people from different religions cooperated in good spirits, they would be able to read the news more critically as well as share their experience to others who might demonstrate a prejudice attitude (Allport, 1952; Wielzen and Avest, 2017; Rockenbach et al., 2020; Mayhew and Rockhenbach, 2021).

Several participants said that after the sessions they would be more aware of prejudice towards others and spread positive views about other groups. A Muslim participant's heartfelt comment: "They will spread good thoughts about us to their friends after these workshops".

Going forward and drawing from their own experiences during this process, several participants felt important to step up as "defenders" if their friends or family would express racist or antisemitic comments. Surprisingly, many of the participant described that the experience started a potential snowball-effect where the participant experiencing a change in attitudes would then share that experience to their friends and family. The responses of several participants showed the possibilities

an interfaith music-making approach could have: "After the workshops I can disagree with those saying negative things about Jews and Muslims." (Kaija)

In addition to this, many participants felt that they would like to continue to learn more about the different music styles and cultures in the future. Some expressed that they continued singing the songs at home and would like to attend to a similar class in the future. Naturally, the long-lasting effect of the group sessions was not examined, but many participants wished that it would have been a longer process and thought that a longer intervention would be essential in reducing prejudice.

Most of the participants felt that the approach of interfaith music-making was affecting in reducing prejudice. Several participants, even if they did not have children, also thought that this should be implemented in schools to reduce prejudice: "This would destroy racism, 100%". (Mikko)

4.6 Summary of the findings

Participants described the overall experience as follows: Empowering; Opening; Emotionally deepening; Stress-reducing; Transforming; Connecting; Exhilarating; Sparking curiosity.

Although the participants backgrounds were different, all were curiously attending the interfaith music-making workshop with expectations to share fun musical moments with other participants and learn about other cultures. The participants felt that the sessions were opening, transforming, connecting, relaxing and emotional. Many reported feeling a connection to other participants (Steinbeis and Koelsch, 2008; Kniffin et al., 2016), sharing same emotions that were immerging in the music-making process (Rabinowitch et al., 2012; Tarr et al., 2014) and feeling overall relaxed and positive after the sessions (Hallam, 2012). Several participants felt that their stress levels decreased during the workshops and they felt better afterwards. Participants felt that the method of interfaith music-making was effective in reducing prejudice and they would implement the program into schools which would help prevent racism (Neto et al., 2015; 2018). Many participants felt that they would be more aware of prejudices in their networks and would stand up if someone said anything bad about the groups involved in the sessions.

At the start of the process every participant came to the sessions with their beliefs, values, attitudes, possible prejudice, knowledge and skills that they have accumulated in their lives and absorbed from their culture and social networks (Hirschi, 1979; Tajfel and Turner, 1979; McLeod, 2019; Wickert, 2022). Some participants had mainly focused on bonding with their in-group and did not necessarily

interact with members from different cultures and faiths (Putnam, 2000). As the participants gather together they have initial intergroup contact (Allport, 1952), a room filled with people from other cultures and religions. As Renko et al. (2012) pointed out, enhancing intergroup relations, in a qualitative way, takes more than just enabling contact. A negative experience of intergroup contact may reinforce pre-existing prejudice (Abrams, 2010) which is why the delicate process needs a method that promotes theory of mind and evokes empathy toward one another. In the figure below, I have visualized an interfaith music-making journey to broadening one's perspective and to enhance social cohesion as well as inclusion.
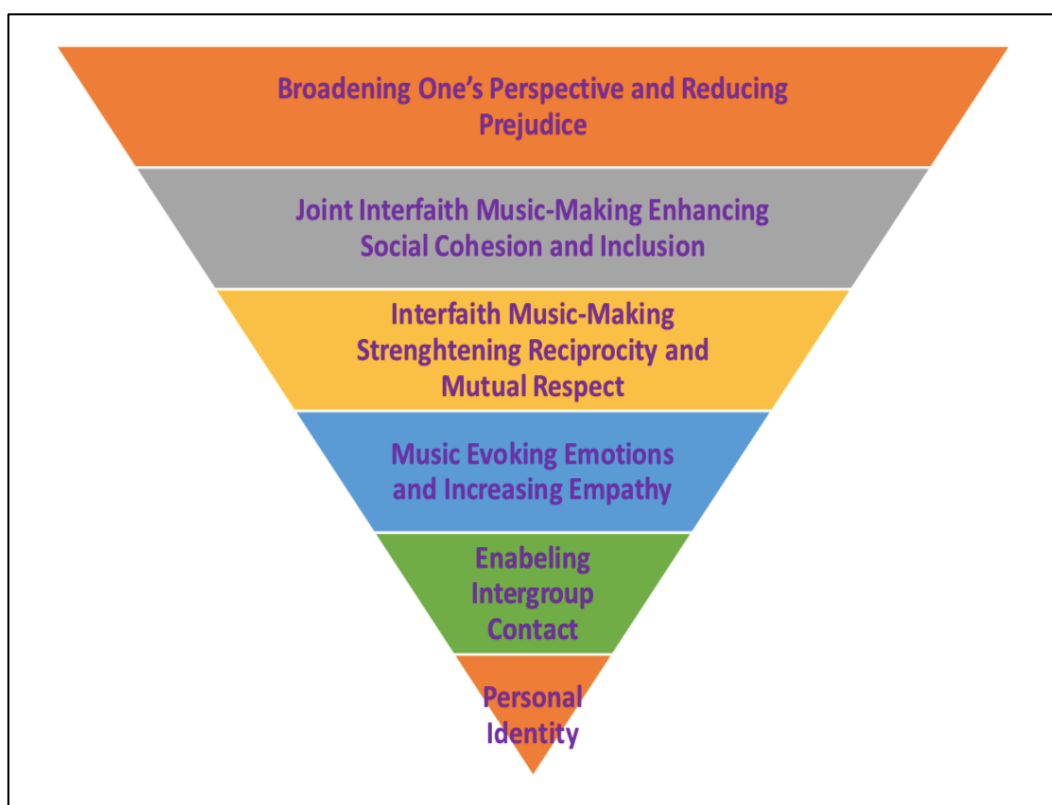

Figure 3. A model of an interfaith music-making journey to broadening one's perspective and enhancing social cohesion as well as inclusion to reduce prejudice.

Music has the ability to increase empathy, trust and cooperation (Steinbeis and Koelsch, 2008; Rabinowitch et al., 2012; Kniffin et al., 2016) as well as developing a positive self-image and sense of belonging (Welch et al., 2014) Music is a strong method in enhancing intergroup relations as it may help engage people from diverse backgrounds even without sharing a common language (Odena, 2016). Adding joint music-making to the mix, enabled the participants to connect in a deeper level as well as bringing positive social feelings towards those they were making music with (Tarr et al.,

**

2014). The sessions also increased feelings of social inclusion (Welch et al., 2009; Minguella and Buchanan, 2009; Marsh, 2012; Kivijärvi and Poutiainen, 2013; 2019).

**

5 Conclusions and Discussion

The pre-assumption for this study was that by being a part of the interfaith music-making sessions, it could transform beliefs and reduce prejudice toward the groups in focus as well as promote interfaith harmony. The context for the study was a diverse group of adults consisting of people from different religious and cultural backgrounds. All data was used from the empirical data, and the questionnaires that were sent to the participants, as well as the interview questions, are included in the attachments. The findings suggested that some participants expressed softer views after the interfaith music-making sessions, especially towards Jews and Muslims. Similar findings were apparent in previous studies examining the prejudice reducing effect of music with longer lasting interventions (Neto et al. 2015; 2018), however short exposure to multicultural, cross-cultural or interfaith music has not been examined enough. In the current research the findings propose that even a short intervention may have meaningful outcomes, even though to truly examine prejudice reduction, it would require a longer intervention as well as a wider sampling.

Additionally, during the sessions several participants' sense of belonging strengthened as well as feelings of joy and trust increased, whereas stress and anxiety decreased. Interestingly, many participants felt the need to share how the music-making sessions affected their overall wellbeing even though this was not asked in the interviews or questionnaires. I did not attempt to explore the health and wellbeing benefits of music-making, however, I thought it was important to include in the analysis since it was hard to ignore from the data. Moreover, I believe one's mindset is a factor that affects how people interact with each other and how willing they are to interact with people from different backgrounds. Several participants reported that they felt "good", "joyful", "calm", "relaxed" and "empowered" during or after the workshops even though some were grieving or had a difficult and stressful day before coming to the sessions. These experiences indicate that the activities indeed enhanced some of the participants overall wellbeing which may have had an effect on how they perceived others.

Drawing from this conclusion, one might argue that using musical activities, which have been shown to elevate one's sense of self and increase empathy (Steinbeis and Koelsch, 2008; Welch et al., 2009; Rabinowitch et al., 2012), would be a beneficial method for enhancing intergroup and interfaith relations as well as promoting inclusiveness and sense of belonging (Rinta et al., 2011; Tarr et al., 2014). Choosing uplifting songs, in the beginning of the sessions, seemed to generate an overall

**

positive mindset in the participants which seemed to enhance social cohesion (Steinbeis and Koelsch, 2008). In joyful songs, the group seemed to connect more comparing to sadder songs, however in sadder songs the participants seemed to show more theory of mind. The songs and styles of the current research were chosen carefully to enhance empathy and teach about the different cultures which seemed to generate curiosity in the participants toward the different cultures and religions in focus. I would argue that using targeted music, as in music of a group that experiences prejudice, would work better while attempting to reduce prejudice toward a specific group. For example, in the current study, it was essential to use music of the Jews, Muslims and Christians to enhance interfaith harmony. Targeted music has been used in several researches that have resulted in reducing prejudice (Neto et al. 2015; 2018) even in contradicting groups (Bodner and Gilboa, 2009; Bodner and Bergman, 2017). As there is not really research in examining interfaith music and how interfaith relations could be enhanced with music-making sessions, this would be a suggestion for further studies.

Several participants mentioned that they felt connected with the other participants while singing together and sense of togetherness strengthened, even though communication was happening mainly through the musical activities. The Muslim participants expressed that it felt especially nice when others were singing "our" music. This made them feel belonged to the group and enhanced inclusiveness (Welch et al., 2009; Kivijärvi and Puotiainen, 2013; 2019) which may have been a driving motivation for several participants to spread the message of acceptance and openness, especially towards Jews and Muslims, to reduce prejudice in their own networks. The mutual respect that seemed to generate during the interfaith music-making sessions was especially meaningful to witness. The participants also expressed curiousness to learn more about the cultures and religions as well as continuing to listen to the music styles, learned during the workshops in their everyday lives.

Many factors influenced the outcome of the interfaith joint music-making interventions, such as the role of the facilitator (Ülger, 2008; Castelli et al., 2008; Greelings et al., 2019; Mäkinen et al., 2022), the backgrounds of the participants, the longitude of the intervention and the level of openness of the participants (Wickert, 2022; Greenberg, 2022; Greenberg, 2015). As music-making increases social cohesion (Kivijärvi and Poutiainen, 2013; 2019), feelings of social inclusion (Minguella and Buchanan, 2009; Marsh, 2012) and self-image (Welch et al., 2009), it helps to broaden one's perception to make that bridge and connect with people from other cultures and religions (Putnam, 2000). The longevity of an interfaith music-making program is key to making sustainable changes. The aim of this research was to examine the potential of joint music-making for interfaith dialogue and promote interfaith harmony even in a short intervention. However, the long-lasting effects are

unknown. A longer intervention with a wider sampling would be needed to truly examine the reducing effect of interfaith music-making. Previous studies indicate that a longer period, as well as a wider sampling are needed to have longer lasting effects (Neto et al. 2015; 2018).

5.1 Ethical considerations and limitations

The topic I chose for this research was driven by my personal experiences and background, which is why it is important to reflect on them from an ethical standpoint. One cannot completely be without bias because as we are human, it is impossible to separate our experiences, values and beliefs from anything we are doing (Leavy, 2017). However, what makes a qualitative research ethically sound, is the awareness of these lenses through which we observe and analyze the world and the people in it. The ability and willingness to reflect on one's position is an important feature of a researcher. The worrying rise of antisemitism and the gruesome history of the persecutions of Jews, are personal motivations behind this research. Being Jewish and a descendant of victims of the Holocaust makes me feel unsettled when facing today's hatred against the Jews, which seem to come from almost every direction and is a part of our everyday lives. Furthermore, the increasing prejudice toward other ethnicities and religions is truly troubling and I feel it all comes from the same source. People who feel excluded are more likely to be prejudiced toward others as they strengthen the idea of in-groups and out-groups (Tajfel and Turner, 1979; Putnam, 2000). Opening up my own background was an ethical choice and speaks to the credibility of this research. However, it was not an easy choice to make considering that it makes one also vulnerable. Do people read this research with a different lens knowing the specifics of my background?

Being a singer and a music pedagogue, I feel strongly that music is a connecting force which should be utilized in bringing people together from different groups. Throughout the research process I wanted to make sure all participants felt equal, respected and included. For the participants I was the researcher but also a teacher of the sessions. However, I also wanted to have other teachers who would represent all of the religions that we had in our group. I could have taught the songs myself because I sing them with the Middle East Music Company, but I thought that it was important to have a teacher who was born and raised absorbing their musical heritage, to teach their music. Furthermore, I felt it was significant that members in the group had a representative from their culture as a facilitator. I strongly feel that this was one factor that reinforced sense of belonging especially in the minority members.

Ethical principles have been followed throughout this process. The sessions were open for anyone regardless of ethnicity, social status, religion, language skills, gender or age, except for children. Being unexperienced as a researcher, I wanted to work with a group of adults. I was also prepared to bring in a translator if a common language would not be found. At some point of the process, I speculated if it would have been better to have someone else interview the participants since I had already so many roles. During the interviews I tried not to be reactive and ask follow-up questions but focused on asking the questions that I had constructed in advance, to reduce the possibility that I would influence the answers. Reflecting on it now, I think I would have been able to learn even more deeper experiences from the participants, if I had asked some clarifying questions.

In addition to this, the participants were relatively open-minded individuals from the beginning. The study did not reach or interest those from exclusive communities and those who do not necessarily interact with people from other cultures and religions in their everyday lives. There are several studies (Welch et al., 2009; Neto et al., 2015; 2018) that show the effectiveness of music-making in reducing prejudice and enhancing social inclusion with children, but not really how the method would work with adults. The current study was the tip of an iceberg with a small sampling and a relatively same-minded group even with different backgrounds. There were only two 90-minute workshops in this study and these interventions are too short to truly examine reduction of prejudice.

The responsibility of the teacher or facilitator in these kinds of interventions is significant. More in-depth reflection with all teachers prior to the workshops would have been useful to ensure that the research aim and methods were acknowledged by all facilitating. A stronger guideline before the intervention that would in detail describe how to communicate with the participants and which way to conduct the teaching of the songs would have perhaps been useful. However, there is also value in spontaneity and perhaps more detailed instructions could have affected the relaxed mood the workshops had. Improvisation is a part of the Jewish and Arabic music styles, arguably also the cultures, and that was one factor that influenced in creating the warm atmosphere of the sessions.

5.2 Going forward

In the social identity theory, stereotyping is a normal human process as well as searching for similarities and differences (Tajfel and Turner 1979). It is nothing to be ashamed of, nonetheless, it is a problem if a greater division is let to form. This may lead to an out-group and in-group setting, where the out-group could be considered as a threat which could result in prejudice attitudes (Mcleod 2019). The current study is sadly relevant as antisemitism is reaching historical levels, and racism is on the rise almost everywhere in the world (UN news, 2022; Police Academy Report, 2021; World Watch Report, 2021; The Antisemitism Worldwide Report, 2021).

Equality, diversity and inclusion are used as terms more than ever in the Finnish society as the goal is to build a society that is open for anyone, regardless of their ethnicity, gender, religion, social status or country of origin. Nevertheless, we are struggling to integrate refugees to the Finnish society and many are feeling socially excluded because of their ethnicity, which may lead to problematic behavior, and is a favorable setting for in-group and out-group mentality to increase. The Finnish society is facing the same problems as Sweden with increasing gang violence that has been fueled by failed integration policies (Helsingin Sanomat, 10/22; Reuters, 04/2022). Social exclusion is a problem that needs to be addressed because it leads to all kinds of worrying problems such as criminal activities, hate and violence. At the root of social exclusion is the feeling of not being included in society whether the reason is ethnicity, religion, social status or something else. Prejudice is a very strong way to push someone out and this may result to them attaching even more to their exclusive communities.

The Finnish public music schools are struggling to get children from other ethnicities into music as a hobby, although it would be beneficial in enhancing inclusiveness and helping the integration process. The editor-in-chief of Rondo magazine, Harri Kuusisaari writes (Rondo, 9/2022) that it is not easy to reach for example, the Somali families in Itäkeskus, which is the most multicultural area of the country, to include them in the activities of local music schools. Would it help if the music schools would have classes with multicultural music included in the curriculum?

More studies that examine the factors that help integration, inclusiveness and intergroup/interfaith relations are deeply needed. The current study suggests that joint music-making, especially using targeted music, and in this context interfaith music, has the ability to change attitudes by arousing empathy and trust which may result in feelings of togetherness. These feelings are vital for a person to feel included in the society and to connect with other people. When others are curious about one's

**

culture, it generates mutual respect and sense of belonging which may help in enhancing inclusiveness in groups coming from different backgrounds and faiths. As there were comments made by some of the participants that they did not feel included in the Finnish society, one must ask what can be done differently.

As it is mandatory for all children in Finland to attend basic education, this serves as an opportunity to integrate members of exclusive communities to the Finnish society, and build a more inclusive society where everyone has the same opportunities to get an education, work and live a satisfying life. Schools are having to face a lot of the issues that diversity brings and resources for integrating students from other cultures are greatly needed (Ilta-sanomat, 8/2021). More resources should be given to schools to be able to face the challenges the integration policies bring, because these young years are precious in preventing social exclusion. The current study focused on adults because these kinds of studies are rarer than those focusing on children. However, with children it is easier to affect attitudes than with an adult whose identity has already been shaped.

Previous research suggests that children develop prejudice beliefs in a very young age which makes early intervention especially significant (Abrams, 2010). As children are flexible when forming their belief systems and attitudes, if music teachers incorporate music from the whole world in to their classes, they may profoundly change their pupils' views about other cultures and other people (Sousa et al. 2005; Neto et al., 2015; 2018). If music education especially in basic education would be designed to promote inclusiveness respectfully and with curiosity by implementing an interfaith and multicultural music-making program, it could enhance sense of belonging as well as social cohesion among the children, in addition to reducing prejudice. By implementing an interfaith music-making program to Finnish music education as well as educating music educators to be able to facilitate these programs, this could in long-term solve many problems that the society is facing relating to prejudice and integration challenges. This kind of a program would be a great opportunity for children to learn about the cultures of their peers through fun musical activities and at the same time generating curiousness, strengthening togetherness, promoting inclusiveness and ensuring equality. However, it is important to keep in mind that not all intergroup relations enhancing programs are good and could be even harmful (Abrams, 2010; Renko et al., 2012). Additionally, it is vital to not disregard the role of the facilitator or teacher, because for any enhancement on intergroup relations to happen, the facilitator's role and authentic enthusiasm may play a major role (Castelli et al., 2008; Greelings et al., 2019; Mäkinen, et al. 2022).

**

Teachers have openly shared feeling strained especially during the epidemic. According to the trade union of education in Finland, the integration policies have burdened teachers who have reported that resources to implement the integration policies effectively are needed (Opettaja, 19/22). Suggesting yet another "new" method to the list of must-do's may not go over well with the faculty. Research shows (Ülger et al. 2008) that a disengaged teacher conducting interventions aiming to reduce prejudice have been shown to be less effective than if conducted by the engaged researcher of the process. Strategies aiming to increase inclusiveness and reduce prejudice in diverse school settings, should take into consideration that while music-making may be a strong attribute, the teachers' motivation is a key factor for the method to be effective. Nevertheless, starting interfaith music-making training in Universities that educate music teachers, could help harness new teachers with methods to enable their future diverse student body to bond and feel togetherness and help reduce prejudice. It may be a more difficult task to change the pre-existing methods of professional and experienced music teachers, but when molding new teachers to the field a requirement should be to consider the challenges that a diverse student body may bring, as well as the potential it has. In my opinion, it should be a requirement to use more music, that includes the music of all cultures and religions, in the Finnish basic music education.

Integrating multicultural and interfaith music to the school's curriculum is not enough to truly promote interfaith and intergroup relations and reduce prejudice, but it is a good start. The interfaith music-making method used in this study involved also embodied exercises aiming to enhance cohesion and sense of togetherness while absorbing interfaith music. The songs presented in the study came with a story about the origins of the songs and the culture behind them. Furthermore, the songs were taught by a member of the group whose music was in focus. All of these factors play a role in changing attitudes which may be difficult to recreate in the real world. Nevertheless, with an engaged atmosphere created by schools to introduce different cultures and religions with joint music-making, would be the necessary steps to be taken in order to achieve a more inclusive, accepting and respecting environment for all students, regardless of their background.

A few unexpected themes rose from the findings, where one was how the participants, regardless of background, noticed a lot of similarities between the Muslim and Jewish music and styles of the teachers. As the media is conveying a picture that these groups are in conflict which is only partially true, but when coming together it is hard to ignore the similarities. Furthermore, several participants brought up that they felt the media induced negative attitudes toward Jews and Muslims, which affected how they perceived also members of these groups.

**

As I addressed in the conceptual framework, a new form of Jew-hatred called antizionism, where Israel is being held to a different standard than other countries is widely spreading in the internet platforms as well as conspiracy theories blaming Israel and the Jews for spreading the virus gained attention in the start of the COVID-pandemic in 2020 (Schwarz-Friesel, 2019; The Antisemitism Worldwide Report, 2021). Additionally, when radical Islamic terrorism is given media exposure, Muslim-hatred increases in relation (Das et al., 2009). What people consume in their lives affects their beliefs and this kind of news exposure gives fuel to increasing antisemitism and racism. The role of the media in relation to prejudice would be an interesting theme to examine more to help preventing prejudices attitudes. This could be examined with a survey asking about what news do people read, what TV-programs they watch and how this correlates with the level of their prejudice or openness toward Jews, Muslims and other minorities. Additionally, would interfaith or multicultural music programs on the radio or TV have a prejudice reducing effect?

Religions are not well understood in the modern world and as was present also in some of the participant's responses. As many are turning away from religions, atheism is increasing rapidly in the world (Zuckerman 2007, Pew Research Center 2015). According to research, lifelong atheists have more negative attitudes against religious groups than those who have deconverted (Pauha, 2020). This new form of atheistic prejudice should be examined more in future studies as it is not well understood and possibly a future challenge. I would suggest a similar joint music-making intervention in an interfaith context where the group would consist from atheists, deconverts and people from different religions and faiths. The intervention should last for several months with sessions regularly to truly examine how atheistic prejudice could be reduced with interfaith music-making.

As Jonathan Sacks so wisely put it, weapons are not the way to win peace, only ideas can (Not in God's name: Confronting religious violence, 2017). Racism and antisemitism are on the rise almost everywhere in the world, and additionally, the Finnish society is facing challenges with integration which may be a cause for increasing gang-violence as is addressed in the introduction. (Reuters, 04/2022; Iltalehti, 10/2022). New ideas are needed if the aim of society is to reduce prejudice and enhance peaceful co-existing cross-culturally. The world is full of words, but to truly transform beliefs, the key is to experience different cultures and religions in an embodied way.

Several participants in the present study were adamant that this kind of an interfaith music program should be a necessity in the Finnish school system to prevent racism and prejudice and I would agree, as previous research shows that children develop prejudice attitudes at a very young age (Abrams,

2010). More research is needed to really understand what methods would be most efficient in reducing prejudice, however, music-making activities have a potential to work as a connecting, empathy increasing method for enhancing interfaith relations which have been shown to be effective in children (Welch et al., 2009; Abrams, 2010; Neto et al. 2015; 2018). Integrating an interfaith music-making program to the Finnish basic education would be beneficial in enhancing intergroup relations and preventing racism and prejudices. Moreover, measures to insure a prejudice-free and inclusive environment for all ethnicities and religious groups in Finland, need to be taken sooner than later. It is a basic human right.

**

REFERENCES

Abrams, D. (2010). Processes of prejudices: Theory, evidence and intervention.

Abrams, D., Eller, A., and Bryant, J. (2006). An age apart: The effects of intergenerational contact and stereotype threat on performance and intergroup bias. *Psychology and Aging, 21*(4), 691–702.

Baxter, P.E., Jack, S.M. (2010) Qualitative Case Study Methodology: Study Design and Implementation for Novice Researchers.

Boer, D., Abubakar, A. (2014) Music listening in families and peer groups: benefits for young people's social cohesion and emotional well-being across four cultures.

Bodner, E., Bergman, Y. (2017). The power of national music in reducing prejudice and enhancing theory of mind among Jews and Arabs in Israel.

Bodner, E., Gilboa, A. (2009). On the power of music to affect intergroup relations. Musicae Scientiae, 13, 85–115.

Brown, R. (1995). Prejudice: its social psychology. Blackwell Publishing.

Brown, RJ., Eller, A. D., Leeds, S., and Stace, K. (2007). Intergroup contact and intergroup attitudes: a longitudinal study. *European Journal of Social Psychology*, *37*(4), 692–703.

Creswell, J.W. (1998). Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among the traditions. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Crisp, R. J., and Turner, R. N. (2009). Can imagined interactions produce positive perceptions? Reducing prejudice though simulated social contact. *American Psychologist*, *64*, 231–240.

Das, E., Bushman, B. J., Bezemer, M. D., Kerkhof, P., Vermeulen, I.E. (2009). How terrorism news reports increase prejudice against outgroups: A terror management account. Pp.453–459.

Dhont, K., Van Hiel, A., De Bolle, M., and Roets, A. (2012). Longitudinal intergroup contact effects on prejudice using self- and observer-reports. *British Journal of Social Psychology, 51*(2), 221–238.

Edekman, L. L., Harring, K. E. (2014). Music and Social Bonding: The Role of Non-Diegetic Music and Synchrony on Perceptions of Videotaped Walkers.

Fallona, C., Richardson, V. (2001). Classroom management as method and manner.

Gaudreau, P. and Miranda, D. (2018). Music and cultural prejudice reduction: A review.

Grape, C., Sandgren, M., Hansson, L., Ericson, M., Theorell, T. (2003). Does singing promote well-being? An empirical study of professional and amateur singers during a singing lesson.

**

Greenberg, D. M., Wride, S. J., Snowden, D. A., Spathis, D., Potter, J., and Rentfrow, P. J. (2022). Universals and variations in musical preferences: A study of preferential reactions to Western music in 53 countries. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 122*(2), 286–309.

Greenberg, D. M., Müllensiefen, D., Lamb, M.E., Rentfrow. (2015). Personality predicts musical sophistication. Journal of Research in Personality 58, 154–158.

Greitemeyer, T. and Schwab, A. (2014). Employing Music Exposure to Reduce Prejudice and Discrimination. Aggressive Behavior, 40(6), 542–551.

Hallam, S. (2010). The Power of Music: Its Impact on the Intellectual, Social and Personal Development of Children and Young People. International Journal of Music Education, 28, 269–289.

Henley, J. (2015) *Music: naturally inclusive, potentially exclusive?* In: Inclusive Pedagogy Across the Curriculum. International Perspectives on Inclusive Education (7). Emerald, Bingley, UK, pp. 161–186.

Hirschi, T. (1979). Separate and unequal is better. Journal of Research in Crime and Delinquency 16, 34–38.

Holt-Lunstad, J., Smith, T.B., Baker, M., Harris, T. and Stephenson, D. (2015). Loneliness and social isolation as risk factors for mortality: a meta-analytic review. Perspectives on psychological science, 10(2), 227–237.

Huhtinen-Hildén, L., Pitt, J. (2018). Taking a learner-centred approach to music education. Pedagogical pathways. London: Routledge.

Jordan-Kilkki, P., Kauppinen, E. and Viitasalo-Korolainen. E. (toim.) (2013). Musiikkipedagogin käsikirja. Vuorovaikutus ja kohtaaminen opetuksessa. Oppaat ja käsikirjat 2012:2. Helsinki: Opetushallitus.

Kivijärvi, S. and, Poutiainen, A. (2019). Supplying social capital through music education: A study on interaction in special educational needs students' concerts. *Research Studies in Music Education, 42*(3), 347–367.

Kniffin, K.M., Yan, J., Wansink, B., Schulze, W. (2016). The sound of cooperation: Musical influences on cooperative behavior: The Sound of Cooperation.

Laitinen, L. (2017). Vaikuttavaa? Taiteen hyvinvointivaikutusten tarkastelua. Turun ammattikorkeakoulun tutkimuksia 46. Tampereen yliopistopaino Oy.

Leavy, P. (2017) Research Design. Quantitative, Qualitative, Mixed Methods, Arts Based, and Community-Based Participatory Research Approaches. New York, NY: The Guilford Press.

Lev-On, A., Adler, O. (2013). Passive Participation in Communities of Practice: Scope and Motivations.

Malloch S., Trevarthen C. (2009). Communicative musicality: Exploring the basis of human companionship. Oxford University Press.

**

Maras, P., and Brown, R. (1996). Effects of contact on children's attitudes toward disability: A longitudinal study. *Journal of Applied Social Psychology, 26*(23), 2113–2134.

Mayhew, M. J., Rockenbach, A., and Dahl, L.S. (2020). Owning Faith: First-Year College-Going and the Development of Students' Self-Authored Worldview Commitments. The Journal of Higher Education 91: 977–1002.

McLeod, S. A. (2008). *Prejudice and discrimination*. Simply Psychology.

McLeod, S. A. (2019). *Social identity theory*. Simply Psychology.

Mäkinen, V., Jasinskaja-Lahti, I., Renvik, T. A., Cocco, V. M., Lášticová, B., Vezzali, L., Liebkind, K. (2022). The role of the perceived engagement of the facilitator in a vicarious contact intervention: A school-based field experiment in three countries. *Journal of Community & Applied Social Psychology, 32*, 4, pp.623–636.

Neto, F., Pinto, M., Mullet, E. (2018). Can music reduce national prejudice? A test of a cross-cultural musical education programme.

Neto, F., Pinto, M., Mullet, E. (2015). Can music reduce anti-dark-skin prejudice? A test of a cross-cultural musical education programme.

Nilsson, U. (2009). Soothing music can increase oxytocin levels during bed rest after open-heart surgery: a randomised control trial.

Penubarti, M., Asea, P. (1996). Polarization and Political Violence. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/228720198_Polarization_and_Political_Violence

Paluck, E. L., and Green, D. P. (2009). Prejudice reduction: What works? A review and assessment of research and practice. *Annual Review of Psychology*, *60*, 339–367.

Pauha, T., Renvik, A., Eskelinen, V., Jettend, J., Noll, J., Kunstf, J. R., Rohmanne, A., Jasinskaja-Lahtic, I. (2020). The Attitudes of Deconverted and Lifelong Atheists Towards Religious Groups: The Role of Religious and Spiritual Identity.

Poutiainen, A., Kivijärvi, S., and Kaikkonen, M. (2013). Music for all for Music: A Study of the Resonaari Concert Audience and Equalized Interaction. In K. Tirri, and E. Kuusisto (Eds.), *Interaction in Educational Domains* (pp. 171–181). Sense publishers.

Rabinowitch, T.C., Cross, I. Burnard, P. (2012). Long-term musical group interaction has a positive influence on empathy in children.

Renko, E., Larja, L., Liebkind, K., and Solares, E. (2012). Selvitys syrjinnän vastaisen pedagogiikan keinoista ja käytännöistä. Sisäasiainministeriön julkaisut 50/2012. Sisäasiainministeriö.

Rockenbach, A. N., Mayhew, M. J, Giess M. E., Morin, S. M., Staples, B.A., Correia-Harker, B.P. (2020). *IDEALS:* Bridging Religious Divides through Higher Education. Chicago: Interfaith Youth Core.

**

Schwarz-Friesel, M. (2019), published by De Gruyter. Antisemitism 2.0"—The Spreading of Jew-hatred on the World Wide Web. This work is licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivatives 4.0 License.

Seyfarth, R. M., Cheney, D.L. (2014) In the Light of Evolution: Volume VII: The Human Mental Machinery. Chapter 2 Affiliation, Empathy, and the Origins of Theory of Mind.

Shaver, J.H., Sibley, C.G., Osborne, D., Bulbulia, J. (2017) News exposure predicts anti- Muslim prejudice, pp.1–19.

Sousa, M. R., Neto, F., and Mullet, E. (2005). Can music change ethnic attitudes among children? *Psychology of Music*, *33*, 304–316. Sage publications.

Steinbeis, N., Koelsch, S. (2008). Understanding the Intentions Behind Man-Made Products Elicits Neural Activity in Areas Dedicated to Mental State Attribution.

Stephan, W. G., and Finlay, K. (1999). The role of empathy in improving intergroup relations. *Journal of Social Issues, 55*, 729–743.

Stern D. N. (2004). *The present moment in psychotherapy and everyday life*. Norton.

Tajfel, H., and Turner, J. C. (1979). An integrative theory of intergroup conflict. In W. G. Austin and S. Worchel (Eds.), *The social psychology of intergroup relations* (pp. 33–47). Monterey, CA: Brooks-Cole.

Tarr, B., Launay, J. Dunbar, R. I. M., (2014). Music and social bonding: "self-other" merging and neurohormonal mechanisms.

Taylor, S. J., and Bogdan, R., (1998). Introduction to qualitative research methods: a guidebook and resource (3rd.ed.). New York: Wiley.

Thomson, K. (2021). World In Motion ensemble: My professional journey with refugee musicians and music university students. In H. Westerlund and H. Gaunt (Eds.) Expanding professionalism in music and higher music education – A changing game (pp. 129–142). Routledge.

Toom, A. (2006). Tacit Pedagogical Knowing at the Core of Teacher's Professionality, pp.254–255. University of Helsinki.

Vilkka, H. (2021). Tutki ja Kehitä. PS-kustannus

Vuoskoski, J. K., and Eerola, T. (2011). The role of mood and personality in the perception of emotions represented by music. Cortex, 47(9), 1099–1106.

Vuoskoski, J. K., Thompson, W. F., McIlwain, D., and Eerola, T. (2012). Who enjoys listening to sad music and why? Music Perception, 29(3), 311–317.

Ward, C., and Kagitcibasi, C. (2010). Applied acculturation research: Working with, for and beyond com- munities. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, *34*, 186–189.

**

Welch, G.F, Himonide, E., Sanders, J., Papageorgi, I., Sarazin, M. (2014). Singing and social inclusion.

Wielzen, D. R., Avest, I.T. (eds.) (2017). Interfaith Education for All: Theoretical Perspectives and Best Practices for Transformative Action. New York: Springer.

ARTICLES AND LINKS

Anti-racism and anti-semitism collide: Glenn Loury and Bari Weiss interview. (2021). Manhattan Institute. Retrieved from https://www.manhattan-institute.org/anti-racism-anti-semitism-glenn-loury-bari-weiss, read on September 5, 2022.

Anti-Semitism Worldwide Report 2021 by the Center for the Study of Contemporary European Jewry at Tel Aviv University's Faculty of Humanities. Retrieved from https://cst.tau.ac.il/wp-content/uploads/2022/04/Antisemitism-Worldwide-2021.pdf, read on August 12, 2022.

Antisemitism in the United States: Statistics on religious hate crimes 1996-2020. (2020). Jewish virtual library. AICE. Retrieved from https://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/statistics-on-religious-hate-crimes, read on Septemeber 25, 2022.

European Commission. (2021) Commission presents first-ever EU Strategy on combating antisemitism and fostering Jewish life. Retrieved from https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/ip_21_4990, read on September 5, 2022.

European Commission. (2019). Countering racism and xenophobia in the EU: fostering a society where pluralism, tolerance and non-discrimination prevail. Retrieved from https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/default/files/swd_countering_racism_and_xenophobia_in_the_eu.pdf, read on September 25, 2022.

Fancourt D, Finn S. (2019). What is the evidence on the role of the arts in improving health and well-being? A scoping review. Copenhagen: WHO Regional Office for Europe; 2019. Health Evidence Network (HEN) synthesis report 67. Retrieved from https://apps.who.int/iris/bitstream/handle/10665/329834/9789289054553-eng.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y, read on November 12, 2021.

France, L. (2022). Dave Chappelle's 'SNL' monologue sparks backlash as being anti-Semitic. CNN. Retrieved from https://edition.cnn.com/2022/11/14/entertainment/dave-chappelle-adl-antisemitic/index.html, read on November 14, 2022.

Iati, M. (2021) What is critical race theory, and why do Republicans want to ban it in schools? Washinton Post. Retrieved from https://www.washingtonpost.com/education/2021/05/29/critical-race-theory-bans-schools/, read on October 11, 2022.

Jokinen, J. (10/2022). Suomen poliisin järjestöpomo vaatii: Hallituksen täytyy herätä jengirikollisuuden kasvuun – "Olemme Ruotsin tiellä". Iltalehti. Retrieved from https://www.iltalehti.fi/kotimaa/a/6874c92c-223a-40ef-b451-6cc4fbb6fd6b, read on November 10, 2022.

**

Hussein, R. Music and Islam: A Deeper Look. Hofstra University.
Retrieved from https://asiasociety.org/arts/music-and-islam-deeper-look, read on October 4, 2022.

Masci, D. Many Americans see religious discrimination in U.S. – especially against Muslims. (2019). Retrieved from https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2019/05/17/many-americans-see-religious-discrimination-in-u-s-especially-against-muslims/, read on September 5, 2022.

Mahlamäki, H. (12/11/2022). Keitä ovat pelätyt "klaanilaiset"?. Helsingin Sanomat, Sanoma-konserni. Read on October 12, 2022.

Merriam-Webster. (2022). Xenophobia. Retrieved from https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/xenophobia, read on November 10, 2022.

Mendez, M. (2022). What to Know About Kanye West's Anti-Semitic Remarks—and the Companies That Have Cut Ties. TIME. Retrieved from, https://time.com/6224464/kanye-west-antisemitic-comments-adidas/, read on October 10, 2022.

Palkoaho, M. (10/2022). Entinen jengirikollinen pelkää Suomen luisuvan Ruotsiakin pahempaan tilanteeseen. Helsingin-sanomat, Sanoma-konserni. Retrieved from https://www.hs.fi/kaupunki/art-2000009119304.html, read on November 10, 2022.

Persecution of Christians. (2020). House of Commons library. Retrieved from https://researchbriefings.files.parliament.uk/documents/CDP-2020-0019/CDP-2020-0019.pdf, read on September 26, 2022.

Finnish Red Cross. (2022). Mitä rasismi on? Retrieved from https://www.punainenristi.fi/tyomme/rasisminvastainen-toiminta/mita-rasismi-on/, read on November 15, 2022.

Racism and prejudice in Europe - Statistics & Facts. (2018) Statista Research Department. Retrieved from https://www.statista.com/topics/3911/racism-and-prejudice-in-europe/#dossierKeyfigures, read on August 20, 2022.

Rauta, J. (2022). Poliisin tietoon tullut viharikollisuus Suomessa 2021. https://www.theseus.fi/handle/10024/780352

RCR guidelines. (2012). Guidelines of the Finnish Advisory Board on Research Integrity. Retrieved from https://tenk.fi/en/advice-and-materials/RCR-Guidelines-2012, read on June 16, 2021.

Reuters. (04/2022). Swedish PM says integration of immigrants has failed, fueled gang crime. Retrieved from https://www.reuters.com/world/europe/swedish-pm-says-integration-immigrants-has-failed-fueled-gang-crime-2022-04-28/, read on October 11, 2022.

Sacks, J. (2015). Not in God's Name: Confronting Religious Violence. Schoken Books, New York.

Shaheed, A. (2020). OHCHR report. Gendered impacts of anti-muslim hatred and discrimination: the case of Germany by the Center for Migration, Gender, and Justice. Retrieved from

**

https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/Documents/Issues/Religion/Islamophobia-AntiMuslim/Civil%20Society%20or%20Individuals/CMGJ.pdf, read on September 5, 2022.

Sippola, J. (2021). Magdalena Andersson esitti linjapuheessaan ehtoja sosiaalitukien saamiselle – Vaati jengirikollisuuden ratkaisemiseksi koko yhteiskunnan mobilisointia. Helsingin Sanomat. Retrieved from https://www.hs.fi/ulkomaat/art-2000008373337.html, read on October 12, 2022.

TENK 2019. The ethical review in the human sciences in Finland. Pupblications of the Finnish National Board on Research integrity TENK 3/2019. Retreived from https://tenk.fi/sites/default/files/2021-01/Ethical_review_in_human_sciences_2020.pdf, read on November 10, 2021.

Tikkanen, T. (19/2022). Opettaja-lehti. Opetusalan ammatti- ja järjestölehti. OAJ.

United Nations Human Rights. (2019). Strategy and plan of Action on Hate Speech. Retreieved from https://www.un.org/en/genocideprevention/documents/advising-and-mobilizing/Action_plan_on_hate_speech_EN.pdf, read on August 20, 2022.

Whitcomb, D. and Anilkumar, R. (02/2022) Whoopi Goldberg suspended from 'The View' over Holocaust remarks. Reuters. Retrieved from https://www.reuters.com/lifestyle/whoopi-goldberg-apologises-saying-holocaust-was-not-about-race-2022-02-01/, read on August 11, 2022.

Åkman, E. (2021). Nyt puhuvat opettajat: monessa luokassa vallitsee kaaos. Ilta-sanomat, Sanoma-konserni. Retrieved from https://www.is.fi/kotimaa/art-2000008217146.html, read on September 12, 2022.

**

Appendix 1

QUESTIONNAIRE 1. (FOR THE PARTICIPANTS BEFORE THE SESSIONS)

INTERFAITH MUSIC-MAKING WORKSHOPS

1. How do you feel interfaith music-making would contribute in reducing prejudice or racism?

2. What kind of expectations do you have for these workshops

QUESTIONNAIRE 2. (FOR THE PARTICIPANTS AFTER THE SESSIONS)

INTERFAITH MUSIC-MAKING WORKSHOPS

1. What would you like to share about your background, ethnicity/religious beliefs?

2. Does your friends/family include people from different religious backgrounds? If so, is there a group you are you not involved with as much?

3. How did you feel before, during and after the workshops? Did you feel some kind of change in the way you felt after the workshops? In what way?

4. How did it feel different to sing Jewish, Christian and/ or Arabic music?

5. Did your views of Jews, Christians and/or Muslims change after the workshops?In what way?

6. How could this kind of approach help reduce prejudice and promote interfaith harmony in your opinion?

7. What can be taken away from participating in this research? What did you learn, if anything, and how could you apply it to your life from now on?

8. Do you have any further questions or comments?

**

Appendix 2

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS (Four participants were interviewed face- to- face)

Research ethics procedure:

All research participants' identities will be kept anonymous within the research, and all will be given the chance to read and approve the final version of the findings chapter before it is published. After approval is given however, the research paper cannot be retracted. Participants may choose to withdraw from the study at any time and have the right to decline the use of anything discussed in the interview.

Introductory questions

1. What would you like to share about your background, ethnicity/religious beliefs?
2. How do you feel included or excluded to/from the Finnish society?
3. How has belonging or not belonging to a community affected you?
4. Does your friends/family include people from different religious backgrounds? wider network?
5. Do you know about Jewish people or the Jewish religion; Christianity and Christians Muslims and Islam?

Workshop-related questions

6. Did you feel welcomed to the group by the participants and instructors?
7. How did you feel before, during and after the workshops? Did you feel some kind of change in the way you felt after the workshops? In what way.
8. How did you feel when singing the Jewish songs/Christian hymns/Arabic songs? How did it feel different to sing Jewish/Christian/ Arabic music?
9. In what way do you feel your views of Jews/Christians/Muslims have changed or not?

Questions related to wider implications

10. How did interfaith music-making affect how you feel about different religious groups?
11. How could this kind of approach help reduce prejudice and promote interfaith harmony in your opinion?
12. Would you recommend attending a similar class to someone? If yes/no, why. Would you yourself like to attend a similar kind of class in the future, do you feel it would be beneficial? If so in what way.

Conclusive questions

13. What can be taken away from participating in this research? What did you learn, if anything, and how could you apply it to your life from now on?
14. Do you have any further questions or comments?

**