Intercultural Communication in a World Music Community of Practice: A Case Study of Warwick World Music Group and Warwick Fused from an Identity Construction Perspective

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Abstract: We are living in a world with an increasingly high level of intercultural contact where integration is observed to be a beneficial strategy (Berry & Sam, 1997; Spencer-Oatey, Dauber & Williams, 2014). A lack of integration is even considered to be a hindrance to the well-being and further development at both the individual and social level (Milak, 2015). Among all music categories, World Music is commonly perceived to be able to promote intercultural communication, but very little research has been conducted to support this opinion. Therefore, Warwick World Music Group and its annual concert, Warwick Fused, are subjected to a close examination as a single case, exploring the specific influence of playing world music together on intercultural communication and competencies through an identity framework provided by Wenger's Community of Practice theory. Data collection and analysis is conducted with the guidance of the framework, while comparatively assessing the data and the theory (Eisenhardt, 1989). The findings contribute to the validation of CoP theory and other studies, whilst also contesting some of their specifics, which will be discussed. Finally, the limitation of the study is addressed with recommendations for further research.

Keywords: Intercultural communication, world music, community of practice, identity construction, case study

1. Introduction

On March 4th, 2015, "Warwick Fused IV: Global Songbook—The Lord Mayor's Charity Concert" took place at Warwick Arts Centre. On the stage, performers from different nations gathered together, collaborating and playing folk music of different ethnic origins. In front of the stage, the audience, comprising a range of people of diverse cultural backgrounds, were relishing the world music. This annual event of "musical internationalisation" (Spencer-Oatey, Dauber & Williams, 2014, p. 35) was first launched in 2012, and is seen as a programme that promotes integration on campus, because it provides its participants a common goal and platform. During preparation that lasted half a year, these performers spent a great deal of time together practising and rehearsing, making it most likely that an increase in intercultural communication would occur.

Globalisation has gradually become a historical background against which numerous contemporary research studies have been positioned (Tu, 2001). Advanced transportation gives rise to increased people mobility, including migrants, sojourners, etc. Concurrently rapid

developments in information and communication technologies have accelerated the distribution and production of information of various cultural artefacts, including music. Digitalisation has further enabled the availability of different kinds of music, bringing them to a global audience, shortening the distance in time and space which forms barriers between cultures (Cuccioletta, 2002; van Klyton, 2014). In a world where intercultural contact is increasing in people's daily lives, as well as music (Hargreaves, MacDonald & Miell, 2005), the two activities are likely to become more significant to people, and also run into each other more frequently. An initial impetus was thus constituted for this study, which was conceived to enhance our understanding about intercultural communication and identity negotiation happening between musicians in the WWMG during their musical collaboration for Warwick Fused.

2. Literature Review

Intercultural communication's basic objective is to prevent cultural differences from being a barrier to mutual understanding (Kalscheuer, 2009). Hall stresses the importance of cultural diversity in this globalised world. He treats cultural diversity as a positive trait, because in the process of reaching an understanding in intercultural situations, the ability to extend one's culture is a necessity (Hall, 1989). Meanwhile, Bhabha put the emphasis on hybridity as the main feature of cultures, and his third space is an in-between space for creative collaboration among other positive results (Bhabha, 2012).

The relationship between music, society and culture has been extensively studied by scholars. Based on the summary of previous studies, a common conclusion is that music exists in almost every culture on the earth, no matter in what form, serving as a social and cultural practice (Zhang, Harbottle, Wang & Kong, 1999). The way culture is seen in turn may also influence people's taste in music.

Music is claimed to be capable of carrying meanings which transcend across time, space and even cultural boundaries (Swanwick, 1988). This universality of music was challenged, and consequently underwent a process of reframing and recontextualisation (Blacking, 1973; Campbell, 1997; O'Flynn, 2005). It then has certain conditions and limitations, which refer to cultural-specific contexts and knowledge (Blacking, 1973).

There is no doubt that music has a function of encouraging communication, including intercultural communication, especially considering its culture-transcending advantage (Fock, 1997). Not only can music help to integrate cultural experiences (O'Flynn, 2005), but the knowledge of it can also become part of one's cognitive system.

It is observed that a number of people use music as a tool to adjust their mood (Hargreaves, Miell & MacDonald, 2002). This function is also observed in multicultural contexts, where the music an individual likes can be a major factor for their adjustment and adaptation in a new society, linking a new environment to old familiar things (O'Hagin & Harnish, 2006).

Examining the rise and growth of world music closely, it has been "globalisation, commoditisation and consumerism" which has caused it to explode, but what really backs it up is simply people's love for discovering new kinds of music (Higgins, 2012). However, the love for only one specific type of traditional folk is not what diversity in world music means. Its diversity goes hand in hand with inclusiveness.

While intercultural communication and world music share specific ideals, namely diversity and hybridity, identity is the keyword that connects the two subjects in practice. With the emergence of mobile devices, music is becoming a major and constant part of daily life (Hargreaves, MacDonald & Miell, 2005). Consequently, an individual's musical identity may also form a larger part of one's cultural identity, playing music and sharing music tastes with others.

Music is a very typical and usual way for adolescents to express and show their identities and may even have influence on other facets of their individual identities (Tarrant, North & Hargreaves, 2002). Music is an extended self and vice versa, music ideas temporarily improvised by someone can also be internalised to influence their internal states and feelings in the longer term (MacDonald & Wilson, 2005).

One can have many identities, and to meet a need for belonging, one constantly positions oneself within a larger cultural group (Ting-Toomey, 2005). In an intercultural context in which people move from one culture to another, an identity transformation is bound to happen and choices need to be made.

Wenger's (1998) Communities of Practice (CoP) theory is useful to explain the development of certain ways of communication operating within a group in a context of situated learning (Schnurr, 2012). In the field of music teaching and learning, the CoP framework is frequently employed to study music communities with different characteristics, including communities of children (Harwood, 1998), adolescents (Countryman, 2009), adults (Bolden, 2012), offline and/or online (Waldron, 2009).

Music is long said to be able to function as a medium of communication and thus intercultural communication, especially world music, considering its unique features. Nonetheless, there are not many case studies supporting this assumption. Detailed case studies are therefore needed to help us to further understand the dynamics and generalisable rules behind them, so that new programmes can be designed and developed accordingly (Smart, Volet & Ang, 2000). Studies into the world music community and collaboration in an intercultural context are even rarer, but considering the specific effects of music in communication, it is important to explore world music's potential of encouraging intercultural communication.

3. Methods

The objective of this research is to gain understanding about the influence world music may have on intercultural communication in the process of identity construction. This study is thus designed as a qualitative case study research, specifically an instrumental one, intending to shed light on not only the event it studies, but also other events of a similar nature (Stake & Savolainen, 1995).

This aim would be achieved through efforts made to answer following specific research questions: How do Fused musicians construct their identities in an intercultural context? How do the specific features of world music have an influence on these identities? Does the experience of playing world music together help them becoming more intercultural?

The author notes that an optimistic view is adopted throughout this study, in which diversity and hybridity are seen as positive qualities that should be encouraged. This study is also in line

with the view that music has great potential in catalysing communication (Hammarlund, 1990, as cited in Folkestad, 2002).

3.1. Qualitative Case Study Research as a Methodological Framework

The nature of identity and intercultural communication as objects of research necessitates qualitative research approaches when investigating participant experiences, as well as the observation of a group's interaction. It is argued that a single case study could be a valuable method where meaning and perspective are critical to the question (Donmoyer, 2000); specifically, where the understanding of the process occurring in a particular context is the focus (Hartley, 2004). In this study, with the multiple sources of data, the advantage of case study is that it enables an analysis including perspectives from all parties (Yin, 2003). Along with the data and participant feedback, a small-scale triangulation would be formed to cross-check the analysis, ensuring the validity of the study (Creswell, 2012).

3.2. Community of Practice as an Analytical Framework

A community of practice is "group(s) of people who share a concern, a set of problems, or a passion about a topic, and who deepen their knowledge and expertise in this area by interacting on an ongoing basis" (Wenger, McDermott & Snyder, 2002, p. 4). There are four fundamental components in the theory, namely meaning, practice, community and identity. Identity construction is done through three other components in practice, with five dimensions, including negotiated experience of self, membership, learning from trajectories, nexus of multimembership, and belonging (defined globally but experienced locally) as shown in Figure 1 (Wenger, 1998).
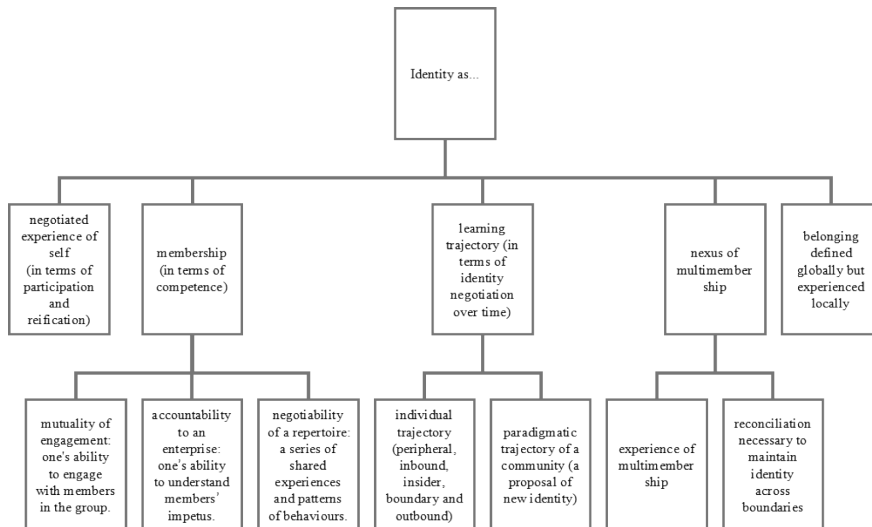

Figure 1. Five Dimensions of Identity Framework in Community of Practice based on Wenger (1998)

Among them, the membership dimension is worth noting, because in being a member of a community, one is supposed to play a part in creating a mutual understanding where the dynamics of the group are related (Corder & Meyerhoff, 2007). In addition, reconciliation is claimed to be fundamental to the meaning of being a person in a society and a strategy one takes to make peace with others and/or to be at peace with oneself.

3.3. Data Collection

The data about the group and the event includes interviews, a host's talk and screen shots from the DVDs of Fused III and IV; interviews conducted by the researcher; posts on the Facebook pages; and documents, including the prospectus of Warwick Fuse IV and a flier, as well as field observation notes of Warwick Fused IV. In order to benefit from well-rounded perspectives, opinions from all parties were included in the collection.

As one of primary resource, it was noticed that the interview data in the DVD has been edited to show specifically what the editors wanted their audiences to see; however, this is of value, as it also indicates what identity the group and Fused want to show to the audience (Ito, Davidson, Jenkins, Lee, Eisenberh & Weiss, 2008). General ethical guidelines and advice with regards to the studies conducted in the field of social science were followed. None of individual information was given without consent.

3.4. Data Analysis

Content analysis is employed as the main method, with the guidance of Wenger's (1998) identity framework. The categories were developed inductively through a bottom-up coding of the data while keeping the five dimensions of the identity framework as a top-down suggestion of themes. Since only members and organisers of WWMG participated in this community of practice with their regular weekly rehearsals, the theory would be mainly applied to an analysis of them. However, as there were also other important participants, including performers, an audience comprising students from the university, and people from the local community, common themes would also include their perspectives in order to gain a well-rounded view on the case, but not necessarily with a theoretical explanation from the Community of Practice theory. The analysis process is shown in Figure 2:

Theory

Coding agenda

Summary

Explication

Structuring

Text

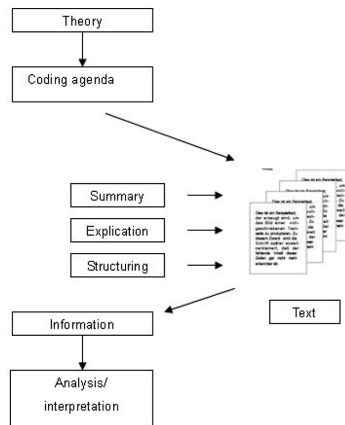Information

Analysis/
interpretation

Figure 2. Basic procedure for qualitative content analysis based on Gläser & Laudel, 1999 (as cited in Kohlbacher, 2006).

In addition to content analysis, discursive analysis is sometimes employed as a supplementary method for further clarification to identify different meanings given to certain things by different parties.

4. Results

There are five common themes, four of which are based on the original dimensions of the identity framework, including participation of members, competency of membership, learning trajectories, and local-global interplay. Interestingly, the multimembership dimension did not emerge as a main theme as was expected, which shall be discussed later.

WWMG members would be referred to as Member Participant/MP hereafter; organisers of WWMG and Fused, Organiser Participant/OP; participants who performed in Fused but not WWMG members, Society Participant/SP; audience of Fused, Audience Participant/AP; researcher/R.

4.1. Identities as Learning Trajectories

Among all parties, organisers' boundary trajectory is noticed to be essential to the forming of the group as well as the concert. OP3 emphasised collaboration as the core of Fused, as shown in Example 01:

Example 01

The collaboration element of Fused is really really important. It would be very easy for us to build a concert of all the different societies to perform on their own, but the thing that makes this truly unique is bringing them together. (Organiser Participant 3)

The fact that organisers were in charge of all the music activities in the Music Centre gave them legitimacy and thus an advantage to connect communities of practice's trajectories together for and through Fused. The repertoire played in the concert was chosen by societies with one principle: every society can perform one piece completely on their own and at least another one collaboratively with other societies. They thereby brokered the boundaries of communities, letting members of different groups coordinate and connect equally. All the parties noticed and appreciated the emphasis on collaboration as fundamental and distinctive features of Fused, thinking this effort of encouraging collaboration was quite valuable and meaningful.

4.2. Identities as Participation

Music lovers. Meaning and identity are negotiated through the interpretation of an individual's background of participation and reification in communities and events, by people themselves and others in the society (Wenger, 1998). WWMG and Fused held various meanings to participants depending on their goals. For MP, they joined the group because they all love music. This enjoyment in music born out of pure interest is fundamental and indispensable to the growth and success of WWMG and Fused. The experience is great fun to the audience also because they can feel the enthusiasm for music from the performers.

Non-professional musicians. The status of *non-professional* was recognised not only by members but also other participants. All the parties involved can be music lovers, but only the ones that practise and perform music on a stage are called musicians, professional or amateur. It is inspirational for members as well as the audience to see people enjoying a meaningful life outside their study and doing really well, and *quality* is always brought up in relation to the status of performers.

Example 02

The students were playing it at such a high level. It's fantastic, but what was really nice is the way they brought it all together. You are hearing songs you have never heard before. (Audience Participants 6)

Example 02 indicates that while the participants of Fused could enjoy themselves and the audience thought it was wonderful to see people having so much fun, a good performance is still the underlying condition for people to enjoy and appreciate world music. Most of the audience detected this and were in support of the idea of collaboration and integration between cultures in and through music. This positive attitude is worth noting, because the respect and appreciation from others helps enhance performers' self-esteem.

Representatives of (musical) cultures. By joining and practicing in WWMG and performing in Fused, one had an opportunity to show their own music and culture. Furthermore, they felt what they did was meaningful and valued by others, which made their sharing and collaborating a fun experience.

4.3. Identities as Competency

One clue of one's identity is what they are familiar with and what they are not. If one knows how to get along with a certain group of people, understanding why they do what they do, and has a shared history with them, it demonstrates a membership of this individual in that community (Wenger, 1998).

Mutuality of engagement. The engagement between members is a basic competency that members develop during the time spent together. Being together is rather important, providing a common resource for communication between members, through which the sense of a group is formed. A dozen members went to two-and-a-half hours of weekly rehearsals with WWMG. Seven or eight singers were to practice first, and instrumentalists came and left later. The break is usually 20 minutes, during which they usually get drinks and talk. The general interaction pattern between members is that of practicing music together, talking about the practice or music-related topics or about the interesting things in their own countries. Cultural values sometimes became involved in conversations.

During the interview, a difference between singers and instrumentalists was mentioned. The two types of musicians usually sat in two different places, so MP1 did not walk over to talk to instrumentalists much, because she felt it was *awkward*. The feeling corresponds with a general preference for communication happening naturally and gradually over time.

Accountability to an enterprise. The learning of this competency is the most important in this whole case, because it has the greatest and most long-lasting influence on identities of members.

(1) Common Goal. It is crucial in building a community, being a great motivation for musicians to participate into collaborative practice. There are two primary aims of WWMG and Fused, according to organisers: one is to enable international students on campus to have a chance to represent their cultures through music, and local students and residents to listen to them; one is to encourage the intercultural communication between people from different cultural backgrounds.

(2) Diversity and Collaboration. Yet how and why did members and organisers settle for these specific common goals? It is probably because they shared the same assumptions. Diversity and collaboration were implied as good qualities that should be encouraged in and beyond the practice of music, and should go hand in hand with each other. Diversity refers to both international students on campus and also the groups of the university. Regarding the diversity of music, it does not mean the focus would be completely on music from other cultures, but also the local music culture in the UK as OP2 explained. A balance is addressed between *international* and *local* in music *sharing.* The concept of diversity carried out in a collaborative practice is what differentiates WWMG and Fused from other world music performances, which also brings challenges, as OP1 mentioned

Example 03

I think the challenge with the World Music Group is that, the music that we play is always a reflection of the people in the group, so unlike the symphony orchestra,

or chamber choir where the music get to be decided even before people arrive.[…] Because it hasn't got one specific identity, it's not like it's just the folk society, or the radio society, anything which has a specific goal. This group is different because by its very nature it has to be diverse and it has to reflect different backgrounds. (Organiser Participant 1)

Example 03 shows that WWMG aims to reflect its members' musical and/or cultural identities, which incidentally change annually. Members need to practice and learning differs from year to year based on current members' musical backgrounds and their choices of repertoire. The identity of WWMG is thus also fluid, changing all the time with its members and the music they perform.

This message was conveyed quite clearly to the audience, according to their comments. If there is such a WWMG identity, it is a diverse and collaborative group. Moreover, participants enjoyed and appreciated this feature (see Example 02).

According to OP1, after several years of trial and error, a set way of leading was worked out to ensure the diversity and collaboration simultaneously:

Example 04

So the every single tune that we play, it has a very specific identity. It comes from a particular place. And I think the thing that the world music group is that this particular piece of music just happens to be played by lots of different instruments from around the world. That's the difference here. So the model is quite easy, just ask people in the group, "What do you like playing? What are your songs that you want to perform?" And the whole group learns that. (Organiser Participant 1)

In Example 04, it is shown this effective model is formed by *democratic leading* and *one focus each time*. The former is to ensure every member is listened to, allowing them to actively contribute and choose what the group would learn and perform; everyone is thereby accountable to the repertoire.

(3) Open-mindedness in and beyond music. The theme of open-minded was interestingly mentioned as a precondition, a state of mind, a personal trait or a result, respectively, by all parties involved. Songs learnt from the members in WWMG in person are also very useful when communicating with people from other cultures outside the group. These positive experiences in turn encourage one's tendency to initiate intercultural contact through this improved competency. However, from the organisers' perspectives, being open is emphasised as a precondition, which is connected with the ideas of being interested and willing to learn and play music from other cultures. The following quotations illustrate this:

Example 05

And I think the challenge of the world music group is that it requires q very special type of person to be in it, because you have to be open-minded, you have to be very

willing to play music from all around the world. So you have to have a very open approach to making music. You can't turn up in that group wanting to play one style, so that is a challenge. (Organiser Participant 1)

Example 06

R: Is it very difficult {o learn Chinese folksong}
MP1: Yes, because we have different systems of correspondence between the lyrics and the tune, so it's like the opposite. It's quite hard to get the pronunciation and tune right together. Furthermore, he could sing it like a folksong, the feeling of a folksong. It's a Yunnan folksong that even Chinese would also find it difficult to sing. But they are quite willing to learn, with an open-minded thinking, to learn songs of different countries. Everybody welcomes this idea to learn new things.
R: So you think in this aspect everyone {n WWMG}is the same as you?
MP1: I think this is the meaning of this group, or you could just join the Indian group directly, and I could join the Chinese group as well. There's no need to join this World Music Group.

Example 05 and Example 06 indicate that although joining the group could help members in gaining intercultural competency, the people who insisted on playing only one type of music would not orient to the group as a first priority. One's identity here is constructed in terms of one's participation in the community and a tendency to understand why the community encourages playing world music together, as members are accountable to the development of the enterprise.

4.4. Negotiability of Repertoire

Weekly rehearsals and socials among other activities became a history of meanings and patterns shared by participants. All the themes aforementioned have formed this fun experience with negotiated ways to see and do things. The happy times members shared together in turn encouraged and inspired them to continue their love for music, making WWMG and Fused an unforgettable experience.

4.5. Local-Global Interplay

The data shows that although the group and event happened locally, their importance is not only attached to local space, but also related to a global picture:

Example 07

Totally important in a world we are facing. We see things are more and more fragmented. We see things are more divided up by major global interest. It's fantastic to see all of that come close to one room, to one, yeah into one room and to give out…

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It's fantastic. (Audience Participants 3)

In Example 07, AP3 was concerned about a fragmented status, which is similar to the separation between different cultural groups, which the organisers tried to address through WWMG and Fused. The fact that a multicultural society is brought about by globalisation worldwide makes intercultural collaboration more important than ever.

Additionally, it seems that most participants believe that music can be shared, enjoyed and understood worldwide, as a universal language and a global enjoyment. The media may easily remind people of certain experiences in their life or bring them to a place and time in their imagination as one audience mentioned. People enjoy certain music, sometimes just because of the familiarity—an existing connection between their memories and the music. Music is observed to have a close association with people's empathy and emotion and OP3 believes music is thus a very accessible way for people to share cultures.

4.6. Platform as an Opportunity

Performers generally think the existence of WWMG and Fused allows them to have a chance to meet one another. It provides a neutral space, bringing people together to share, learn, practice and collaborate. These non-professional musicians literally have a platform by which to show their own music, during which a number of transformations beyond musical practice also occur. Distinctive ideas, cultural experiences and values were unavoidably involved. And participants' learning through music may be applied to a wider intercultural context beyond the world of music.

Positive Atmosphere. The artistic nature of music helps to create a neutral place that welcomes all cultures.

Example 08

I think that is a situation can be constructed where people of all ethnic, national, creed, race, belief system from wherever they are in the world, can have a mould into which they can all fit together in order to make music that people will want to listen to more of that manifestation. I think that's the arts to the audience thing. And the simple thing for me about the music making is that whatever your background, your nationality, your race, creed, belief system, if you can make music with one another, there's something we can all learn from this. That's beyond the music. And that's behind and above the music, and underneath, and to the sides of the music. There is more, and the music can lead us into that point of perception. (Organiser Participant 2)

In Example 08, a further effect of this positive climate created by music collaboration is explained. Music is emphasised as a catalyst for collective learning and mutual understanding, which is not only about music but *beyond* it. The "mould" as OP2 clarified, refers to a working mechanism that changes constantly according to different participants each year.

To meet and share with people. Every member had their own agenda and thus priorities:

some put an emphasis on introducing music from their own culture while others on the learning aspect. The diversity of WWMG facilitated its members in both learning music of other cultures directly and teaching their own, sharing music of and with each other.

Example 09

I have an opportunity to do, play music I have never played before in my life, and also play with music that is close to home as well. So it was really really refreshing to hear from like-minded individuals. And there was a platform for me to really continue my passion. (Memebr Participant 2)

Example 10

I think for international students, it is really interesting to be able to share different types of music. Well, for me, it is not particularly representative where I come from, it being so, rather urban style, b-boxing. But that for me has been able to sort of sing this, integrated with people. And I think that is something I really, well I could never ask for a better opportunity for that to happen in such a compact collaboration really. (Society Participant 2)

Example 09 and Example 10 indicate how musicians are happy to meet people who come from distinctive cultural backgrounds but still share the same interests and passions. It is observed that music sharing and musicians meeting are rarely separated from each other, because the goals of sharing and collaborating require both of them. This is also a feature of community of practice as an informal learning community. The whole point is that performers happily learn from and with each other, as OP2 explained:

Example 11

In this case, it's not about having cornet lessons, getting through some great system on your own in the practice room once a week for a lesson. It's about being inside a collective experience. The group itself creates this kind of thrust, and people becoming enthusiastic, and they start practicing, because they want to be able to deliver this piece of repertoire by such a, such a time. (Organiser Participant 2)

Answering to research questions, participants negotiated their musical and cultural identities through practicing the music of their cultures or that of the genres they are interested in, and through learning world music. How they love world music and how well they can play, how they engage with other musicians, how they see the world and how they think of the experience and the importance of WWMG and Fused, these are all parts of who they are. By joining the group, one's identity as a person who is open to new experiences and so willing to play music from different cultures was developed in learning and practising world music collectively. This experience is very likely to have an influence on their world view, and consequently, their

decisions and identities in future.

They have learnt to get along with people from different cultural backgrounds through music, developing a tendency to see open-mindedness in sharing and collaborating between people of diverse cultures as a positive and beneficial quality. This shared history and experience, which is described as fun, great and unforgettable, became a resource for these people to communicate in and even outside the group. WWMG and Fused is not only seen as a local event in the UK, but more like a reflection of the multicultural society brought about by globalisation, and an effective effort to bring people from different cultures together through music within such a context. The programme succeeded, because all the participants share a common opinion that music is a universal language in which people from every culture can understand and connect with one another.

During this intercultural learning process, the diverse nature of world music is indispensable. Along with participatory and collaborative features of the group and the event, they created a series of positive intercultural experiences for participants, which may enable them to be more enthusiastic and confident in initiating intercultural communication. A platform was provided to promote intercultural communication through music sharing on a large scale, bringing people to practise music together, and during the process more cross-cultural musical pieces were created (Duffy, 2005). Enjoying music together, participants were able to listen to and learn unfamiliar music, in which cultural knowledge and values were hidden. Furthermore, the time people spent together created shared perspectives and understandings, as shown in some themes, which helped participants to be more interculturally competent.

5. Discussion

Most findings are consistent with previous studies with a few exceptions. The absence of the key dimension of multimembership is worthy of discussion. The literature review indicated that one's reconciliation between multiple identities is fundamental and most challenging. However, in the data, it is not mentioned frequently, nor with great importance. This absence of the key dimension of multimembership from the identity framework may be due to the private and sensitive nature of the topic. On the one hand, one could say it is because music is only taken as a hobby, so no serious conflict of identity could be induced; on the other hand, the lack of need for balance may occur because of certain features of music, such as its ability to create an intimate connection between people more easily among others. The confidence gained through the stability and development of their musical identities may also have an anchoring effect, helping them to sort out the conflict they felt between their other identities, cultural identities in particular.

5.1. Findings and Previous Studies

First and foremost, open-mindedness is seen as a crucial feature of WWMG and Fused by all participants, which is also usually considered as a necessary factor in promoting intercultural communication (Bennett, 2004; Deardorff, 2006; Spencer-Oatey & Stadler, 2009). By practising in the community, one's open-mindedness towards unfamiliar cultures particularly

has a great opportunity to be developed. As an identity in the form of competency, members improved their intercultural competency in this process, no matter whether it is considered as a knowledge competency (Spencer-Oatey & Stadler, 2009) or a prerequisite attitude (Deardorff, 2006). No agreement has yet been reached in the field regarding the exact nature and source of this openness. What they do share in common is an individual's curiosity, openness, and willingness to learn new things. Aside from the theories, it is found that international students generally think local students do not know or are not interested in learning their culture (Smart, Volet & Ang, 2000). Therefore, this willingness to learn is extremely significant in the communication between participants.

Besides, what participants learnt about world music and instruments, as well as the backgrounds of other participants, is relatively reliable information from direct cultural informants. Such knowledge has broadened their musical horizons as well as their cultural horizons, and along with the skill to play or sing it can also be a quite valuable resource to initiate communication with music they are familiar with.

Careful listening and observing are emphasised as important intercultural skills as well as identity negotiation skills (Ting-Toomey, 2005). This ability is particularly enhanced by the nature of music, since enjoying music itself requires one to utilise such skills (Levitin, 2008). A good collaboration between musicians further requires one to pay attention to others' performance attentively in order to play together harmoniously.

Findings show that participation in WWMG helps members to relieve academic pressure and fit into a bigger environment. Members mentioned several times feeling refreshed and relaxed after their music practices, after playing music and after talking to other musicians. This mood-adjusting function of music listening or practising corresponds to previous research on music (Hargreaves, Miell & MacDonald, 2002). It is suggested that the arts can act "as ways of creating and sharing emotional communication with other humans, thereby transmitting group knowledge and instilling a sense of 'coping' that could relieve individual anxiety and foster one-heartedness and social solidarity" (Dissanayake, 2001, p. 98). Every type of musical practice is social and intrinsically communicative, no matter whether it involves listening alone or making music together (Barrett, 2005).

Diversity is indispensable to the development of people and civilisations, and this awareness is shared (Shachar & Amir, 1996, as cited in Ward, 2001). However, while agreeing with the existence of a common humanity, one should be careful not to stretch it too far into unconditional universalism; while supporting diversity, one should be cautious not to turn ethnocentric (Tu, 2001). There is always a dilemma between unity and diversity, and Tu argues "only through genuine dialogue as mutual learning... will we be able to achieve unity in diversity and build an integrated global community" (Berry & Sam, 1997; Tu, 2001, p. 496). This observation is applicable to integration programmes on campus, musical or not. The fast growth of WWMG and Fused provides an illustration of how to balance this, and also offers a suggestion of ideal integration.

In this aspect, world music is a great way to help start a genuine dialogue, since it is a cultural artefact that can enable people to feel cultural differences very illustratively and intuitively, while being generally less threatening (Levitin, 2008).

While a multicultural society may be an ideal, the idea of multiculturalism seems to focus

more on the equal co-existence of different groups in one place (Walser, 2000, as cited in Klopper, 2010). The intention is good, but without care it may also stumble into undesirable separation between groups and a dominant society, as Trevor Phillips has criticised (Casciani, 2005). Insufficient integration seems to be a main shortcoming of multiculturalism (Malik, 2015). Collaboration and understanding thus are inseparable for an ideal social integration and harmonious society. The concept of "inclusiveness" is also repeatedly mentioned as a unique feature of world music, an important factor in the success of WWMG and Fused, and an advantageous quality of identity in starting intercultural communication. It seems the more inclusive one's thinking and identity becomes, the easier it is for them to be open to sharing, learning and understanding new things interculturally (Kim, 2009).

When a neutral space as well as a common ground such as WWMG and Fused are provided, intercultural communication between musicians and the audiences of world music can be precipitated. However, it should be noted that world music, WWMG and Fused are still just catalysts. Listening is only the first step to an effective intercultural communication, which is not complete until people actively participate, exploring the cultural context behind the music, and talking with people from different cultural grounds.

In terms of implication, as Levitin (2008) explains, early exposure to different tonal systems is recommended in music education for children to lay a good foundation, including cognitive abilities like perspective-taking, imagination and recontextualisation for open-mindedness in and beyond music; and further, the metaphorical aspect of messages conveyed in music prevents confrontation on sensitive issues from happening, helping one to feel and thus understand things from a neutral stance. This specific characteristic also lets people participate in interpretation, inviting them to analyse and "fill in" intercultural meanings with their own experience and imaginations consciously or unconsciously (Bird, 1996, as cited in Cortés, 2004; Levitin, 2008, p. 32). It leaves a large space for discussion, which is advantageous to intercultural training for adults (Cortés, 2004).

5.2. Conclusion

The major contribution of this study has been to explore intercultural communication as it occurs in the musical practice of WWMG and Fused through a close examination of the identity negotiation of participants.

It is found that world music communities with diverse, collaborative and participatory characteristics can help its participants to be more interculturally competent through the process of appreciating, learning, practicing and performing music of distinctive cultures introduced by one another. The musical and thus cultural identity was reaffirmed, negotiated and developed with the active practice in rehearsals and performance of WWMG and Fused. Music is especially an effective medium by which to create a neutral stage for people to enjoy communicating with each other. Therefore this study is important because it supports the assumption that equal intercultural communication and integration can be facilitated through world music with its transcultural nature effectively, while also providing guidance for developing programmes with similar features and intercultural goals.

5.3. Methodological Reflections

It is acknowledged that as a single case study, the generalisability of the research is questionable. It cannot provide an exact evaluation of the influence the case has on intercultural communication. The researcher's stance also unavoidably affected the collection and analysis of data, as with other qualitative studies. Finally, the study is located in a very specific context—a higher education institution in the UK with a high percentage of international demographic.

Single-case study is chosen partly because of its feasibility within a short time period and budget. The study is therefore preliminary. If given longer time, more data could be collected for a truly longitudinal research, as well as an ethnographic one. Considering the features of CoP theory, the potential of its framework can be brought into full play in these two types of research (Wenger, 1998).

5.4. Recommendation for Future Research

Within the same case boundary, an ethnographic research into WWMG and Fused is necessary to provide a more detailed depiction and further answer questions that have emerged from this case study. For instance, one member participant who also joined a music group of his own culture mentioned his closest friends are in that group of co-nationals. There is no doubt that with WWMG, communication increased among international students and between home students, but how much influence can this have on its members' quality of friendship?

The contextual conditions, which are described as a "crazy bubble", contributed to the uniqueness and success of the group and the event. Meanwhile, this raises another question, namely, whether it is so unique that it can only happen under such a situation. A multiple-case study would thus be useful to examine the influence of contextual factors, comparing intercultural communication happening in several world music groups.

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Author Note

Appendix: Transcription Conventions

(hello)   Transcriber's best guess at unclear utterance
{it was}   Words added in English translation to help comprehension
?   Rising or questioning intonation
[...]   Section of transcript omitted

The transcription conventions are adapted from Schnurr, S. (2012). *Exploring professional communication: Language in action*. Routledge.