

“THE BUS CAME BY AND I GOT ON, THAT’S WHEN IT ALL BEGAN:” AN
ORAL HISTORY OF THE JAM BAND MUSIC SCENE IN THE UNITED STATES

by

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Abstract

Before this thesis, there did not exist much scholarship on jam bands, and none of it from the point of view of participants. This oral history explains the history and cultural context behind jam bands and details the conducting of narrative interviews with 10 participants about their experiences at jam band shows and festivals. It addresses the topic of social cohesion at these shows and festivals and how that cohesion manifests. The resultant testimony, coupled with the author's own experiences and insight, clearly show that social cohesion is a central facet of the jam band scene and experience, and that cohesion manifests as energy between participants and the band, as well as an "ethos" of a helpful and kind nature that typically focuses on the group over the individual. Participants did also report, however, that social ills like theft and sexual harassment are still present at shows and festivals, albeit infrequently. This study found that participants feel they hold a deep connection between not only their minds and their bodies, solidified by bodily-musical movement at shows and festivals, but between their emotions & understanding of themselves and the world, and the music. Finally, all of these experiences at jam band shows and festivals, together, lead to what participants describe as transcendent and spiritual experiences.

Chapter 1: Introduction

I began listening to the music of Grateful Dead around the year 2016. I had never before considered myself a Deadhead, but I was always open to listening to something new. As I explored the sounds, I realized that there was, beyond the many adjectives one could use to describe the Dead, a distinctive character to this music. I saw my first Dead & Co. (the most recent iteration of Grateful Dead) concert the summer of 2017. By that point, I still didn't, and still don't know, all the songs, but it was truly an amazing experience, and I knew I was on to something. That same summer I went to my first LOCKN Festival in Bristow, Virginia. That was what really changed my life and turned me into a complete and utter Head. From these early beginnings, I started to see the patterns of kindness and generosity that would come to fully characterize this music scene for me, all the way to the point that I sit here writing this thesis. The experience that finally convinced me to undertake this project was at 2019's LOCKN Festival. On the first night of the 4-day weekend (Thursday), there was, as seems to be destiny for many music festivals, a massive rain and thunderstorm. Tents and easy-ups were torn asunder and lifted high into the summer air as mud cascaded down the rolling hills. The sight as this unfolded were people in campers and RVs beckoning strangers toward their shelter, to keep them safe from the tempest raging outside. After the dust settled and the sky cleared, what was left were ruins of former campsites. Instead of the owners of the RVs and campers sending these wayward souls to make do alone, the entirety of that

festival seemed to collectively rise and work together as equals to rebuild and repair what had been lost. What was most striking to me throughout this experience is that this entire process was unspoken. Nobody asked for help. Nobody gave instruction. We just got it done. That experience, and some contrary experiences I've had at other live music events (like just a general lack of care for those not considered family or friends), suggested to me that there was something worth exploring in this music scene in regards to social cohesion and the ways in which people interact and perceive those interactions in these live music spaces.

For this project, I conducted narrative interviews with jam band music scene participants about their experiences at live jam band music events, to find out how socially cohesive those participants perceive the jam band scene to be, in order to contribute new perspectives to the scholarly discourse surrounding: 1) the concept of 'social cohesion,' variously defined by Stefan Koelsch, Jane Jenson, and D.R. Forsyth, 2) the concept of both "publics" and "social imaginaries" as defined by Michael Warner and Byron Dueck, respectively, and 3) the conception of the jam band scene for those both within and without its membership. The problem set out before me was conceptual. The concept better understood is how socially cohesive the members of the jam band scene perceived it, and what that means for the previously mentioned scholarship. I have taken the prevailing theories concerning the effects of live music, festivals, and jam bands on listeners, conducted interviews with those listeners and used those theories as a lens through which to view their experiences, all this to find out which of the theories should inform or corroborate my understanding of the relationship between jam band music and

the group dynamics amongst the participants of those types of festivals and shows. This clearer understanding of this concept could lead to other insights of how music affects conscious experience, as well as fill a knowledge gap in multiple disciplines, such as ethnomusicology, musicology, musical healing, folklore, and cultural & community studies. This research primarily responds to scholarship on social cohesion, jam bands, and publics & social imaginaries, by Stefan Koelsch, Peter Connors, as well as Michael Warner & Byron Dueck, respectively. However, that is not to say that there is a gap any wider in these works, in fact, it is narrower in that these are the works most relevant to my own research as a whole. Beyond those few works already mentioned, there has been, despite some research in the area of group dynamics in live music scenes, a lack of focus on the perspectives of fans themselves and instead many attempts to reach an objective truth about scenes of various genres, which can be an essentialist folly in and of itself. Currently, there is nobody asking my exact research questions regarding jam bands and social cohesion.

Through conducting this research, I had several hopes in mind for its relevance: This study will give the academic community a new way of conceptualizing a style of music they may not even be familiar with in the first place. My research will detail what “social cohesion” means and how it manifests, for the jam band community specifically. My research will give a new perspective to ongoing conversations on “publics” and “imaginaries.” Finally, my research will add to the small amount of scholarship that exists on jam bands themselves, bolstering the academic recognition of this music. My interviews themselves will also give a very tentative understanding of the jam band scene

and the fans of the many bands of numerous genres of music included in that style, constructed in a symbiotic association between myself and those fans. I hope that upon successful completion of my Master's degree, I or any other future music researcher, will be able to continue applying a methodology similar to the one presented here to other genres and styles of music. In that case, academics would be able to compare and cross-reference those results to form an even greater understanding of "social cohesion" and the ways in which music affects our lives and interactions with others.

My initial prediction when creating this thesis was that the participants of the scene would indeed find it socially cohesive, and I went a step further to predict that the musical structure itself would be the defining factor in why that strong cohesion exists. It was, in some ways, confirmed, in that the participants did report finding the scene socially cohesive to varying degrees and with numerous conditions. Many also cited the special nature of this music as, at the very least, the catalyst for their involvement in this scene. At first, I was thinking of these predictions as hypotheses, but focus on a hypothesis, or even concrete predictions for that matter, was lessened as this project shifted from a mixed methods approach to a strictly qualitative approach, that process detailed in the methodology chapter.

I chose to work on jam band festivals and shows because it is a style of music I know well, both academically and personally. The population studied are simply any adults (18 years or older) who have attended a jam band festival or series of shows in the

United States since 1965, and are willing to share their experiences with me.¹ My own observations are what lead to the creation of this thesis. I did, starting out, hold some presupposed ideas based on those observations, which helped me to craft my methodology. In the methodology chapter itself, I will explain the many changes this thesis undertook to become what it is at completion. I used my literature review to prepare myself for all possible answers I may have received in my interviews.

The structure of this document consists of this introduction chapter which includes the following background section, the review of the literature, and the methods used. After the methodology, there are the findings and conclusion chapters where I will discuss my findings along with their subsequent implications, respectively. Following the findings will be an appendix which lists all of my basic interview questions, followed by the timeline for the project. I have included as the last items of this thesis, a glossary of terms useful when reading my work, and a glossary of terms beyond my research purposes, but pertinent in the jam band scene, to help provide a full mental image of the stories herein, as well as a list of bands and festivals for suggested listening.

Background

There exists a style of music based on a simple idea: explore musical possibilities by spending great amounts of time improvising. These long periods of collective improvisation in the middle of and between what we know as “songs” are termed “jams.”

¹ During my time spent interviewing participants, I did not speak to anyone who was disabled, pregnant, or a member of some other protected group, and these were not target populations.

A jam can and does last anywhere from 1 to sometimes upwards of 60 minutes, depending on the band playing. Bands that often jam can be from any and all known genres of music, since one of their only defining features is never playing a song the same way twice, but several of the most influential have been jazz, bluegrass, old-time, country-western, rock 'n' roll, funk, and during various periods, even disco.

First of all, there is no easily categorized, unified “jam band scene.” When I use the phrasing “jam band scene,” throughout this thesis, it refers to a web of interconnected music scenes, each with their own unique practices and discourse, but all sharing an underlying theme of connectivity and not only hearing the jams, but feeling them, deeply. Not only is the social scene nebulous to a high degree, but so is the musical structure. To reiterate, I use the word “style” to describe jam band music, rather than “genre,” as the performance practice of this music is almost like a research methodology: no matter what the “content” is (thereby the “genre” in most people’s minds), you can conduct these same methods: lay down a set of chords, however complex, and find what you are able to inside that musical space.² In this background section, I will give a brief history of the jam band style, including as well, any details necessary to understand what the jam band scene is and how it progressed to be the much more concrete, yet still fluid concept that we know today, in both a musical sense and a social sense. Finally, I speak to some necessary background scholarship on live music in general.

As is discussed in this section and the thesis as a whole, but should be made clearer here, the Grateful Dead originated this specific style of playing that has since

² Read my entry on “genre” in the key terms appendix to see me deconstruct the concept.

evolved into a set of many different fluid styles of music all under the somewhat vague term “jam band.” This thesis is heavily focused on the Grateful Dead and their surrounding scene, in regard to the previously mentioned conclusion based on an historical analysis, as well as in regard to what most of my participants discussed in their interviews. The term jam band was not coined until the 1990s in order to describe Phish and Widespread Panic, despite it functionally having its origins as a style with Grateful Dead.³ Of course, progressive rock bands like Pink Floyd, The Moody Blues, King Crimson, and Jethro Tull for example were all experimenting with improvisation during Grateful Dead’s tenure, but the *core* of their aspirations came from the desire to create entirely unique sounds from a timbral perspective, often utilizing the technology of a recording studio and using distortion in a more consistent way. Grateful Dead, on the other hand, were taking aspects of early rock ‘n’ roll, psychedelic rock, and country-western to create an “Americana” amalgam completely focused on taking those genre conventions to their limits and, most importantly, making live performance the centerpiece of their style. There is a somewhat separate but still connected set of scenes sometimes called “southern jam band” that typically is thought to start chronologically with the Allman Brothers Band. The Allman Brothers Band is probably more of a straight blues band than a jam band, but there is some serious overlap.⁴

³ Jacob A. Cohen, “Jam Band,” *Grove Music Online*, last modified July 25, 2013, accessed October 2, 2020, <https://www-oxfordmusiconline-com.mutex.gmu.edu/grovemusic/view/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.001.0001/omo-9781561592630-e-1002241809?rkey=r9gbMr&result=1>.

⁴ This paragraph was put together from a mixture of my own observations, general knowledge, and picking up patterns through years of listening to these various bands. Furthermore, the point about progressive rock bands, for example, could be translated into being a representation of “studio audio art,”

The scene, before it was one, in the sense of being connected to a cultural phenomenon, started in the mid-to-late 1960s, primarily in San Francisco, with Ken Kesey's exploratory gatherings known as the "Acid Tests."⁵ There are countless places both online and in-person for finding sources related to the counterculture of the 1960s, but the short version is: it was a period of great change, experimentation, and social upheaval typically represented by the summer of 1967, otherwise known as the Summer of Love. This period was characterized primarily by the hippie archetype, and furthermore the rise of modern versions of Bohemian and alternative lifestyles, as well as a rise in anti-authoritarian, collective, creative expression. This movement was also heavily involved with the civil rights struggles of that decade.

These values were the foundation for Grateful Dead's "philosophy." They were always focused on the music. I am not attempting to claim that Grateful Dead's members never valued the income they made from the plethora of shows they did over their 30 long years of touring, but it was certainly never their primary motivation. Creating one-of-a-kind musical experiences was their main directive. Jam band music, no matter the genre, being distinctly American, and despite taking considerable influence from jazz, is likely most closely related to bluegrass and old-time music for a few reasons: all of these styles are, with the exception of most iterations of old-time, all highly virtuosic, in the way we traditionally understand that concept. Most importantly, the concept of the jam is

one of Thomas Turino's *4 Social Fields of Music*. See my entry on this work in the Key Terms appendix for more.

⁵ For an in-depth look at Kesey and his Merry Pranksters, see Tom Wolfe's *Electric Kool-Aid Acid Test*.

also a central facet of both bluegrass and old-time music. In fact, Grateful Dead started as a jug band, an offshoot of old-time, called Mother McCree's Uptown Jug Champions.⁶ From about the year 1983 onward, numerous jam bands appeared, many of them coming from a great variety of genres, but all sharing the jamming thread. For example, Phish, founded in 1983, is one of the first bands to approach music as the Dead had: starting from a place of interdisciplinarity, musically speaking, and making the pursuit of the jam the guiding principle, knowing that all other supplementary details will follow.⁷

As the reader will learn in the findings chapter, the modern scene is a continuation of similar values and discourse to the ones that presented themselves in the earliest iterations of American jam band music. The one aspect of the jam band scene that most mainstream media outlets seem to focus on is the rabid dedication with which jam band fans, and specifically Deadheads, will continue to see the same band time and time again. While there are many more facets of this scene than just that one, as will be expounded upon in the findings chapter, that dedication exists in the scene as well.

One of the most iconic and important parts of the jam band scene is the Lot. Once again, this started with Grateful Dead, but has continued as a tradition for many other jam band fanbases. Within the Deadhead community, it is often called "Shakedown Street" in reference to the 1978 song, and album, of the same name. The Lot involves a legion of fans turned entrepreneurs who convene in the parking lot of a venue or find themselves

⁶ Much of the information in this section comes from Amazon's 2017 documentary *Long Strange Trip*. It is a sufficiently full and accurate history of Grateful Dead and includes many interviews.

⁷ The suggested listening appendix is only the fraction of bands of which I know from being informed by my interview participants, my own experiences, or conducting my own research on the matter.

mobile salespeople during a festival. The official vending areas of some festivals are occasionally referred to as “Shakedown Street” by festival administrators, but typically the fans reserve the title for those in a more *de facto*, less *de jure*, capacity. These vendors sell anything from food and drink, to clothing, jewelry, art, and of course psychoactive substances. The money made from a few shows is usually used to fund the continued journey until they have saved up enough to get a ticket inside, and they essentially get to take the night off and enjoy the music from within the venue. In festivals, it is slightly different, the vendors walking around campsites have already purchased their passes, but they can recoup costs by selling their wares on the festival grounds.⁸

Finally, one of the other most important parts of the jam band scene is that of their sober communities. Because drugs are such a ubiquitous part of the scene, many fans have had substance abuse issues. Over time, people who have overcome their addictions but are still hooked on jams can still attend shows in a safe and supportive environment. Each band typically has their own version of the same concept: a tightly knit community of people that can support the enjoyment of the music without drugs or alcohol. Within the Deadhead community they are called the Wharf Rats, in reference to the 1971 song of the same name.

The literature surrounding the overall phenomena of festivals and shows would suggest that they are both forms of release. They are able to experience and act

⁸ May I suggest, for those curious to learn more about the Lot from the people who *are* the lot, check out the following Facebook groups: The first is called Deadhead Stories. After a certain amount of time, all of the posts from that group are compiled into a book, also titled *Deadhead Stories*. <https://www.facebook.com/groups/Deadheadstorieswanted>. The second is called Dead Lot, and consists of Lot vendors and concertgoers alike, often selling their wares through the Internet, but sometimes just sharing an anecdote or asking questions about a specific show. <https://www.facebook.com/groups/deadlot/>.

differently than they could and would at home, at work, or at school.⁹ They may ingest substances they typically would not, such as psychoactive drugs (cannabis, LSD, MDMA, etc.), or may simply imbibe to a greater degree than is normal for them.¹⁰ They may be willing to engage in sexual acts with those they knew previously or those they've just met.¹¹ They may feel a sense of belonging, and may act more altruistically than usual.¹² Of course, with any study there are outliers, and I am certain that there are those who exhibit no change in behavior or perspective when attending a festival or show.

Everything included in this section is crucial for first constructing a framework of general knowledge about jam bands, the way they play music, and the kind of scene that has built up around them. Having that framework is important so that when the reader reaches Chapter 5: Findings, they can smoothly integrate what they see there with their overall understanding of the scene.

⁹ Lucy Maddox, "The Psychology of Dancing at Festivals," Huffington Post, August 6, 2014.

¹⁰ Grace Fleisher, "Report: The Most Commonly Used Drugs at Music Festivals," Dancing Astronaut, last modified April 25, 2018, accessed September 28, 2019.

¹¹ TickPick, "The Most Promiscuous Music Festivals: An Overview of Hookup Culture at Music Festivals in America," last modified 2019, accessed September 28, 2019.

¹² Casey Lowdermilk, "Improvisation and Reciprocity: An Analysis of the Jam Band Community and Its Unique Business Model," *Journal of the Music & Entertainment Industry Educators* 7, no. 1 (2007): 159-176.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

For this study, many types of sources were used to construct and present a theoretical and practical framework. Featured in the following literature review are journal and magazine articles, books, both scholarly and popular, videos, webpages, lectures, theses and dissertations, as well as reference works. I will begin by bringing up the three groups of sources which are most relevant to the study: those dealing with a set of conceptions about social cohesion, followed by work studying the formation of “publics” & “counterpublics,” and finally, scholarship on jam bands. After, I will include some sources about the general effects of music on the mind and body, the social aspects of live music in general, the general effects of festivals of any kind of genres or themes on people’s shared practices and discourse, and lastly what goes into organizing a festival event. In terms of what one should take from this section: it would seem that social cohesion and music are deeply tied and each operate together to facilitate many various social functions. Cultures and subcultures go by many more specific academic names with their own specific implications for the way we understand human interaction. While it can be difficult to always properly categorize a musical act as being a jam band or not, they have defining characteristics involving both the ways they make music as well as how the scene manifests. Music is a highly affective art medium that can heavily influence the ways in which people think about the world around them. The organization of a festival or venue can have effects on how the music is perceived.

I have organized this literature review based on each scholarly work's relevance to my own, so the first three sections constitute the main "scholarly conversations" that my research will be confirming, denying, or qualifying. The following four sections are strains of the literature that tangentially relate to my own research. I include them here because they resonate somewhat with what my interview participants had to say. Crucially, not only do some of the sources within the literature review overlap across multiple of its categories, but some of them are used in other chapters of this thesis as well. Some inform methodology, others are used in a specific "key terms" appendix.

Social Cohesion

This section is the most important of the literature review, not only because "social cohesion" itself is a major term in my research statement, but because the scholarship in this section give several different but concordant perspectives on social and group cohesion and the related term, "community." Social cohesion is a term with a complex series of definitions and applications. In its most clinical sense, it is simply a phenomenon in which human beings form connections within social groups that then influence the ways in which the members of that group interact. In a more real and emotional sense, the term refers to the strong bonds that people form when they feel connected to each other, for one reason or another. It also has political applications in that governments and organizations have attempted to instill or create social cohesion amongst people for specific ethnic or nationalistic purposes, but I will primarily be using

the more generic definition. Music seems to play a large role in affecting the social cohesion of a group.

Psychologist and neuroscientist Stefan Koelsch's work includes the primary understanding of social cohesion from which I derive my own understanding of the term (due to its dealing with music *and* social cohesion), and to which I will compare the new perspective gained through this research. In his article, "From Social Contact to Social Cohesion – The 7 Cs," Koelsch discusses how music making promotes social cohesion amongst humans for a variety of reasons. Several of his points do actually apply to music listeners as well, despite no introduction of the study suggesting as much. His main point is that music making has seven social functions, to which the "7 Cs" in the title refer: Music making incites Contact amongst people.¹³ The same goes for listening. Koelsch also cites W.R. Crozier's study, included in *The Social Psychology of Music*, on dancing and its ability to promote that same social contact, in what Crozier calls a "socially acceptable manner." Crozier adds that because that contact "adds value to the music," people, despite the preponderance of "high quality recordings," will "go to the trouble of attending concerts."¹⁴ Listening to music engages Social Cognition. Koelsch's example is that people, when listening to music in general, even nontonal music, as was the case in his study, will very quickly focus on discovering the intentions of the composer, a process he calls "mental state attribution." Being a part of a live musical event stimulates

¹³ Stefan Koelsch, "From Social Contact to Social Cohesion – The 7 Cs," *Music and Medicine* 5, no. 4 (2013), 204.

¹⁴ W.R. Crozier, "Music and Social Influence," in *The Social Psychology of Music*, David J. Hargreaves and Adrian North, eds. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997).

the development of Co-path, a social function of empathy that results in the “homogenization of interindividual empathic states.” When people listen to music, they perceive an emotion coming from either the music itself or the musician. They, in a way unlike the well documented ability of the brain to mimic behavior, actively attempt to mirror this emotion in order to understand that perspective. Both music making and listening involve Communication, which is important for “social, emotional, and cognitive development.” It would seem that there is substantial overlap between “the cognitive mechanisms” behind both language and music. Music Coordinates and synchronizes actions amongst both players and listeners. The “shared goal” in these movements created pleasure in the people Koelsch studied. Successfully playing music necessarily requires high levels of Cooperation, and does not reward selfish actions. The last “C” is the main term itself, Social Cohesion. Koelsch declares that music making and listening “lead to increased social cohesion of a group” due to a “need to belong and form strong and enduring personal attachments,” as well as a “confidence in reciprocal care and in opportunities to perform these social functions again in the future.”¹⁵ Each of the listed social functions here, I believe, have implications and interpretations in the jam band scene, which the findings chapter illuminates.

According to sociologist and political scientist, Jane Jenson, many scholars and global organizations (re)defined social cohesion as being centered on social inclusion. This was part of a movement Jenson calls “after neoliberalism” and included vast developments in social policies and a focus on ensuring citizen rights in countries around

¹⁵ Koelsch, “From Social Contact to Social Cohesion – The 7 Cs.”

the world. Jenson states this movement starts in 1980, but takes place mostly during the 1990s.¹⁶ Social psychologist, D.R. Forsyth, clarifies that the terms “social cohesion” and “group cohesion” are indeed both used to refer to the creation of links within a social group between the individuals of that group as well as to the group as a singularity.¹⁷ This is clearly connected to sociologist David Studdert’s ideas about community and the way that it is created.

A term that is not the focus of this study, but is thoroughly connected to social cohesion, is “community.” The contemporary view of the idea of “community” is that its former anchoring to schemas of meanings and hierarchies is an outdated view, coming out of modernity. Instead, Studdert suggests we view community as a series of actions. He claims that action is a unique experience each time, unlike thought, and “establishes relationships” between people, while denaturing those former webs of meaning. Importantly, Studdert also claims that any group of people, at any level of organization, has potential to be considered a community.¹⁸ This has obvious applications for my research in that I can measure the degree to which jam band fans take action to form a community amongst the festival participants.

Furthermore, I have gleaned similar insight into interactions between people from a psychological study conducted in Japan by psychologist Yukiko Uchida, economist

¹⁶ Jane Jenson, *Defining and Measuring Social Cohesion* (London: Commonwealth Secretariat, 2010).

¹⁷ D.R. Forsyth, *Group Dynamics*, 5th ed. (Boston: Wadsworth – Cengage Learning, 2010), 118-122.

¹⁸ David Studdert, *Conceptualizing Community: Beyond the State and Individual* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), 186-187.

Kosuke Takemura, and social scientist specializing in communication studies Shintaro Fukushima. While the study is based on interactions in farming communities of East Asia, the authors admit there are some applications in “non-farming” contexts. Their conclusions are that certain thinking styles and forms of adaptation and survival are tied to one’s environment. They cite “collective activity” as a main factor influencing community cohesion.¹⁹ It would seem that there are many collective activities that take place at a jam band show or festival, which actually did play into the ways people conceptualized the cohesiveness of the community.

Despite the studies found in this section coming from the, somewhat disparate from my own, disciplines of psychology, sociology, political science, and neuroscience, they have important implications for the ways in which we understand how humans process reality, which is really what I am studying when you break it down to its constituent parts. They constitute, as a unit, the most important section in this thesis when compared to the following sections.

How Do We Study a Subculture?

Understanding the constituent parts of cultures has become a central segment of this study. Having the knowledge of the different but connected terms used to describe cultures and subcultures helps to put my research into a larger set of conclusions about the ways in which humans orient themselves to each other across various themes.

¹⁹ Yukiko Uchida, Kosuke Takemura, and Shintaro Fukushima, “How Do Socio-Ecological Factors Shape Culture? Understanding the Process of Micro-Macro Interactions,” *Current Opinion in Psychology* 32 (2020): 115-119.

“Publics,” “counterpublics,” “imaginaries,” “liquidity,” and “intimacy” are all terms which give us an idea of what social groups are and how they operate.

In his article “Publics and Counterpublics,” literary critic and social theorist Michael Warner first differentiates between “the” public and “a” public. “The public” is a totality which refers to all humans in any one area. “A public,” on the other hand, is a specific group that has certain qualities. Warner lays out the seven characteristics that are associated with publics, as he defines them: “self-organized, involves relation among strangers, have both personal and impersonal aspects, are constituted through attention, are created by the reflexive circulation of discourse, operate according to their temporality, and are a poetic form of world-making.” Finally, he defines a “counterpublic” as being a public possessing all of the mentioned characteristics, but with an added power dynamic in relation to a dominant public against which the counterpublic operates.²⁰ We will see that jam bands are indeed a form of “counterpublic” that operates on and for the fringes of mainstream society.

Ethnomusicologist Byron Dueck uses the term “imaginaries” to refer to the social relationships outlined by Warner’s “publics” and “counterpublics.” Dueck also defines “intimacy” as the “getting to know each other” aspects of both “public spaces” and “imaginaries.”²¹ Thinking about the jam band scene in these terms allows one to place it on a sort of spectrum of social relationships amongst other scenes. Based on my research,

²⁰ Michael Warner, “Publics and Counterpublics,” *Public Culture* 14, no. 1 (2002), 50-86.

²¹ Byron Dueck, *Musical Intimacies and Indigenous Imaginaries: Aboriginal Music and Dance in Public Performance* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2013).

the jam band scene is very idiosyncratic in terms of those relationships, in more ways than just musical structure and the direct testimony of my interview participants.

Much of what ethnomusicologist Luis-Manuel Garcia discusses in his dissertation on intimacy in EDM nightclubs in Paris, Chicago, and Berlin, is what I've observed in my live jam band music experiences. Crucial to Garcia's argument is the term "liquidity," inspired by Lauren Berlant's usage of "intimacy" in her book *Intimacy*, despite his lack of a citation. Garcia basically finds that there is a sense of belonging on the dancefloors of nightclubs in these cities. The way he describes "liquidity" in these spaces is as follows:

a slippery togetherness that manages to hold a heterogeneous and unconnected crowd. In crowds that are loosely ligated by liquidity, vague recognitions and resonances reduce the sense of strangeness in strangers while preserving a sense of anonymity, thus casting a halo of collectivity without identity. Liquidity describes a space of fluid belonging that nonetheless provides a sufficiently firm ground for gestures of social cohesion and, in so doing, fosters an atmosphere of intimacy on the dancefloor.²²

There still seems to be, compared to what we find in the findings chapter, a "standoff-ish" nature to the scene described. There is not the same anonymity at a jam band concert, but there is still the same "collectivity without identity," which seems to preclude a need for anonymity in jam band spaces.

In an article titled "Audiovisual Ethnography: New Paths for Research and Representation in Ethnomusicology," ethnomusicologist Nicola Scaldaferri details technological developments in terms of ethnographic tools. His conclusions were that

²² Luis-Manuel Garcia, "Can You Feel It Too?": *Intimacy and Affect at Electronic Dance Music Events in Paris, Chicago, and Berlin* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2011), 113.

with the availability of better and better audiovisual recording technology, ethnographers are able to capture more data. However, researchers must be careful to contextualize all data and to choose the correct medium which will best present the way of life of a people. Sometimes that means only recording sound or only taking photographs rather than a video, depending on the situation. Throughout the article, he of course, in general, urges readers to make use of any technology feasible.²³ I will, throughout my study, make use of technology, but I mention this study here, rather than in methodology, because I do not feel that my study necessitates a strict consideration of technology at all times.

It was not a mistake that, although all but one of the sources in this section was written by an ethnomusicologist, the section is titled regarding “subcultures” generally. There are a plethora of sources from nearly every discipline regarding the idea of “subcultures.” If I was to produce a succinct and relevant literature review, I had to narrow down my sources by who had asked questions specifically pertinent to my study. This section was a reflection of that process.

What Is a Jam Band?

All of the following sources are included in order to illustrate some of the characteristics of the jam band scene from the academic perspective. My interviews offer the affective, participant perspective. As with everything else in the literature review, these are used to compare the academic view with the view of the participants

²³ Nicola Scaldaferri, “Chapter 21: Audiovisual Ethnography: New Paths for Research and Representation in Ethnomusicology,” in *Musical Listening in the Age of Technological Reproduction*, Gianmario Borio, ed., 373-392, Musical Cultures of the Twentieth Century 1 (Surrey, England: Ashgate Publishing, 2015).

themselves. As was detailed in the background section, jam bands are groups of musicians who have decided that improvisation is one of, if not the, most important aspect of a musical experience. Furthermore, improvisation is connected to the essence of what is the core of that musical experience: creativity. Lastly, we'll find that the existence and proliferation of jam bands necessitates the close connections referenced by using the term "social cohesion."

In his book *JAMerica: The History of the Jam Band and Festival Scene*, author and independent scholar, Peter Connors, describes the basic framework for understanding jam bands: "At the core of all jam bands is a dedication to improvisation as a chance to create a unique, spontaneous, artistic/musical event shared between band and audience. A jam band cannot reach that point without the energy of the audience. Nor can the audience reach it without the band." Connors calls this a "shared agreement between the band and the fan." He lists four defining characteristics of jam bands:

1. Dedication to a singular musical event between band and audience driven by improvisational moments.
2. Possessing a certain level of musicianship and virtuosity. Connors is careful here to essentialize. He brings up bands which choose to evoke an "old-time" feel in their music, which often materializes as a lack of that virtuosity in favor of what he calls a "less polished, rougher-hewn, homemade sound."
3. Emphasis on live performance over studio recordings.
4. Conscious efforts by bands to connect with a grassroots following of fans. This connection is what creates entire cultures centered around being a fan of a certain band.²⁴

The work of music industry professional Casey Lowdermilk also lies at the core of my own. He describes why jam bands are a novel and enduring staple of the musical

²⁴ Peter Connors, *JAMerica: The History of the Jam Band and Festival Scene* (Philadelphia: Da Capo Books, 2013), x-xi.

scene: One major aspect of the jam band scene is the concept of taping. At most jam band shows, if you venture to somewhere in the back-middle of the crowd, you will find a sea of tripods holding up long stands with high-powered microphones affixed to the top, peering out over the audience to capture every note. You may find this at concerts featuring non-jam-band acts, but the difference is that at a jam band show, those microphones belong to amateur recording technicians and usually, superfans. Anybody with the equipment, the know-how, and the desire, can enter an establishment and leave with their very own recording of that performance. Most bands and their associated managers and record companies do not allow the making of bootleg copies of shows. The reasons for doing so are probably obvious to most concertgoers, despite those reasons resting on some false assumptions. The assumption that record sales are a band or musician's primary income source is simply not the case. Most bands make their money from ticket sales and merchandise. The question most record executives would ask at this point is "Well if you can record the show, what is the point of ever going to see that band again?" This brings us back to that other defining feature of jam bands: improvisation. Jam band fans continue to see bands that they tape because they simply possess a *version* of that show, but the one they'll see after is functionally an entirely different show. Again, compared to most concerts where you're going to hear your favorite artist's latest album exactly as they recorded it, the act of taping associated with jam bands allows you to archive a one-time performance. Jam band tapers are literally capturing a series of notes that was never before played and will never be played again. Lowdermilk's work is simply chronicling the development of this "jam band business model," as he calls it,

over time. His conclusions are simply that the success of this business model proves that reciprocity, trading, and so called “piracy,” can actually be profitable and beneficial for all parties involved.²⁵

There are not many more sources entirely about jam bands and explaining what they are than what I have presented here, which should explain why so much of what I wrote in this thesis is informed by my interviews. This section, only alongside the background section from the introduction chapter as well, is necessary to understand the “clinical,” “academic” or otherwise detached perspective of what a jam band is. Everything else in the thesis is the affective, and arguably more important, perspective of what a jam band is.²⁶

Music’s Effects on the Mind and Body

The following section details the few sources that speak to how music can affect lived experience, while also being relevant to the specific questions associated with this study. The first concludes that live music, in general, creates a deeply connective

²⁵ Lowdermilk, “Improvisation and Reciprocity: An Analysis of the Jam Band Community and Its Unique Business Model,” 159-176.

²⁶ An article by professor of music Austin Showen and professor of arts, culture, and media Roger Allan Mantie, lays out some important potential developments in the world of music education. It is important because of a smaller, logical conclusion made from one part of this study’s overall conclusion. The authors’ arguments come in several parts: 1) Christopher Small’s concept of *musicking* is a framework for how jam band fans interact with the music. *Musicking* is simply the idea that making and listening to music do not rest on separate categories of experience. *Musicking* includes every single thought and action that has to do with music and puts it in one handy category. 2) jam band fans and this worldview are examples of how other types of music listeners, players, and researchers should be viewing music as well. 3) music teachers should adopt a view of music based on both *musicking* and the worldview of jam band fans. They conclude that student retention of and interest in information would increase if music educators implemented a more holistic understanding of music, which jam band fans tend to hold.

atmosphere. The second deals with the affective nature of musical enjoyment. Finally, the third source explains how “ascent” in music is the catalyst for highly transcendent experiences.

An interesting study conducted for a doctoral dissertation in mind-body medicine by Leah Ferree Taylor deals with live music and its relationship to well-being. Taylor did not travel to music festivals or speak with participants of said festivals, but she did conduct interviews with subjects of various ages, and asked them about their experiences seeing live music in any form or genre. According to Taylor,

three primary themes emerged from the data: live music connects people deeply; live music is a full body experience; and live music can be transcendent. In each theme, individuals reported increased energy or vitality before, during, and after the live-music events. Co- researchers integrated these repeated experiences to release, renew, and recharge the positive emotions and mental resources to use in their daily lives.²⁷

Although her study was heuristic in nature, it still corroborates the rest of my secondary research. Where my work fits here is to explore how making connections with others and having “transcendent” and “full body” experiences will make jam band music festival participants feel. This is an important piece of research, because the act of conducting my work has been like taking a magnifying glass to the bulk of not only her methods, it would seem (narrative interviews), but also her results, being so in line with mine.

In his essay about affect and pleasure in relation to music, music theorist Michael Klein discusses, at length, the philosophy of Baruch Spinoza and his work *Ethics*. Klein

²⁷ Leah Ferree Taylor, “Well-Being Through Live Music: A Heuristic Exploration,” PhD Dissertation, Saybrook University, 2018.

defines affect. It is the, often unexplainable, human bodily experience and especially one's own perception of that experience. Spinoza claims logically that when the mind and body better understand one another, it brings us pleasure. Klein states that music can bring the mind and body together in a myriad of ways. He cites both musicianship (the muscle memory associated with playing an instrument) and, what I'll call, audienceship (dancing, singing, etc.) as examples of bodily-musical movement that reinforce this mind-body connection.²⁸ A question with which this study leaves us is what does that pleasure make people do? How does it influence their behavior or how they view the world? It would seem that for jam band fans these "audience mind-body connections" help to further reinforce the overall connection amongst the crowd.²⁹

Musicologist, Rebecca Thumpston, in her article, "The 'Feel' of Musical Ascent," discusses the affective experience of listening to music which possesses ascent in its melody or rhythm in some way. Ascent could be defined as a melodic line which moves upwards in tone or as a rhythm or bass line whose frequency of notes increases (see: the period before the bass "drops" in an EDM track). According to Thumpston, the effect of

²⁸ Michael Klein, "Bodies in Motion: Musical Affect and the Pleasure of Excess," in *Music, Analysis, and the Body: Experiments, Explorations, and Embodiments*, Nicholas Reyland and Rebecca Thumpston eds., 155-170, Analysis in Context 6 (Leuven, Belgium: Peeters, 2018).

²⁹ One of composer and music researcher Rachel Beckles Wilson's articles deals with the insertion of "authority," or a sense of it, into music. She cites the most obvious factor, lyrics, as well as musical interpretation. The reason it is connected to Klein's work is because it also deals with bodily experience and affect. In this case, Willson tracks how music can act as a substitute for authority thereby affecting participant decision-making. I do not intend on citing specific examples from her work, but I kept in mind the idea that authority can be instilled into music, while conducting interviews.

this ascent is a more exciting and transcendent experience.³⁰ She even brings up a quote by Roland Barthes which she states was the basis for her study: “the ascent (or the descent) of the stairs: there is, we know, a scale of tones, and by traversing this scale (according to very diverse moods) the body lives in breathlessness, haste, desire, anguish, the approach of orgasm.”³¹ Thumpston clarifies, at the end, that making an affective argument is ultimately subjective and that the “embodied experience” of music listeners is a personal one, so results may vary.³² I did not find that jam band music in general had any discernible ascent beyond the buildup of the energy, according to some participants. That buildup of energy sometimes takes the form of fairly separate sections of a song or jam, or it might even be part of a medley of two, or three, or sometimes several songs. One might think of them as movements in a classical piece. One participant did report that Widespread Panic specifically “has a rise to it,” citing something they felt to be inherent about the Southern rock feel that Widespread Panic’s music evokes.³³

The human experience, including how the mind interacts with the body, surrounding music in general gave me a base for what I should expect at least some of my interview participants to report. The jam band fans with whom I spoke indeed detailed a complex system running between the mind and body, one that, in some ways,

³⁰ Rebecca Thumpston, “The ‘Feel’ of Musical Ascent,” in *Music, Analysis, and the Body: Experiments, Explorations, and Embodiments*, Nicholas Reyland and Rebecca Thumpston, eds., 75-92, Analysis in Context 6 (Leuven, Belgium: Peeters, 2018).

³¹ Ibid., 81.

³² Ibid., 89.

³³ Confidential Interview #9, Clay Douglas Baran, August 27, 2020.

directed the majority of people's listening experiences and reception of the music and scene as a whole.

Sociality of Live Music

There exists only a few sources that can speak to the exact type of social practices and discourse that I am studying in regard to jam bands. In this section, the reader will find two primary conclusions: 1) "mediatized" music, that music which has been divorced from its natural state to some degree, has changed what people expect from music in general, and 2) the way a recording of music is distributed or diffused affects the ways in which people not only listen to that music, but the way the music is received in the long-term.

First, according to music psychologist, Eric Clarke, people listen to recorded and live music differently. They often complain that a recording, to which Clarke here uses the Marxist academic term "mediatized" to refer, sounds "safer" or "boring," whereas a live performance (a group in which Clarke claims a live radio broadcast also resides) is dynamic and exciting for several reasons:

they offer a program of music with start and finish times which are not under the control of the listener; they are subject to interruptions, delays, 'deficiencies' (poor performances, audience or environmental noise) or 'excesses' (extraordinary and compelling performances, exceptional responses by audiences) that cannot be foreseen; and they are unique – broadcast on a single occasion, perhaps never to be repeated.³⁴

³⁴ Eric Clarke, "Chapter 2: Ideological, Social and Perceptual Factors in Live and Recorded Music," in *Musical Listening in the Age of Technological Reproduction*, Gianmario Borio ed., 23-40, *Musical Cultures of the Twentieth Century 1* (Surrey, England: Ashgate Publishing, 2015), 25.

Clarke concludes, based on listening experiments, that “mediatized” music has had an effect on the way in which people hear live music. In a way, they begin to expect certain characteristics of recorded music to appear in a live musical performance, while simultaneously desiring a kind of “authentic experience.” I will later use this source to explain how jam bands typically somewhat dodge this issue. However, Clarke does clarify that there is a blurring of lines between live and mediatized music in that a recording creates a virtual space in the mind of the listener wherever they happen to be listening which certainly interacts with their idea of the traditional live performance space. Of course, Clarke’s findings can be extrapolated to include music festivals since they too are inundated with a similar variety, but much higher number of musical and technological choices to make.^{35,36}

These exist in the literature review as considerations necessary to make an accurate judgment of the jam band scene. It is quite obvious that there is a theme of recording in both of them, and recording, as we learned in the jam band section, is a unique and crucial part of the jam band scene and experience. Beyond that, they view music, and especially the reception of that music, as being very fluid, which fits well with what I learned about the jam band scene.

³⁵ Ibid, 37.

³⁶ For more on the ways that live and recorded music can affect each other, read David Novak’s *Japanoise* detailing how the circulation of bootleg Noise music cassettes, mainly in the United States, but around the world as well, affected the reception and continued performance of Noise in Japan where it was invented.

How Music Festivals Change Us

Overall, research into music festivals have found congruent results, save for the study by Kaitlyne A. Motl, which already was testing for a negative factor: sexual and gendered danger and social politics at certain music festivals, versus the positive aspects found in the results of most of the current studies. Motl's study covers the difference in perception of sexual safety between men and women at specific music festivals. I have included these sources as a reassurance that I have taken into account the current understandings on how music festivals regulate human practices and discourse.

A master's thesis by Brittany A. Bannerman has come into play for my own thesis. Her study, a psychological and, in some ways, religious one, covers the phenomenon of exceptional human experiences (EHEs) in relation to music festivals.³⁷ These EHEs apply to all sorts of contexts, but are broadly defined as "an anomalous experience which is viewed as the beginning of a lengthy process of working through unconscious products characterized by an awakening of an evolved state of consciousness for the subject."³⁸ Her conclusions were that these EHEs contribute to a calm acceptance, surrender, and transformation for participants. In other words, going to a music festival and having an EHE is an important part of growing as an individual. Experiences like EHEs play a large role in understanding participant decision-making and interactions. Her results are entirely in line with my own in the sense that many of

³⁷ Brittany A. Bannerman, "Transformative, Exceptional Human Experiences at Music Festivals: A Transpersonal Phenomenological Exploration," Masters Thesis, University of Lethbridge, 2012.

³⁸ Ibid., 6.

these participants, either without knowing what EHEs themselves are or without mentioning them, reported experiences that would fall into that category.³⁹

According to Professor of Cultural Studies, George McKay, “festivals are a compensation for our everyday routine: ‘A concentrated hit of social and cultural being, an immersive 24-7 blow-out that makes up for the stresses of city life, precarious employment, the drudge and atomization of sitting at a screen all day.’”⁴⁰ This point speaks to the idea that participant practices and discourse may be able to be boiled down to an environmental (in its broadest sense) release. This idea will appear later in a discussion of methodology. I was only able to find this testimony in this newspaper interview, but according to McKay’s website, his primary research before this interview was the 1999 Glastonbury Festival where he conducted fieldwork, and his statement here is simply a summary of his findings across his career up until that point.⁴¹

³⁹ An article by psychologist and professor of religion and environmental ethics Lucas F. Johnston delves into worldviews and choices within these spaces. Johnston’s study specifically deals with the intersection of environmental conservation and spirituality among jam band fans. Johnston clarifies that, in light of his own past research, he was careful to use the term “worldview” rather than religion, in order to not sully the answers given by participants in interviews, and therefore his results. Not only did he find that those who supported a broad “Green” movement are indeed prevalent at jam band concerts and festivals, but their description of their worldviews confirms that they do associate their seeing jam bands with a somewhat spiritual experience. The main purpose of Johnston’s study, though, was to provide a useful system for further research into this area. Johnston concludes that “worldview” is indeed a more useful word for describing participant opinions because “religion” carries with it unnecessary baggage. On the other hand, it should be said that the baggage associated with the term “worldview” can be identified as, in Johnston’s opinion, “the supposition that rationalized ideas are the causal factor in particular behaviors is suspect. Rather, highly affective experiences (integrative modes of consciousness, or particularly poignant “flashbulb” experiences) are often formative for normative presuppositions and the cosmological imagination.” Jam band shows are certainly examples of a highly affective experience, based on my interviews.

⁴⁰ Maddox, “The Psychology of Dancing at Festivals.”

⁴¹ For more on British music festivals, music festival consultant and lecturer Roxy Robinson, in her book *Music Festivals and the Politics of Participation*, details the political and social elements of these festivals throughout a brief history. This book deals strictly with British festivals, save for Burning Man, which are in many ways, particularly historically, different from American festivals (for more on the

Kaitlyne A. Motl, for her PhD Dissertation, studied the intersection of gender and risk at music festivals. The purported genre she was studying was termed “jamtronica,” by both her and her interviewees. It is apparently supposed to constitute a mixture of jam band and electronic music. Because this is a very niche genre, I am not including it in my chapter on jam bands and their associated festivals. However, Motl’s work is still integral in that it can speak to issues present at all music festivals. Motl’s findings suggest that men and women perceive the “problems” present at these festivals to be very different. In general, men do not fear for their safety in the same way that a woman might. In fact, she suggests that predatory behaviors in men are encouraged in these spaces. Beyond that, for women to experience the joy of the festival, they have to simultaneously navigate their “physical, social, and sexual well-being.” In conclusion, Motl’s work suggests that fear may be an answer to our overarching question about participant practices and discourse.⁴²

In the findings chapter, to a degree, and in the conclusion chapter, particularly, the reader will see just how central Bannerman’s concept of EHEs are for my research. Motl’s work also comes up in the conclusion as an acknowledgement of her work’s tangential relation to mine in that we were studying completely different topics with some similar details. More importantly some findings of mine do corroborate the main portion of her work.

history of American festivals and the racial tension in which they grew up, read the work of folklorist David Whisnant). With that said, Robinson concludes that many festivals, namely those she attended, offer an experience with no discernible “spectators.” This is certainly in line with Casey Lowdermilk’s conclusions about the jam band festival scene.

⁴² Kaitlyne A. Motl, “Well Don’t Walk Around Naked... Unless You’re a Girl:’ Gender, Sexuality, and Risk in Jamtronica Festival Subcultural Scenes,” PhD Dissertation, University of Kentucky, 2018.

Festival Organization

Understanding not only what thought goes into creating a music festival, but also how socially cohesive it is, is important for comprehension of attendant experience at said festival.⁴³ Only one source is relevant enough in this field to have made it into this literature review.

Tourism researchers Isabelle Szmigin, Andrew Bengry-Howell, Yvette Morey, Christine Griffin, and Sarah Riley discuss what they term “socio-spatial authenticity” in their article that examines “how [music festivals’] design, organization, and management are co-created with participants to produce authentic experiences.”^{44,45} Of course, their conclusions are simply that participants reported the festivals’ organization and the fact

⁴³ In an article from *Leisure Sciences*, professors of tourism studies J. Laing and J. Mair discuss both of these concepts. Its authors set out to understand just how socially inclusive music festivals are. This takes place in the UK rather than the US, but it gives us some idea of a general festival landscape. According to Laing and Mair, festival organizers boast and use buzzwords like “inclusive,” but rarely does the outcome look at all inclusive. However, the authors admit that not having a defined criterion for inclusivity is a major problem for the field in which this research is being done. The reasons Laing and Mair claim that festivals are not as inclusive as they seem, because although many people of different walks of life come together, are that the festivals they studied did not, for example, have adequate accessibility for disabled individuals and did not directly facilitate social interaction between people either outside of or within the festival space. It would seem that true social cohesion is often not the main goal for festival organizers.

⁴⁴ Isabelle Szmigin, Andrew Bengry-Howell, Yvette Morey, Christine Griffin, and Sarah Riley, “Socio-Spatial Authenticity at Co-Created Music Festivals,” *Annals of Tourism Research* 63 (2017): 1.

⁴⁵ Remarkably, their methods and resultant data are very similar to what I will be conducting and collecting, respectively. The only major differences, beside the research question, are that it, once again, takes place in Britain and focuses specifically on a series of “rock festivals,” which do overlap with the jam band scene, but are nonetheless arising from a different set of values, albeit a similar one.

that it was a space separate and away from their normal lives as being the main catalysts to their perception of having had an authentic experience in socio-spatial terms.⁴⁶

Although my study's connections to a strict understanding of only festivals, and no shows, have been completely reworked, the information in this section and particularly the things about "authenticity" are still here because even the ideas that we no longer accept as factual or useful must be passed on, so that future researchers and those reading this thesis right now, might get an idea of how we should not think about music, shows, festivals, or anything related to those.

⁴⁶ The idea of "authenticity" was first posited for discussion by folklorists, mostly, along with early cultural anthropologists and ethnographers. The idea has since been deemed a remnant of a bygone era of research full of biases and assumptions about lived experience. Regina Bendix, in her book *In Search of Authenticity: The Formation of Folklore Studies*, breaks down the idea of "authenticity" showing how it is not so much an objective quality of a person, object, or entire culture, but a part of imperialistic and parochial vocabulary that has been used throughout history to, as the title would suggest, lead to the formation of entire disciplines full of researchers obsessed with documenting only the most "authentic" parts of life, a determination made by these same flawed humans. Let it be known that with all of these details in mind, I will use this source as an example of one more potential viewpoint, in the same way that I used Kenneth Smith's article on tonal energetics and its wide-reaching implications if true.

Chapter 3: Methodology

For my study, I have employed a qualitative approach. It is constructivist in nature because new understandings and previously “undiscovered knowledge” are actually not discovered at all, but created in a cooperative process between researcher and participant. It is, more specifically, exhibiting both the grounded theory and narrative approaches.⁴⁷ There are parts of my old methodology and its sources that have still been useful to me despite the shift in approach that I have been forced to take.⁴⁸ The new source with which I rebuilt this methodology comes from sociologist and gender researcher Patricia Leavy, titled *Oral History: Understanding Qualitative Research*.^{49,50}

My methodology was also fully informed by contemporary ethnomusicological practice. I have made every effort possible to adhere to the idea of “reflexive ethnography,” where affect and lived experience are always and continually taken into

⁴⁷ John W. Creswell and J. David Creswell, *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approaches*, 5th ed. (Los Angeles: SAGE Publishing, 2018).

⁴⁸ Those parts come from cultural anthropologist and sociologist Anthony Kwame Harrison’s book *Ethnography: Understanding Qualitative Research*.

⁴⁹ According to Leavy, oral history is similar to ethnography, but it involves just narrative interviews rather than necessarily observing firsthand, although there is an observational aspect to the interpretation of answers given by participants. Nevertheless, I am conducting interdisciplinary research, and so my observations are indeed a crucial part of my conclusions.

⁵⁰ To read a succinct list of tips for conducting oral history interviews from Leavy, refer to the cited book, pages 38-49. For even more on the topic, see Alan Bryman and Robert G. Burgess, eds., *Analyzing Qualitative Data* (New York: Routledge, 2002). All interviews conducted were completely in line with the tips laid out in both *Oral History: Understanding Qualitative Research* and *Analyzing Qualitative Data*.

account throughout the life of a research project.⁵¹ Their work also helped me to consider the implications and possible effects that doing purely virtual fieldwork brings.^{52,53}

Despite the breadth and variety of topics covered in my literature review, my interviews were considerably more focused, in this case, on the phenomenon of live music events of an extended nature in the jam band scene influencing participants' perspectives on the level of social cohesion present in the scene, in general. The methodology described here has helped me to explore my research statement by giving me all of the necessary tools to be not only prepared for any potential answers participants gave, but prepared to adapt my final thesis to what I was given. For example, the initial focus on strictly jam band festivals was changed based on the people with whom I was able to speak, and the stories they gave as evidence of their views including more than just festival experiences. This opened up the project to being about any live jam band experience, which gives it an entirely new depth.

Some other points to note are that all participants were contacted through a platform or group specifically for jam band fans and all participants' identities and personal information was kept entirely confidential. The interviews themselves will be cited in the bibliography as "Confidential Interview" followed by a number to

⁵¹ Timothy J. Cooley and Gregory Barz, "Casting Shadows: Fieldwork is Dead! Long Live Fieldwork!" in *Shadows in the Field: New Perspectives for Fieldwork in Ethnomusicology*, 2nd ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008).

⁵² Timothy J. Cooley, Katherine Meizel, and Nasir Syed, "Virtual Fieldwork: Three Case Studies," in *Shadows in the Field: New Perspectives for Fieldwork in Ethnomusicology*, 2nd ed., Timothy J. Cooley and Gregory Barz, eds. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008).

⁵³ To get an even better understanding of "reflexive ethnography," read the cited book, focusing on the concept of "experience over representation."

differentiate them within the manuscript. There were also several choices to be made for the way interviews were conducted. The resultant interviews for this thesis are considered to give a “comprehensive understanding” because the topics discussed by participants were from different parts of their lives, and because the lead-up and connections to each memory were discussed contextually rather than separately. A bit more specifically, these interviews fall into the “segmented-conversational” category as participants skipped around in their presentation.⁵⁴ We had a normal conversation, and only if participants were especially quiet or non-responsive, did I introduce some guiding questions. More often than not, the participant’s memory got jogged to the point of long bouts of articulating discourse, so that I did not have to ask any questions. This was also only possible by creating a comfortable atmosphere for the interviewee by way of my demeanor, dress, and speech. I attempted to be as holistic as possible in my wording and the inclusion or exclusion of questions. All interview subjects have been given a standard consent form, which has not been signed and does not include any personal information. It exists to inform the subject of how their answers will be used.

There are certain circumstances surrounding the completion of this thesis research which must be divulged in order for the reader to fully grasp the context with which I dealt while preparing the research. First, I began planning this study around the idea of travelling to music festivals in order to speak with festival participants about their experiences and their opinions and beliefs regarding their own behavior. Around December 2019, the deadly COVID-19 virus was discovered. It spread rapidly over the

⁵⁴ Leavy, *Oral History: Understanding Qualitative Research*.

next 3 months, and in March 2020, essentially all gatherings, events, and institutions in most of the world were cancelled or shut down for the foreseeable future. This meant that the festivals to which I had been planning to travel were cancelled and it became necessary for me to rework this proposal, which I had been working on for about a year, to accommodate the new social paradigm.

Chapter 4: Findings

In this chapter, I will establish three points or states of existence for the jam band scene: 1) what has been observed in regard to social cohesion in the jam band scene as well as how I've interpreted those statements, 2) how social cohesion manifests as the dominant ideology in the jam band scene, and 3) what conditions or qualifications are necessary to fully understand the breadth of social cohesion in the jam band scene.

Throughout the chapter, I will make references to the literature from chapter 2, which not only anchors these findings more firmly in the "scholarly conversation," but particularly helps to address my research statement. For any interview transcripts in this chapter, P will stand for "participant" and C will stand for "Clay (myself)," if applicable.

Sometimes the terms "family" or "tribe" will be mentioned in the excerpts. This is a colloquial designation for the jam band scene, and in some cases, specifically Deadheads.

While I did not set out purposefully to speak with jam band musicians of any kind, several of the interview participants are musicians and do play this music. I felt it important to note that a musician's perspective may at times appear here and have implications for this study.

Observations of Social Cohesion in the Jam Band Scene

Based on the information I have, that being the testimony given in my interviews as well as my own personal observations and conceptions of the scene, social cohesion

seems to be a central facet of the “jam band experience.” The main point of this section is that social cohesion manifests in the scene in so many complex ways. Supporting points are that there is a constant cycle of energy back and forth between the band and the audience, and amongst the other members of the audience as well. It is an esoteric scene only fully understood by those who undertake its rituals. The Lot is a beast all its own that carries with it similar contexts and implications as the shows themselves. Jam band fans, and especially Deadheads, are people with a helpful nature who feel an inherent trust in other members of the scene.

It would seem that the jam band scene is more socially cohesive than some other genres of music from the small amount of testimony able to be given by a few of the interview participants regarding that contrast. Bluegrass and old-time, together, were the only genres to garner equal, if not more positive, praise, which is to be somewhat expected given the considerable musical overlap between bluegrass and jam band music. The specific manifestation of social cohesion within the jam band scene seems to be one of the primary reasons that the members of this scene continue to participate with the remarkable fervor they do, beyond just to hear the music itself, which nearly all interview participants gave as the number one reason behind their continued patronage. Although the music independently sits above social cohesion as the main reason people are at these shows in the first place, the connectivity they all talked about in their interviews is directly tied to the music.

In this scene, there are deep, lasting connections made on a consistent basis and people generally feel safe around one another, trust each other, and expect most people to

share their progressive and inclusive views. Part of the public of the jam band scene and its exhibiting of social cohesion is the general conception of the music in the minds of the fans. Especially because I've learned that social cohesion can simply manifest as agreement between members of a group. Unsurprisingly, the central time when social cohesion actually occurs is during a performance. The jams heighten the connection between fans, which in turn leads to socially cohesive environments. In not only my experience, but the experience of at least one participant, the process of listening to the music, the jams, and thereby hanging on every note in an attempt to predict what will come next, and the connectivity that results are what primarily facilitates the social cohesion found in the scene. The other participants did not have concrete explanations of *why* that social cohesion happens in those specific moments. There are, of course, cursory elements of social cohesion that materialize outside of performances, which is where the framework of publics and imaginaries come into play. The "vibe" of the scene extends to those within the group even when music is not present. Nevertheless, all participants did say that when the music is over, the energy does ever so slightly decrease.

According to participants, the scene itself depends on the fans. For one, the music feeds off of audience feedback and energy, to which it so often referred. That energy is recycled back and forth between the musicians and the audience. In this way, there is far less distinction between the two groups, in the same vein as the work of Roxy Robinson, mentioned in footnote 45. So many also talked about the shared experiences of "epicness" and rising energy amongst a crowd. Many jam bands and the songs they play possess an ebb and flow of energy in terms of the emotional responses made by the

audience. When certain events arise in the music, the crowd all react together, viscerally. For a great example of perfectly controlling the energy of the audience (in the specific case of Grateful Dead), check out the “Terrapin Station Medley” from the Capital Centre on March 15, 1990.⁵⁵ Of course there are other genres which improvise, we’ve covered them at various points in this thesis, but crucially, the way that the jams are received in the jam band scene are entirely unique, as is the larger issue of the social paradigm in the jam band scene, as this entire chapter explains.

An important theme from the interviews was the esoteric nature of the jam band scene. As you will see from the deeper discussion below, the jam band scene is a very eccentric community of fans, and according to my interviewees, it is something to behold, first of all: you must see it to believe it. Secondly, once you do, you either wholeheartedly dive in and become a member of the community or it exists in opposition to one or more views or perspectives that a person holds, and they choose not to return. This was told to me as “You either get it or you don’t.”⁵⁶

The phenomenon of the Lot and “scoring” tickets, I would argue, reflects socially cohesive behavior: a self-sustaining economy with different “levels,” if you will, exists in the Lot. The obvious, top level would be the nomadic merchants who sell their wares in the Lot, but deeper than that, there is a separate system of ticket circulation consisting of gifting, trading, and sometimes selling, known in the Deadhead community as a “miracle.” Selling tickets for much more than what you’d need for that night, i.e. making

⁵⁵ Can be found either on the *Terrapin Station (Limited Edition)* official live album or at the following link: <https://archive.org/details/gd1990-03-15.sbd.miller.105690.flac16/gd90-03-15d2t05.flac>

⁵⁶ Confidential Interview #6, Clay Douglas Baran, August 18, 2020.

profits, is generally frowned upon and would be seen as “scalping.” Since the propagation of social cohesion is an important motivator for the various practices within the jam band community, scalping is a practice which is seen as predatory and does not fit in with the cohesive ethos that’s been created in the scene, a system of meaning to be explained in the next section. Furthermore, one interview participant felt that the nature of the Lot itself is, like the scene itself, centered on social cohesion:

[the jam band ethos] manifests in everything. On Shakedown Street, the merchandise, the sales, ya know, you don’t get ripped off in this community, they’re there to do fair trades and barter. Like “come on, give me a dollar for this grilled cheese, I know it’s not great, but it’s called a mediocre grilled cheese...”⁵⁷

Participant #3 further confirmed that the atmosphere of the Lot is the same as what you’ll find inside the venue:

Yeah, it definitely keeps spilling over, the tribe kindness, and generosity and willingness to help, it’ll spill over into the parking lot. If you’re going to a show with a parking lot and people are doing a bit of pre-partying in the lot: it’s tribe members getting together and there’s usually some music on speakers, and people dancing a little, and it’s actually kind of similar to being inside, you’re enjoying the atmosphere. There’s eating and drinking and conversing and ya know, sharing of different substances. Yeah it’s basically a lifestyle, which is an all-encompassing term for it, I would say. Outside of a club as well, a lot of people will pick a spot to meet before the show or after the show, to continue the social experience with or without any music. There’s different ways to do that, like at a festival, you’re there all weekend probably and you’re camping with people, you’re really getting to know them, it’s like you’re living with them, there’s hardly an escape from these people, so hopefully you’re copacetic with everybody. I suppose if you’re uncomfortable with that sort of thing, you wouldn’t do it in the first place.⁵⁸

⁵⁷ Confidential Interview #2, Clay Douglas Baran, July 24, 2020.

⁵⁸ Confidential Interview #3, Clay Douglas Baran, August 5, 2020.

Despite the great importance of the Lot to the scene itself, there is not much more to discuss when it comes to the Lot and how socially cohesive the scene is.

Most participants stated that their journey into the scene began with Grateful Dead. Participant #10 talked about their first Dead show and how that experience affected them:

Merriweather Post Pavilion is this big, sprawling, outdoor place that when you just get off the bus, it's like the show was *actually* all the people all spread out through these rolling hills, up in trees and different things that I had never seen before that was just part of the scene that you're dropped into, so that was how that started.⁵⁹

Notice here, the participant says that, while they knew they were attending a concert, it was the sight of the fans on the grounds surrounding the venue that struck them initially and brought them into the scene. The Grateful Dead and Deadhead scene is often thought of as a sort of representative or flagship of the jam band scene as a whole, because of this original association many have, but there are numerous bands which perform in this style. The suggested listening appendix is only the fraction of bands of which I know from being informed by my interview participants, my own experiences, or conducting my own research on the matter. In that way, jam band fans, but especially Deadheads, constitute an “imaginary” and a “public,” and, as I explain shortly, perhaps are better identified as a “counterpublic.” There is even an implicit trust amongst members of this scene:

...if I hire a Deadhead, I know I can trust them.⁶⁰

⁵⁹ Confidential Interview #10, Clay Douglas Baran, August 31, 2020.

⁶⁰ Confidential Interview #2.

...you start from a core of deep admiration and trust...⁶¹

In speaking to the helpful nature of the scene, participant #4 told a story about his first

Dead show at Meadowlands in New Jersey in 1978:

Our tickets were in the 400 section, my brother and I got there, my older brother took me, and we got there and we're kind of hanging around the top of the 100 level, and no one was kicking us out, but we didn't really have seats or anything. And we noticed that over, about a quarter of the way around the stadium if you've ever seen a giant stadium, like the Meadowlands, there's sort of this 12 foot wall between the stands and the turf, right, and we noticed this one spot where people started to drop down, onto the turf, cause they didn't have tickets for the field, and we started walking around that way and by the time we got there, I don't think anyone, I'm not aware of anyone who said a word about the "process," but a process developed. Which is that as you got close to the edge as sort of people were clustered around, for some reason everybody chose this one spot, which was sort of strange, but when you got to that spot, as soon as you were right there, you started to help other people over, and you'd hold their arms while they'd dangled as far as they could, cause it's like 12 feet, and then they would drop, they'd say "let go" and they would drop, and you'd help a few people and then it was your turn. And nobody said this! You just, it just, happened. And when you landed, you stood there and you helped two or three people land without falling, and then they'd take over for you, and you'd wander off. And it's funny because the cops dragged the first few people out, and then they gave up trying and looked the other way, and finally they just started helping. 'People are gonna come anyway, we can't stop them so what the hell.' To me that was a great lesson in that sort of unspoken 'village' kind of a thing. And I've seen that sort of thing happen over and over.⁶²

This specific participant was unable to speak to whether that has happened to them or happens in general at other live music events with similar logistics and infrastructure.

Finally, going into this project, I expected, based on my own perceptions about live music and music festivals in general, there to be a considerable amount of sexual activity mentioned. It came up so little that I found myself specifically asking for it for

⁶¹ Ibid.

⁶² Confidential Interview #4, Clay Douglas Baran, August 13, 2020.

each participant, and essentially every single person came back with that it doesn't happen anymore than it might at any other festival. This lead me to consider that possibly my own perception of just how much sexual activity was occurring at music events was askew. Only one participant told a story about how a heterosexual couple was engaging in penetrative intercourse on the lawn of a jam band festival just behind where he was standing.⁶³

Social Cohesion as an Ethos

This section includes the term “ethos” in its title because one of my interview participants using this term to describe the social paradigm of the jam band scene, centered on social cohesion. Some of the words people used to describe the scene were “communal,” “kind,” “helpful,” “generous,” “accepting,” and “flexible.” Participants said that the people who make up the fanbase are “quirky,” “geeky,” or do not otherwise fit into “mainstream society.” This view makes the scene constitute as more of a “counterpublic” rather than a strict “public,” since a key part of their conception of themselves is based on resistance to the mainstream. Participant #8 specifically spoke to the mainstream perception of one key part of this scene in their interview:

P8: ...I like a show that has a good “Lot.” It’s fun before the show. I don’t understand why people get so pissy about having Shakedown Streets, but a tailgate before a ballgame is no big deal. Like “I’m gonna tailgate, drink some Budweiser in my truck,” that’s totally fine, but people look down on, ya know, the “fucking hippies in the parking lot.” I’m like “what’s the difference?”

C: If anything, the major difference is that there is an economy of the “Lot.” There are people selling tons of stuff.

⁶³ Confidential Interview #1, Clay Douglas Baran, July 1, 2020.

P8: Art, and jewelry, and food, and yeah...

C: And I haven't really seen that type of thing in other kinds of music, that's why I'm curious in all this.

P8: Yeah, either way you're pregaming, you're getting ready for the show, and it's really no different, yet society... police, *especially* police, and business owners tend to have no problem with tailgating, but they have a problem with "Lot" scenes. It's a weird thing because they're not that different.⁶⁴

Granted, these statements are regarding the Lot specifically, but the Lot, as Participant #8 pointed out in the the first paragraph with a very mockingly angry tone to accompany "fucking hippies in the parking lot," is made up of the scene itself.

One interesting story that shows just how pervasive social cohesion is in the jam band scene came from participant #4:

I was at a show at the Caps Center in the 80s and a police, mounted horseback guy, a couple of them, we were trying to, stupidly they decided to clear the parking lot, right, because of all that nefarious, horrible stuff that happens in the parking lot, so when the show started they tried to basically force people to go into the show, so the cops started at the perimeter and they started pushing everyone in, and of course by the time you're getting to the door, it's getting crowded and tense because you can only get in so quickly, and they started to really overdo it. And at one point, the crowd and one of the horses, things got too close and got nervous and everything, and the funny thing I remember is, the only thing everyone in the crowd's reaction was, not being, ya know, there was frustration with the police, it was 'don't freak out the horse, don't hurt the horse.' I mean, this horse is looming over us, and ya know, everybody's concern was, 'don't do anything that could hurt the horse.' And of course, the odds are the horse was much more likely to hurt us, but you know that sort of gentleness and attitude...⁶⁵

⁶⁴ Confidential Interview #8, Clay Douglas Baran, August 27, 2020.

⁶⁵ Confidential Interview #4.

This story exemplifies how jam band fans will work together cohesively for the goal of maintaining the well-being of, in this case, an animal, but really of any living creature.

Many participants spoke of the collective nature of the scene. Some of the specific usages of “collective” beyond just the use of that word alone, were “collective high” and “collective effervescence.”⁶⁶ All of these words combined form a collage of impressions which could give someone on the outside a cursory understanding of the jam band experience. Participants treat this community as a family and a tribe; senses of community that imply a culture of operating towards the collective good and towards cohesive behavior: “There’s lots of love, there’s lots of hugs, there’s lots of trust too. It’s like ‘you’re a fellow Deadhead? You are my brother, you are my sister’ like right off the bat.”⁶⁷ Beyond all of the words used to describe the scene so far, there is also an openness and a desire for genuine engagement.⁶⁸ Participant #10 describes a very specific manifestation of this phenomenon:

⁶⁶ This term has an established history originating with Émile Durkheim. Anthropologists will recognize this in reference to religious rituals, particularly focusing on the aspect of shared behavior being capable of unifying the group. And while that certainly does apply to the jam band scene, the interview participant who used it did not do so with Durkheim in mind. To read more about collective consciousness, read Durkheim’s *The Elementary Forms of the Religious Life*.

⁶⁷ Confidential Interview #3.

⁶⁸ There is a study, by psychologists Dan Bosnyak Dana, Steven R. Livingstone, Jotthi Bansal, Susan Marsh-Rollo, Matthew H. Woolhouse, and Laurel J. Trainor, entirely concentrated on head movements and how they relate to enjoyment and perceived sociality of a music event. They also asked participants to self-report as “fans” or “neutral.” The artist used in their case was Canadian rock star Ian Fletcher Thornley. The authors’ main claims are that “live music engages listeners to a greater extent than pre-recorded music” and that “a pre-existing admiration for the performers also leads to higher engagement.” They also found that there was no clear correlation between listener engagement and the state of being part of the social group known as an audience. This is not a groundbreaking statement, and it is not even the main conclusion of that scholarship, but it has direct connections to the ways in which jam band fans conceive of their scene and their relationship to various jam bands.

C: “So you said so far that you feel a strong sense of community with all these ‘same people’ you see at shows. Generally speaking, what nature of interactions have you observed in these types of places?”

P10: “Definitely cooperation, where people are kind of building something together, like what you mentioned about LOCKN. At High Sierra in particular, it’s just a celebration, everybody is in celebration mode, you know that it’s the peak of the summer, and you’re gonna go all out. And so that involves like costumes or whatever. So say you’re doing something funny or you’re wearing something funny, then it’s an invitation for other people to come up and interact with you. So there’s a real openness to being like ‘oh that looks really cool,’ or doing like... there was some guy that had this weird game, and it was something like, you threw a ball threw a hole and it was totally impossible, but he had this whole skit that went along with it, and it would just draw people in, it was the most ridiculous game ever, but everybody would get sucked into it, and it would be really funny. So there’s different little things that people pick up on, to do, to engage conversation and interaction with people who were just random people that you maybe feel drawn to because maybe they *look* like somebody that you would like, or they look cute, or ya know, something like that. So there’s that extent, where there’s this full openness, when you feel what your inner being is, like who you *really* are. It gets to the essence of what you show other people is like your real light, shining out, and that’s what *they* see when they look back, and that’s why you’re drawn to each other. I think you know that when you go to High Sierra and you realize that ‘this is gonna be the peak of my year, this is gonna bring me energy that I’m gonna need to get through the rest of the year.’ It’s a way to connect with your true self and know you’re kind of on the right track in life. I guess there’s different spiritual aspects of it, but that’s what I see...”⁶⁹

The openness in this scene can be viewed as intimate connections forming between members of the scene both during a performance and outside of performances.

If there is one story that exemplifies the welcoming atmosphere synthesized as an ethos, it would be this one about Participant #6 taking their 81-year old mother to her first Phish show:

P6: I took my 81 year old mother to see Phish in Atlanta, it was the 3 night run in Alpharetta in 2018, and I took her to the Sunday night show. She had never been to any kind of concert like this before, and it was awesome because I drove her

⁶⁹ Confidential Interview #10.

car because it has handicapped tags so we could park *way* up in Shakedown Street, which was awesome. It was such a cool learning curve for her to see all of this, and all these people, ya know, tie dye, dreads, all the Wooks, all this stuff, and they're all coming out and greeting her, like "hey, is this your first show?" "welcome to the fam!" "this is so great to have you here," it was amazing, she was made to feel welcome, I mean, white-haired lady, cane, ya know, kind of limping her way into the park and it was like 95 degrees and she makes a beeline for the high-end liquor tent and gets herself a Wild Turkey and Diet Coke. And we had seats under the pavilion, but I told her "mom, no one will sit, so we have seats and you can sit, but you're not gonna see anything because everybody will stand." Have you ever been to the amphitheater in Alpharetta?

C: I have not.

P6: So the back row of the seats, right above that is one single row, for basically handicap access type seats, and they're not all taken up, and they have people there with little Apple Pay machines on them and you can buy, upgrade your seat and get one of those. So we were there early and I did that, and got 2 right there. They opened up with "You Sexy Thing," which is a disco song from the 70s and my mom knew that song so she was just up and raging, and it was so great, and then they busted right into a "Twee/Prise." So I think Friday night they played "Tweezer" so it's inevitable you're gonna get a "Twee/Prise," and I actually think people like "Twee/Prise" better, and I mean this crowd lost their collective shit when they went right into the "Twee/Prise," it was immediate glow sticks and everything, and my mom is just looking around and I'm not sitting, I was having a ball, and I'm trying to explain to her what's going on, and she's catching balloons, she's waving them all around, these two dudes were next to us from Boston and within like 15 minutes they were her best friends, going to get drinks for her and stuff, it was great.⁷⁰

Many participants also felt that the scene is a small world in that more often than not, once speaking with someone, you find out that you have more in common with them than you had originally considered, or people recognize each other. In the case of Participant #6 and their mother, the whole story ended up being a communicative thread on Reddit:

Somebody posted like 'hey, some dude brought his grandmother to the Phish show, she was having a great time,' and I saw the posting and I was like 'no, man that's *my* mom and I'm the chick in the orange and maroon tie-dye sitting next to her!' and it was this long thread in Reddit, it was really cool.

⁷⁰ Confidential Interview #6.

“I actually told my mom about the thread about her being there, and how there was one on a Phish Facebook group as well and so she got into the group and joined it, and over the next few weeks she is instant messaging back and forth with *all* these people who saw her. People were commenting too, like ‘I saw her come in,’ or ‘I offered to help her when we were leaving’ and she made friends with all of them. It’s amazing.”⁷¹

On the matter, Participant #8 had this to say:

it’s like family, you go to these festies and you see people that you’ve seen at other festivals or people you’ve never seen but you feel like you’ve know them forever, you make the quickest friends, and everytime it’s a mini-adventure.⁷²

The following story is another great example of how well-known people can become in this scene due to the level of intimacy:

So that year (2017) for Dicks, we scored field tickets. I way over did it with edibles, and I’m basically comatose, off my feet for the second set, and on the way out of the stage area, I see this hat sitting on the ground, one of those bamboo/straw, safari-type hats, and it said “DICK” on the front of it. So I put it on and I’m walking around like ‘look, I’m Colonel Forbin, climbing the mountain,’ being all stupid. So I wore it the next night at the show, and I ended up giving it away, but I’m like ‘that’s gonna be my name on Facebook.’ And now everybody knows me as Colonel Forbin, everyone who knows me in the scene, knows me as the Colonel. I actually went out after that fest, and bought a pith helmet that’s got Forbin written on it, and I wear it to shows now, that’s my show hat. I don’t know how many actually recognize me, but it’s cool hearing people calling it out and saying hey.⁷³

It seems obvious that the jam band scene has nearly an obsession with naming phenomena after their favorite songs, the previous case referring to Phish’s “Colonel Forbin.” All of these stories go to show how deeply ingrained an emotional and physical intimacy is in the scene. Speaking of Facebook and social media in general, in the case of

⁷¹ Ibid.

⁷² Confidential Interview #8.

⁷³ Confidential Interview #1.

participant #1, they said that meeting people at jam band, particularly Phish, shows and festivals made him get Facebook again after a hiatus. Participant #2 spoke about having an overwhelming number of new Facebook friends after jam band shows. Jam band shows are also great for introverts because they are accepted for whatever they do and have no pressure on them.⁷⁴ Beyond that, multiple participants specifically said that a jam band show or festival is the best time to make a friend and that it's easier than normal to get to know someone. The "ethos," as participant #2 called it, of the jam band scene is dominated by this social paradigm which operates outside of the fans' perception of the music, while also being highly tied to that perception.

There is so much emotion tied up into this scene, it is such a special thing for a lot of people. The emotional depth with which jam band fans process this scene is unimaginable, and how people form their beliefs, their morals, their ethos, is based in a highly visceral response, on the same level as emotions. For example, one interviewee was brought to tears talking about memories, which brought back these waves of feeling. The participant became particularly emotional when discussing the Wharf Rat presence at the Fare Thee Well concerts in Chicago, put on by the living members of Grateful Dead in 2015:

... between sets [and] there was a massive Wharf Rat meetup that I just happened to stumble across on the way out to hit the bathroom or something. And it was beautiful, they were in a big group hug, there was just a lot of swaying, it *was* almost religious, but everybody around them... they were like under a staircase too so people were coming down from the upper decks and it was just this massive crowd forming and everybody knew who they were, and started applauding, and there was this... *wipes away tears* God, I'm getting so damn emotional about this...

⁷⁴ Confidential Interview #5, Clay Douglas Baran, August 17, 2020.

There was this, ya know, sense of just pure love and support for everybody in that crowd. That was the thing, I don't think I've ever seen anybody pressure anyone who is in that scene. Phish has another, has a group too and I can't remember what their name is, but I've never seen anybody be, ya know, I guess, cruel about it or mean about it. And maybe it's just that we're all older now, but the support is there. And that's a great thing about the community.⁷⁵

On the importance of the Fare Thee Well shows for the scene itself that same participant said:

Well, Fare Thee Well... the Wharf Rats group is strong everywhere you go, but Fare Thee Well was actually a religious experience for a lot of us, it was... we all thought we were just going to a show when the tickets were sold, and we didn't know that we were basically gonna revive a whole scene, that was limping along at this time...⁷⁶

In an extrapolation of the emotion attached to this scene for people, if we bring emotion to its peak, that creates spiritual or religious experiences. Participant #9 just touched on that point specifically about Fare Thee Well. Participant #5, along with Participants #7 and #10, as well as #9 again, as readers will see in the conclusion chapter, spoke about the religious aspects of the scene:

Because it really is like church. Going to see music is church for a lot of people. It takes you higher, it puts you on that "closer to God" kind of level, I think.⁷⁷

I do feel a big connection with all the other people who are enjoying it in the moment, and I love... one of the great things about Phish, is that, there are just moments you just look around and just everybody in this giant stadium is just having the fucking time of their life, and the energy of that, and for myself and for other people, that's kind of close to God. Ya know, that's a shared, cultural, religious, spiritual experience, just having such fun all in the same place at the

⁷⁵ Confidential Interview #9.

⁷⁶ Ibid.

⁷⁷ Confidential Interview #5.

same time directed at the same thing and being brought there by the same thing, and I definitely feel that connection in those moments.⁷⁸

I think it has to do with the oneness, like when people say “we’re all one,” and knowing that people are generally good, and how there’s a spirit of helping. At the core of most people... and sometimes there’s weird stuff that happens, maybe if people are tripping out on drugs, but you see something like that, like say somebody is having a hard time in some way, people will come together and help that person. And all of these things put you in a higher vibration. If you put yourself in this situation where you’re doing what you really love, it’s all positive in your thinking, and you’re hugging people and everything and you’re smiling and doing all that stuff, it puts you at that higher vibration, and it’ll attract other good things *to* you. So that’s my spirituality: the more you’re present in the moment and keep yourself at that higher level, that’s what will guide you in your life, because when the opportunities, they say the opportunities “line themselves up in your frequency.” So once you’re at the higher frequency, doors will open that maybe weren’t normally there, like if you’re dwelling and depressed and in this other phase you’ll attract other people that are like that, and not get to have those doors open for you.⁷⁹

In a tertiary connection to Johnston’s study, these spiritual experiences could be read as an instance of Bannerman’s EHEs.

A major theme that continued to arise from interviews was the idea that people who enjoy and/or prefer heavy improvisation in their music also enjoy and/or prefer “improvisation” in their daily lives:

... people always talk about the little miracles of serendipity, the last Gypsy Sally’s show I just went down without a ticket, and with no real expectation of getting in, just wanted to be there on the last night, and I got into a really cool conversation with somebody, a singer, that I’d always meant to meet and talk to, and I’d never had the chance to before, and that was great, and we were talking over at the Vinyl Lounge, and then she said ‘well, I’m heading in,’ and I said, ‘well, I can’t,’ ya know, and I walked outside in the back alley and ran into a friend of mine, who, I literally I coached his kid in soccer 15 years ago and I’ve known him here or there, but I know he’s a Deadhead, but never seen him out, anywhere, maybe one time, and run into him, we’re chatting a little bit, he’s a

⁷⁸ Confidential Interview #7, Clay Douglas Baran, August 20, 2020.

⁷⁹ Confidential Interview #10.

neighbor basically, and he goes ‘okay, let’s head in,’ and I’m like ‘I can’t, came Friday, don’t have a ticket for Sunday,’ and he reaches into his back pocket and he’s like ‘ehh, somebody didn’t show,’ and he hands me a ticket. And that’s more just luck, but again, this sort of openness this attitude of ‘well, I’ll just show up and see what happens,’ ya know, kind of a mindset.

My wife will put out a recipe and say ‘let’s try this,’ and I find I start to get actually... and musically I’ve always been the same way, like ‘tell me what the chords are, let me know what key it is,’ and if I know the song at all, I’ll start seeing something you’re doing, and I can go off that... I have to admit, and you might find this with more Deadheads or more people who have that improvisational mindset, that probably quite a few of them, it’s not an option, there are people who like to make the list of what they’re gonna do, and they check down the list, and it’s not just that I don’t like doing that, like I literally can’t, like my skin crawls, I start to get antsy and uncomfortable, if there’s too much structure, to anything I’m doing. I’m not saying that’s a good thing, I wish I could do it when I needed to, but I really have a hard time with it. So I’d be curious, if you might find, that for quite a few of us, it’s not really an option, by nature, we are improvisational, by lack of another option. It’s so baked into us, we don’t follow step-by-step. It sounds cool to be improvisational, but it’s a little less cool if you realize, maybe it wasn’t an option, ya know? I just can’t be that way.⁸⁰

Not all of the participants shared this feeling, but it was one of the only other connections between the social paradigm and the fans’ perception of the music beyond the feelings of connectivity spurred on by the jams. In general, however, the social paradigm itself simply exists alongside the music, and while many may follow it, there are always outliers as well.

Connected to improvisation is another major theme: Most jam bands improvise setlists. It has become an enduring part of the “jam band tradition.” The improvisatory aspects of the setlists themselves are a crucial part of the framework for how social cohesion manifests in the scene. I touched on this briefly at the end of page 38, but that was in regard to an anticipation associated with each note in any given song or jam, but

⁸⁰ Confidential Interview #4.

beyond that, the act of guessing which song will come next also goes a long way to facilitating social cohesion. Participant #3 spoke to this phenomenon:

A big part of it, is these bands not knowing what they're gonna play. You're gonna go see The Who or whoever has their song list, and you're gonna see the same show every time. Lynyrd Skynyrd was like that, actually. They took it so far as you knew what notes they would play even. All the solos were like note for note. There was zero improvisation. But with jam bands, the fun of the anticipation, trying to guess what they're gonna play next, we don't know, and when they start to play something and everybody all goes "YES! That's a great treat! They're gonna play *X*!" As a performer I feel that, as a Dead band, we've tried to surprise Deadheads, or more so mess with them, mess with their heads, and we get positive feedback from that. People will come up after the show and say "thanks for playing that song" or "thanks for playing it that way." That's a lot of fun. We're on our toes, ya know, we're not in a rut. We're not in our comfort zone.⁸¹

Another variation on this idea is feeling connected, and most importantly, happy, when a song begins that you really wanted to catch. Looking or hoping for that song is referred to as "chasing" that song. People in the scene will ask "what are you chasing?" to mean "What song are you really hoping we get?"

Confirming McKay's point about festivals being a "space away," many participants reported that same feeling. In fact, several of the conversations went to the topic of having a "festival self" and a "non-festival self," so much so that by the last few interviews, it was incorporated as a main question. Participant #8 described it thusly:

Well, non-festival [redacted] is responsible, organized, a bit of a planner, know what I'm gonna do and how I'm gonna do it. Festival [redacted] is like 'whatever, let's go, let's do it, blah!' I can't even bother to brush my hair at a festival. I've been an educator in one form or another for a really long time, working mostly with adults, but recently with children as well, but I *have* to plan that out, and I *have* to be prepared and responsible, you know, I can't say 'I'm sorry, I can't have class today because I did a bunch of acid last night and my head doesn't feel

⁸¹ Confidential Interview #3.

right,' like you can't. So you have to be very, very responsible. I can't be Festival Me in the classroom. I would lose my job instantly, and it would be a disservice to my students.⁸²

I continued by asking if they view the festivals then as an escape or if they view both versions of themselves as equally crucial or tied to their self-image. They responded that they now get to have the “best of both worlds:”

Yeah, I wouldn't say it's an escape. I would say it's allowing me to be 20-something again instead of almost 50. I'll be 48 in January, you know, I am... when I *was* in my 20s, sure I would do drugs and then go to work the next day, I was in my 20s, I didn't care, nothing was important. 47, almost 48, years old, you know, values change, life changes, responsibilities change, I mean, I don't have kids, I don't want kids, it has nothing to do with them, it has everything to do with me, but I think it's just... it's not an escape, it's just getting to be that 20 year old that didn't have a care in the world again, and that was a great time in my life, but also I don't want to live in shithole apartments with shithole roommates with a shitty job that I hate, ya know, I don't wanna do that anymore. I don't want to go back to that part of it.⁸³

This separation between a “festival self” and a “non-festival self” was particularly striking to me in light of all the testimony about the zeitgeist of the jam band show to “spill over” into the “outside world.” As in Bannerman's concept of EHEs, these fans typically use their affective experience as the beginning of a personal journey of self-discovery and growth. Participant #5 corroborates the divide between the show and festival space and this conception of the “outside world,” while also disagreeing, somewhat, with the idea that people bring the energy home with them:

I will say though, my main observation for these festivals is that people in real life just aren't as friendly, and everybody is sharing things and there is an open atmosphere. Outside of these spaces, people are generally just colder and one track minded. It's weird because you can get these people that are, well, people

⁸² Confidential Interview #8.

⁸³ Ibid.

become who they really are, they become who they want to be when they're there. I think people are just too reluctant to be that way in 'real life' because I don't know, they might not think it's that possible for everyone to be that way, so they kind of go back into their way of trying to cover their own ass, and get ahead, or whatever. Everybody's just, it's definitely a separate festival environment. We just become ourselves, I believe. Like I'll put paint on my face and run around in cut-off short shorts. It's just pure freedom of expression, nobody's judging you, at least most people aren't. It's a place to let loose and be yourself. And we need more of that in the world for sure. More of that vibe, like why does it have to be at a festival, we should get that in our daily lives somehow.⁸⁴

An additional point in understanding how jam band fans think about this scene is what the relationship is to their "outside lives." Many characterized having or starting a family (basically responsibility) with being an alternative lifestyle to consistently attending live jam band events. However, one participant reported that jam band festivals, particularly High Sierra, are very kid-friendly despite all the drug use. It simply depends on what each parent considers appropriate behavior to model for their children.⁸⁵

Another theme of note focused on Phish fans. Without any prodding or direction on my part, three of the ten interview participants spoke at length about how toxic and uncharacteristic of the scene many Phish fans can sometimes be. I have placed this portion of the ethos section here at the end because while it is in some ways a negation of my argument that the scene is indeed socially cohesive as whole and while this is also a recommended consideration for full comprehension, the fans of this scene define themselves by what they are not, the "Other," often to the same degree as what they are.⁸⁶

⁸⁴ Confidential Interview #5.

⁸⁵ Confidential Interview #7.

⁸⁶ To see this concept explained in the context of modernity and the formations of nation-states, read the introduction to Martin Stokes' *Ethnicity, Identity, and Music: The Musical Construction of Place*, which I took as inspiration for the wording here.

In discussing their general perception of jam band festivals, particularly LOCKN, participant #2 ended up speaking about a negative experience involving Phish fans, to highlight the contrast. They explain it best:

...4 or 5 years ago, when we got back into LOCKN, we bought a camper, and we just fell in love with that scene. I think the difference is, ya know, an ethos, it is literally a place that for 4 days you won't see a harsh word exchanged, and I don't even know what it is [that causes it]. When we're talking about LOCKN, we're talking about jam bands, talking about Dead & Co. being a frequent headliner, or Tedeschi-Trucks, Warren Haynes, Gov't Mule, bands that do actually have devout followers, their own communities, if you will, that surround those. And it's a pretty strongly overlapping Venn diagram between the different jam band scenes. And when you have those focused things, it creates this ethos where I wouldn't ever think or worry about, ya know, not locking up my camper or my vehicle. I would leave all of our things just laying out because I knew no one would do that. Literally for 4 days, I don't hear an argument, I don't hear people swearing or cursing or arguing with each other. You're more likely to see people give away things. You'll see people proactively seek out suffering and bring whatever remedy is needed. 'You're thirsty? Here have some water,' 'Oh my God, you look starving, come here, sit down,' 'You look lost, where you going? Let me help you find it,' 'Here, let me climb up [on top of a camper], what's your friends flag look like?' A thousand of those, ya know, and it's just you don't want to leave. Again, I think it's something specific about the music. If you were to extrapolate to larger festivals, like Bonnaroo, for example, and I've never been there, I've never been to Wane, but I've heard stories, secondhand. Moreso, I've been to LOCKN when Trey Anastasio of Phish was there, and again Phish, has a devout following. There does always seem to be a conflict between the Dead following and the Phish following. We literally watched a beautiful show, we always hang back in the middle, stage-right next to the sound booth, near the 'spinners' and the 'tweakers' as we like to say, because the density of the crowd is less, we like to spread out. Usually there's a slope to the venue, and short people like us can see a little bit more effectively, we can spread out and dance and not worry about people walking all over us. And when the transition happened from whatever act to when Trey Anastasio was coming on, I mean, all these Phish fans, as if it were mandated by God, or warranted, just literally trampled over our and other people's stuff, walked all over their bags and their blankets. We're in a lit area, it's completely obvious, and there was just complete disregard, just the most inconsiderate behavior I've ever witnessed. It left a sour taste in my mouth, for the event a little bit, ya know, it was localized, it was just such a foreign, abstract

feeling to feel this animosity towards someone when I was in the middle of this otherwise beautiful village, this musical community.⁸⁷

When asked if this is indicative of their general opinion of Phish fans, participant #2 responded using the term “granularity of resonance” to describe the minor and specific differences between Phish fans and Deadheads and the ways they operate within the show or festival space. Their answer was that they believed that this incident of being trampled was indeed a fluke, however, there are more instances of this happening in Phish spaces.

The following was participant #5’s answer when I asked them if there is a connection between the specific characteristics of a jam and the “vibe” that results. While only portions of it actually answer that question, it does shed light onto another view on Phish and their fans:

I think there is, yeah. Because a lot of jam bands, specifically I think, are, well I can’t speak for all of them, but take Tedeschi-Trucks Band for example. They just make really uplifting music. And everyone at a TTB show or set at a festival is just extremely enlightened. Like everyone just seems like they’re in the best mood ever. And that isn’t the way for a metal show, I’ve been to some heavy metal festivals and there’re just a lot of angry people there and the lyrics are just so angry, but I will say this: I’ve been to a bunch of Phish shows and that crowd, is just... I’ve been calling the Phish fanbase the ‘sad boys,’ cause there’s just so many people there that are upset, like I don’t really like that environment very much, that band specifically. I think they rock hard as shit, but you’ve gotta deal with the Phish fans. At a Dead show, it’s just like so many older people there that were there in the 70s and stuff, and they know kind of how to lead by example, in a way. But yeah, I think at like bluegrass/jamgrass festivals, those are the best vibes, man. Everyone there is just in the best mood ever. I don’t know, something about mandolins and banjos and fiddles just take everyone’s worries away.⁸⁸

⁸⁷ Confidential Interview #2.

⁸⁸ Confidential Interview #5.

There is more where that came from, but that excerpt was the most succinct. The rest of their testimony on Phish came as further examples. Phish is not the only band whose fanbase was directly called out as being a divergence from the expected social norms of the jam band scene. Participant #4 spoke about his experience:

I've had great experiences at a lot of Little Feat shows, but I also came the closest I've ever come to being in a fist fight in my adult life, at a Little Feat show, because my buddy, the seats at the Warner Theatre aren't numbered well, and my buddy and the other guy both thought, everybody's standing up and dancing anyway, but they both thought 'this' was their seat? So it developed into a pushing match and everything, and ya know, I think, as much as I love Little Feat and I love their music and I think they're great guys, that probably wouldn't have happened at a Dead show, the mindset would've been more cooperative, but still the overall jam band thing, the tie in, where I think you're on track is, and something I have to fight within my own band, like one of the things I always push back on if any of the other band members brings up the word "supposed to." "We're supposed to do it *this* way," [instead] it's that openness to "we're gonna figure it out." I think that probably ties in, so I think it's a double whammy, with the Dead for one, and there's this overall gentleness in hippy culture, and the jam band side of things, I think, is that open-mindedness to "we're just gonna show up and we're gonna figure it out together," and I think that mindset and that openness to "I don't know where this music is gonna go," translates into "I don't know where this *day* is gonna go, but I'm gonna show up and I'm gonna embrace that the person I just bumped into might end up being my best friend for the next 12 hours, and then I may never see them again," and that's the kind of thing that happens at those events. So I think that's probably the biggest part of it, that would make sense, that there'd be a correlation between those two mindsets, in my view. And it's sort of the togetherness, it's, you're not going as an individual to listen to a band, you're going to be part of a group, which includes the band, and you're all going to do something, today, together. Even though they're on the stage, and we're down *here*, there's less of a feeling of separation, I think it's viewed more as a shared experience. And I think, there's probably a, people who are attracted to that, first of all, and then second of all, once you've *bought into* that, and you're there, you're probably gonna continue to act that way.⁸⁹

This was the only participant to mention Little Feat, but it is here as an extension to the discussion on Phish and their fans, and particularly comparing it to Grateful Dead.

⁸⁹ Confidential Interview #4.

Participant #9 spoke about Phish as being the true successor to Grateful Dead: a view no one else explicitly stated, but one which may be arguable to many Deadheads. Their negative testimony as to their fans took a positive spin that didn't appear in the previous excerpts on Phish fans:

I see Phish fans, I've got one friend in particular who's like doom and gloom, "oh they're never gonna be the same, and they're not gonna come back after the pandemic in good shape, everything's changing," and I'm like "no, if they're still playing, I'll still go. Because there will still be those moments. Even if they're not at their absolute tip-top. There *will* be something." And that's what seeing the Dead was like in the 90s. That's what going to a cover band is like. Phil [Lesh] put it best, "searching for the sound."⁹⁰

All of the participants who spoke about the Phish scene reiterated that they did not have direct ill will towards those fans, as two of the three individuals were avid Phish fans themselves. In fact, not only they spoke highly of the band as a group of musicians, but two additional participants made it a point to talk about the fascinating musicality of Phish and how they interact with their audience during shows. Clearly, there is no reason that anyone making these criticisms here have any sort of anti-Phish bias. Nevertheless, this portion of my findings is crucial in understanding what the scene seeks to convey to the world.

There are so many ways to look at the jam band scene. This ethos that was not just discovered by myself but built in collaboration with my 10 brave participants who subjected themselves to several hours of very personal communication with me in order to help me make sense of my own feelings that I had about the scene and what it meant to me. The best way to describe that ethos is as one of gratitude, one of caring and mutual

⁹⁰ Confidential Interview #9.

aid. Also, strong, emotional transcendent experiences are associated with this scene. It is all one big cycle of collective consciousness feeding itself with the music and the transcendent aspects. The gratitude and caring come into play again outside of the venue, when the jam band “imaginary” at large, the web of connections people have in common with each other from their membership in the “imaginary” or “public” of the jam band scene as a whole, synthesizes. I hope this section of my findings illuminated all of the layered ways in which jam band fans conceptualize this scene. While there are some social ills in the scene to be discussed in the following section, my participants always wanted to make it clear how powerfully cohesive and connective this scene is, both in and out of a venue, and how much it has increased their amount of friends & connections, as well as their enjoyment of life.

Caveats & Considerations

Perceived cohesion does not exist without several caveats as well as information that should be considered in order to have a confident understanding of this complex web of scenes. The first caveat I cover is related to how homogeneity exists in the jam band scene, for better *and* worse. After that I will detail the intricate abstraction of drugs in this scene. Then, there will be any other bits of information that could be good to know, but do not otherwise fit into one of the other categories of this thesis. Finishing this section will be a consideration concerning COVID-19 and the online jam band community.

Social cohesion itself necessitates common ground in terms of opinions and views on interpersonal interaction. That common ground can go so far as to lead to

homogeneity amongst the members, a quality which was viewed as particularly problematic to one participant. Outside of that one participant, that homogeneity manifested in the form of most people in the scene sharing the same stance on social issues, something that they saw as comforting. Participants #1 and #2 both specifically said they can generally trust that someone they meet in the jam band scene is at least left-leaning or liberal if not further left, is not a fan of President Trump, care about the planet, and possess empathy and progressive ideals. That outlier participant felt that that homogeneity particularly manifested in the perception that most jam band fans are white, and many of them from privileged backgrounds and upbringings.⁹¹ This is important to think about: does whiteness facilitate the social cohesion that exists? In that whiteness does not possess the barriers that diversity may present? Nevertheless, it does not seem to be the reason for the social cohesion.

While consensual sexual activity is discussed in the last paragraph of the section on Observations of Social Cohesion, this is to acknowledge a significant amount of time spent in a few of the interviews talking about sexual harassment. Participant #7 was the first to make specific mention of sexual harassment occurring in the scene. A point I made earlier in the interview sparked this observation:

... it makes me think about the amount of sexual harassment that occurs within the scene, and how that's really glossed over because a lot of the guys come off as 'so nice,' and 'liberal,' and ya know 'I'm a feminist,' and then every girl I know has a story about getting grabbed somehow or getting harassed somehow at a show, and it's everywhere, and yet, again, we have this idea that these are great guys, and then I have so many friends who have dated guys within the scene, and 'oh, they're such a nice guy, they're within this scene,' and they end up being a

⁹¹ Confidential Interview #7.

complete dickwad. And they go through different girls in the scene. So there's definitely a darkness, on the other side of it.⁹²

However, when I then asked subsequent interview participants about this, participant #10 had a rebuttal:

I've never noticed that, but maybe I'm the kind of person that wouldn't. Because I'm pretty strong-willed and if anybody is talking to me that I don't want around, I know to shut them down and leave right away. It's probably just not in the realm of what I would notice. What I see is just everybody respecting each other and respecting diversity. And part of the festival scene is showing your creativity and what you identify with, maybe a favorite animal, or dress up in your favorite colors, or like circus performer, or something that you really... your identity that you want to show, and then everybody accepts that from you, so I don't see anything.⁹³

In this case, we cannot say for sure what the overall perception of the occurrence of sexual harassment or violence is in the scene, but clearly there is a diverse set of opinions.

As for crime not limited to that of a sexual nature, only one participant, #9, spoke directly to the rate of crime they feel occurs at jam band shows and festivals:

There's people in the Dead & Co community that operate as low grade criminals, threatening each other, stealing merch on tour, that sort of thing. The Nitrous Mafia isn't part of the scene but operates on the fringes and can definitely be violent. After MeToo became a movement I was shocked to hear how often women at shows are grabbed by guys walking through the crowd, or harassed while they're dancing. The scene isn't some magical fairyland. We do a pretty good job taking care of each other, but we're just a subset of American society and subject to its ills.⁹⁴

⁹² Ibid.

⁹³ Confidential Interview #10.

⁹⁴ Confidential Interview #9.

On the other hand, participant #8 was of the opinion that jam band fans, particularly “Wooks,” steal “good naturedly” as they put it. When asked about that good nature, they responded:

... because there’s Wooks everywhere and they’ll come up to you and it’s almost like they’ll talk to you and distract you, and they’re taking your beer or your food and you’re getting a really good story out of it. They know... or they think they’re tricking you, but they probably know that they’re not really tricking you, and *you* know that they’re probably just looking for something, but it’s all entertaining, it’s not... I have been to a few festivals where there have been incidents of people breaking into cars and tents and stealing stuff, but that’s rare, that doesn’t happen that often, you know? It’s more like, someone’s like “dude, I know he’s just coming here to smoke a bowl, grab a couple free beers and move onto the next campsite,” but you know this and you don’t mind, it’s all part of the... it’s all just part of the fun.⁹⁵

Speaking of the Nitrous Mafia and Wooks brings us smoothly into a summary on the general conception of drugs in the scene.

Participants did report feeling like drugs are absolutely a part of the scene, but a more spiritual or existential experience rather than a strictly recreational one. Many also added specific instances of how they and their bodies react to drugs. By far the most mentioned/popular substance was psilocybin of the fungal variety, sometimes called “magic mushrooms,” or simply “shrooms.” Nitrous, laughing gas, or whippits, as they are typically called, are the most commonly seen non-psychedelic used in the scene. They have problematic implications as well. Regardless of type of substance, participants mostly viewed taking any drug as an “augmentation” of the experience, something that adds rather than detracts from it. The people who reported this focused on how the interpretation of the musical structure changed due to drug use, in that you “just feel it.”

⁹⁵ Confidential Interview #8.

Far fewer mentioned the inherent tendency of psychedelic drugs to instill a sense of “oneness” with the Earth and other human beings. The fact that no one talked much about that shows that the conception of drugs in this scene is not one connected to a scientific or objective understanding of the effects of these drugs, but one of an affective quality.

These feelings of connection and the way they’re compartmentalized in the minds of these participants in the case of drugs, follows suit in terms of their general perception of the social cohesion of the scene: An obvious shared love for this music exists, but many spoke about how, in the midst of a jam, they feel connected to everyone in the crowd in a way that they do not when the music is stopped. Many participants also reported feeling connected during the narrative or non-instrumental portions of songs (i.e. the parts with lyrics), but less so and not in the same way. In those instances, there is a conscious focus on the mythic or story-telling aspects of some of the songs these types of bands play and their various, associated imagery, particularly the songs of Grateful Dead.

One of the points that participants did not agree on is whether or not bringing friends to a show or festival is helpful/recommended or a hindrance of some kind. Participant #8 stood on the side of needing a core group of friends as a base, and then venturing out to meet others. Participant #10 subscribed to the idea that the ultimate freedom of bringing nobody with you is what they want most out of the experience; nobody to “tie you down,” so to speak. Participant #6 somewhat concurred in that they are willing to go to anything alone, not that they prefer it.

Participant #7 brought up the idea that men and women hear the music, and particularly the jams, differently:

I don't know, if I had to go back to school and do it all over again, my research would be on how men and women hear music differently. Because I do think the different genders get different things out of the same thing that they're hearing. I can't say too much more about it, but the way the dudes talk about it is completely different than the way the girls talk about it. Like if you asked someone, 'what is your favorite song? And why?' In this scene, you're gonna get much more qualitative criteria from the dudes than you are from the women. Like they're gonna tell you, 'well okay, so this 5/8/77 jam of *this* which ran 35 minutes and when Bobby hits that 12th chord in the 4th stanza,' and you're gonna get this very technical, note-by-note thing, and then if you ask one of the women what her favorite song is, she's gonna say 'Eyes of the World, like everytime I hear that song it just makes me remember *this* time and or it gives me *this* feeling,' so I think there's a big difference there.⁹⁶

As to whether or not this means that the social cohesion is somehow manifested differently considering this possible gender discrepancy, I cannot directly answer, but it is certainly an interesting question ripe for future research.

There is certainly a consideration to be made for the online aspects of the scene. Clearly, these live jam band music experiences are highly therapeutic for these participants and many others they know. Several of them discussed the impact that the lack of these experiences, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, has had on their lives, as well as the necessary substitutes for those experiences. Strictly musically speaking, many of the participants reported watching livestreams of either past shows or shows with no one in actual, live attendance. These livestreams, while delivering the musical structure itself of jam bands, do not offer the social experience that seems to be the flagship characteristic of the "vibe" of this music scene. With that said, participant #9 did tell stories about (almost) completely online communities of jam band fans, beyond what I knew of:

⁹⁶ Confidential Interview #7.

No one has mentioned the Fare Thee Well groups...? It started with a... God, what were they called, it was "*something* Backstage," they evolved into "Dead & Co. Backstage," I think. But when they put the tickets on sale, it was like, everybody was talking to their friends online and they realized that almost all the tickets were backstage, there was almost nothing in the rest of the venue, so we said "okay, well there are more tickets coming," but the Backstage group started for people to basically form new relationships, new friendships, with all the people that they were gonna boogie with for 3 days, behind the stage, in a massive arena. And out of that... ya know, there were a lot of people griping about ticket sales, there were a lot of people who were just like "we're gonna make it happen no matter what," the people who talked along the lines of "we're just gonna make it happen no matter what, we're gonna support each other, we're gonna get everybody in that we can," and all of a sudden some other groups popped up: dedicated to those people that didn't want to bitch about it, but wanted to actually help each other out. I joined one that is known as Ripple, "Ripple Dead 50" officially. You won't find any of these, if you look for them... well, actually, you might find, a header or something, but they're private groups... But anyway, the group itself just became this amazing social interaction where we were all on constantly, not just helping each other find tickets, there were people who were just refreshing ticket feeds constantly, and they're like "they just dropped 'em, go get 'em," and suddenly we'd have 10 more people in the group that had tickets... And it became not just an online social group, but some of the people who were most active, that had effectively founded it, took it upon themselves to throw us a party. They put all the money up front on their credit cards and sold tickets, but none of it... it all went to charity. We donated something like 7,000 dollars to the Chicago Food Bank, we had a party the night before Fare Thee Well in a ballroom at the Chicago Hylton, with a band and several hundred of us that... and that was just an amazing time, and it was a chance for a lot of us to meet for the first time, and all the stuff, we had T-shirts we made, we had all this... and along the way we all found tickets for each other. There was nobody in that group that wanted to go, but couldn't. We did fundraisers for people who were, ya know, down on their luck and needed a bus ticket to get to Chicago. That was when I realized that this scene really and truly was something like what I had glimpsed back in '88 at that Dead show, and once you embed yourself in it, it's just like any other culture, there's good things and bad things, but ya know, it was very socially rewarding... And within the group, people weren't just talking about music, they were talking about their personal lives, there would be somebody talking about going through a divorce and then we'd all jump in the thread. You could get advice. It became this middle-aged hippy commune all taking place online. And we didn't know if it was gonna continue after that either, we sat around and asked that question the whole month of July 2015, afterwards, and then Dead & Co. came along and we're like "well, let's all keep this thing active and all stay in touch," and it kinda became a way of life, of checking those threads every day and talking to people

and lots of people who are now lifelong friends and didn't even know each other before. I know I've got a few of those myself.⁹⁷

If anything, this fascinating history of some, probably little known, groups gives me hope that the energy of a jam band crowd can live on through these livestreams and that the spirit of live music in general can survive the pandemic. This scene seems too socially cohesive to let this stop them.

With the findings thoroughly presented and discussed, we come to the conclusion chapter which will go over the main points and the impression of the jam band scene one should take from reading this thesis.

⁹⁷ Confidential Interview #9.

Chapter 5: Conclusion

An incredibly important part of these interviews, where I got to see the poetic side of my participants, was at the end. I would tell each of them something amounting to, “if you could give a summary of the vibe of this scene; how this scene makes you feel, what would you want outsiders to know?” I will list them here in this section as a way to introduce this final chapter of the thesis, because I believe the best way to intimately know someone’s opinion is to hear or read it in their own words. And this thesis, the entire reason that this exists, is, in many ways, an homage to the people of this scene. I can think of no better way to honor them for their time, by presenting their closing statements about what this scene means for them:

Participant #1: Some people get offended from getting bumped into, but I don’t. We’re all little germs just flowing through space, just microorganisms flowing through a crowd together. We’re all one family just trying to enjoy ourselves. When someone’s really dancing away and they bump into you, whose fault is that really? Were you maybe too close to that person? The big thing about becoming a “hippie” as it were, these shows made me realize that it’s not about material possessions. My yard and house need repair, but if it’s between that and a concert, I’ll pick the show every time. Surrendering to the flow, giving myself up to the music, has helped me escape my ego. Having these life experiences have helped my own relationships in my life. I will always remember, I drove up through the Rockies, and came up over a ridge, saw the Rocky Mountains for the first time, as the sun was rising and Purple Mountain Majesty was playing just as it crested. It was a religious experience. I realized that it’s not about having all the stuff, I mean hell I’ll wear the same pair of jeans if it means I can make it to the show. It’s more of a lifestyle than just a fandom. I always wear my pins, I always play my music, and my first tattoo was a Steal your Face, and I’ll always have long hair.

Participant #2: Some musical genres or artists are like a hobby, but this type of music, is different. We do all share a similar viewpoint, I think. You honestly have to look at other genres to see that contrast. And maybe you will never figure out why, but just seeing that contrast is important. There are people who like to know what to expect, and people who don't. There are people who are into hearing music in a new way, and they may be open to concepts that are antithetical to their biases and resident stereotypes. The people who are open to those ideas, probably share more progressive ideals than someone who responds like 'oh, he missed a note!' or 'that didn't sound like the album at all.' These bands are not just making stuff up, they are creating and recreating this energy every single night. That is a strong, distinguishing attribute between jam bands and other styles of playing.

Participant #3: ... and that's the power of the music in action. Despite differences we all just try to capture the vibe. Ya know, for many people music is an escape from the grim reality of life, and the grim reality of life is where those political differences come in, and jam bands and the Dead provide a temporary refuge from all that.

Participant #4: ... I certainly think that you'll find within a Deadhead community or really among anybody who's really really into music, you'll probably find an above average level of mild dysfunction, I would say. They're just not necessarily, and probably a lot of people who appear normal aren't 'normal,' but they're 'normal' enough, and I certainly appear 'normal' to most people, and I am, but a little bit of that, if you go around, you'll find different people who have different strengths or weaknesses that put them out of the mainstream and this is a place where, not only is that okay, it's encouraged... one final thing you might enjoy, I read in a biography recently, that the show at Meadowlands in 1978 that I mentioned? There were 2 deaths and 3 births that happened there that evening. So we were "up 1."

Participant #5: I once heard this term used by a friend before, and I'm going to steal it real quick. It's 'everyone is a link in a chain' type thing. The term is 'collective effervescence,' and I like to use that phrase for the whole vibe in general, because everybody's on the same page mostly and I think we're all links in a chain, somebody goes haywire and starts moshing, it's gonna break the chain and everyone around them is gonna be like 'yo, you're ruining everyone's time around here,' but there's just something about the group being more important than the individual, and that's what helps drive the energy of the whole show. You can ask jamming musicians, like the crowd is what is actually driving the whole bus. The musicians play off the crowd. It's our responsibility to look out for the greater good, and then when you go back to the 'real world,' it's also our responsibility, and that's a bit harder, it's a lot bigger of a task, but the people that don't go to these festivals don't really understand that as much.

Participant #6: Most people are happy there [at festivals or shows]. It's like the optimal time to make a friend, because everybody is there for basically the same reason, the music drew them there, chances are they've seen them before, you already have common ground. You already can talk about stuff. And it doesn't matter if you're 50 and they're 25, and everywhere my husband and I go, everyone around us always take the time to introduce themselves to us and tell us where they're from and then ask us the same questions, it's everywhere we go. Whether it's 'shitty vibes' from Michigan or some 21 year old or some 45 year old guy from Louisiana who goes to shows by himself, but everybody is happy because they made a deliberate effort to be there, and chances are you share the same reason for being there. So it's already like you're part of the community. And everyone is very accepting. You don't have to be thin or beautiful or tan or rich or whatever, you're just there, and you're probably dressed in comfortable clothes, not anything super 'blingy.' You know you're gonna make new friends, which is fun, you know you're gonna hear stuff you love, which is great, and you know you're gonna hear stuff you haven't heard before, which is even better. And you know you'll probably see these people again, and you kind of count on it, you look for them when you go to the next show, you look for the faces that you met, and you talk about what you saw in between, it's just very, very communal. But like I said, you either get it or you don't. And people who have gone to a jam band festival and not had a good time, most of the time, I think it's because that type of music is just not their thing, they don't like the long jams. My ex-husband couldn't stand the long jams, he'd be like 'is this still playing? Turn that off,' and I'm like 'but it goes for 17 minutes, it goes into this really soaring section, you just gotta give it time!' People get it or they don't. I love it. It's an opportunity for lots of likeminded people to get together. It's a collective high.

Participant #7: ... I just wanna say, I think that the people that I've met through this music are incredible people, they're intelligent, they are thoughtful, and they *are* for the most part, very interested in activism and their hearts are in a place of wanting to do better and wanting to be better for ourselves and this world, and I have met so many really, really excellent human beings through this music. And I would not want you to get the impression that that's not the case or that I don't love, love, love this community and feel so invested in it, and proud of it in some ways, in many ways. But I also hold a realistic eye to some of our darker moments.

Participant #8: Well, yeah, half the time someone's trying to talk to me during a show and I'm like 'can you please stop? Everytime you speak, you're killing my vibes. I love you, but shut up.' But when you're walking out and about, that's when you talk, in my opinion. On the other hand, I've always said, that if we could collect the energy that people emanate when they're really into the groove and they are dancing and feeling the music and vibing off the band and vibing off

each other, and man, if we could bottle that energy, we'd have world peace in a second, but as soon as the music stops, that vibe stops too. Not entirely, but it definitely diminishes.

Participant #9: A lot of it is what you bring into it. If you go in curious, openminded, and relaxed, you're probably gonna have a better experience overall, if you go in and you're judgmental towards the people around you, then forget it, it's not gonna fly. Not that there isn't negativity in the scene, there definitely is, but if you take somebody who's brand new and they go in expecting joy then they are probably going to find it, I mean sometimes the band is off or the crowd is off or the weather is lousy, but you almost have to understand that. I got lucky in that my first show was magical no matter what was going on, that wasn't just me, that July 2, '88 was one of those revered shows. But I didn't go in expecting what I got. What I got out of it from the human standpoint was something like what I imagine Woodstock was like, ya know, a tiny town with just caravans of cars, adding ten times the population of the town, and all of us just kinda making it work. Walking down Shakedown Street is a good introduction to any show. You've never seen... it's just a hippy flea market is basically what it amounts to, but it's such a part of the culture, that now we all expect a grilled cheese when we get out of the show. When I went to Fare Thee Well, they didn't have vending outside but they had food trucks, and it was at least like 'okay, before I go in, I'm getting my grilled cheese on.' I wasn't sure if what we had had kind of died with Jerry, I didn't see the scene around other jam bands being anywhere near as strong as what was the merry band of pranksters following the Dead around. I don't where any of those people went after the shows were over, I'm like 'where are you? Cause I would love to find you,' but they all just disappeared like Homer Simpson into the shrubbery. But it all came back out at Fare Thee Well. We all decided to celebrate the legacy of the Dead. And people bitched a lot about Trey being the stand-in for Jerry, but he was fantastic and it was a great way to blend those two bands, that's why I was there! Walking into the place was a feeling of joy where you felt your heart lift, and even if that was your very first show, I know people who brought their teenage children to this show, you would've known there was something magical. And even if you go back and listen to the performance, it's really not that great, some of it is tough to listen to even for fans, but you know, we were *there*. And whenever I watch these concert films, I want them to focus on the audience, I want more cameras on the audience, because that's why we're there. The band will say it from the stage, that we're all a part of this same experience. They're not just up there playing music. We're feeding energy back and forth off of each other, and probably, if you want to get an example of that, JRAD is the best one out there, for doing that now. It's that energy. And there's a feeling that I look for whenever I go, where I'm gonna transcend wherever I am, I'm gonna have a moment where I'm going to church. And it might only be for one song, it might only be for one solo, and if I'm lucky,

it's gonna be for a whole set or a whole show, but I'll still keep going, looking for those moments.

Participant #10: I have this screenshot of a Dead show where everyone is reaching up towards some water being sprayed at them, and I feel like that's how I feel about the scene. Like we're all together reaching out towards the same thing. This is the only style of music that has its level of community. Others are just entertainment. This *is* the fans and their relationship with the music and each other.

So far, in the findings chapter, I made connections between five scholarly works and the actual information acquired in the interviews: “Imaginaries” and “counterpublics” viewed through the jam band lens; the idea that shows and festivals constitute a “space away” from the “outside world;” not to mention, the large number of religious or spiritual experiences, which can also be referred to with the term EHE (exceptional human experience). Finally, in both the literature review and the findings chapter, I characterized ascent as the rise in energy that occurs. Here in this chapter, I will continue to make those connections; connections like: that jam bands and the music they play confirm the framework of the central social functions of music, confirm that, like much live music in general, they are transcendent bodily experiences, and are more nuanced than previously known. The jam band scene and their practices give them a very unique position in the landscape of American musical styles. Finally, people do, unfortunately, have negative experiences in the scene, like that of other live music events in different styles and genres. I am using the literature review as the basis of each of the discussions of those sources and topics found below.

The work of Stefan Koelsch focuses on the relationship between music and social cohesion. In all seven of the “Cs,” the jam band scene confirms the social functions of

music that Koelsch lays out in his article: it does initiate contact amongst people (under normal conditions); it does engage social cognition in the form of fans reading into the meanings of songs and dissecting them in real time. Co-pathy is a central underpinning that leads to cohesion in the jam band scene. While some participants spoke about different forms of unspoken communication, particularly between performer and listener, the “C” for communication was not as strong as the others. Jam band music, and by extension, the scene itself, absolutely coordinates people’s thoughts and actions. That is one of the major threads of the findings section, that they are all there for one reason, and that reason unites them in a powerful way. I would argue it works in the same way as the “collective activity” cited by Uchida, Takemura, and Fukushima, since there are no further specific conditions under which that term can be applied to a situation. It simply came from an unrelated topic of study. It goes without saying that the jam band scene is one of cooperation, as that is also a core part of the findings. Finally, and as a way to address our overall research statement: Jam band music does unquestionably exhibit social cohesion, especially in the way described by not only Stefan Koelsch, but two other scholars from that section: Jane Jenson and D.R. Forsyth.

While I did not specifically reference the work of either Peter Connors or Casey Lowdermilk from the section of my literature review on general jam band academic literature, I did collect information that corroborated a few of Connors’ points in his definition of the jam band style: “Dedication to a singular musical event between band and audience driven by improvisational moments.” Certainly, the social cohesion of the jam band scene is driven by the music and the improvisational moments. “Emphasis on

live performance over studio recordings.” I believe this goes without saying. The members of this scene have described the deep, inner workings of what it all means for them. Live performance is everything to them, even if they entered the scene through studio or, more likely, live recordings. “Conscious efforts by bands to connect with a grassroots following of fans. This connection is what creates entire cultures centered around being a fan of a certain band.” The way jam bands bring their fans into their circle, to a degree, speaks to those grassroots followings. Furthermore, people got to spend quality time with artists that they admire greatly for the cohesive environment that has “grown up around them” over the years. Participant #5 talked about meeting Billy Strings at a campsite near a venue. Participant #6 would typically purchase a VIP pass, if one was available, mostly to get access to the sound check, but they and their partner have also met bands before. They did not specify which ones, but in the jam band scene in general, they reported that the bands were always “cool, gracious, and happy.” Despite the importance of Lowdermilk’s inclusion here as foundational for understanding the jam band scene, there is no conclusion made that is not already generally accepted as fact to anyone who studies jam bands, either the style itself or the scene surrounding it.

I discovered incredibly similar results to what Leah Ferree Taylor found in her heuristic study of live music: live music connects people deeply; live music is a full body experience; and live music can be transcendent.” Jam band music is quite obviously connective and transcendent, and dancing is an important part of the scene. In fact, in my own experience, I never liked to dance in front of others. Whatever mental block I had, I just felt uncomfortable dancing in front of other people. Once I began attending jam band

shows, I felt that pressure to conform to some idea of “normal” just melt away. I could immediately tell that no one would judge me for how I looked, because it was some of the most raw, deeply emotional movement in time to music that I’ve ever seen from others. “... Integrating these repeated experiences to release, renew, and recharge the positive emotions and mental resources to use in their daily lives.” This certainly occurred for most of the participants in terms of the energy of the scene “spilling over” in various aspects, like the Lot, and within the framework of the conception of the “show or festival space” and the “outside world.”

Keeping in mind Michael Klein on the mind-body connection bringing us pleasure. What I termed “audienceship” and what he explained as dancing, singing, etc. “They are examples of bodily-musical movement that reinforce this mind-body connection.” It would seem that there is a connection between bodily-musical movement and the moments when people feel deeply connected during a show, specifically, since there are manifestations of social cohesion that happen outside of any venue or live music context, but those moments don’t share the bodily-musical movement connection. As promised in the entry on Clarke’s conclusion on “mediatized” music altering the way people listen to live music, I will explain how jam bands dodge the mentioned issue. Considering the entry from Lowdermilk and the way taping works, jam band fans are not going to shows and festivals to hear it like on a recording. They’re probably going to end up with a recording of it. And that is more than a recording in the case of jam bands. It is a time capsule containing a unique series of notes that, luckily, won’t fade away due to

their being recording, and most of them saved in Archive.org.⁹⁸ As expected, Motl's work on gendered danger at jamtronica festivals was supported by my own work, if only by the two participants who confirmed that sexual harassment does occur at jam band shows.

⁹⁸ The reader will notice that this is the website that the link for the referenced version of "Terrapin Station Medley" sent them to. It contains many more shows. Many of them with multiple archived recordings for that same show. It is truly one of the most valuable resources in this field.

Appendix

Interview Questions

Starting Questions

1. What are some reasons you go to music festivals in general?
2. How far will you travel to attend a festival?
3. What is your opinion of the “vibe” of the festivals to which you’ve been?
4. What are some things you like to do while at a festival?
5. How has a typical interpersonal interaction played out for you while in attendance?
6. How do you feel during the times that music is actually being played?
7. How does that compare to times when there is either not music playing or you are not present for it?

Follow-Ups

1. What is your favorite memory from a festival?
2. What was one of the craziest things you’ve ever seen at a festival?

Timeline

May 2020 – research commenced

June 2020 – began making contacts and scheduling interviews

July 2020 – conducted interviews and began writing manuscript

August 2020 – continued interviews and writing

September 2020 – submitted partial drafts to thesis chair and began editing

October 30, 2020 – submitted full draft to thesis chair

November 3, 2020 – submitted draft for format review

November 4, 2020 – received content feedback and made edits

November 5, 2020 – submitted draft to thesis committee

November __, 2020 – received feedback and made edits

November __, 2020 – received format approval

December 4, 2020 – submitted UDTS-approved final draft to the university

Key Terms

Biofield – See “Energy.”

Brain Waves – in humans, fall somewhere between .5 and 100 Hz. Groupings of brainwaves make up the different states of consciousness we experience on a daily basis. Some obvious materials in the world are also measured by frequency like the tides, a heartbeat, and sound waves. The truth is, all objects are in a constant state of vibration and have a resonant frequency. (See “Resonance”)

Brain Wave Ranges – States of Consciousness:

Delta = 0.5 – 4 Hz

- This state is associated with deep REM sleep, but can be reached through practice with meditation.

Theta = 4 – 8 Hz

- This state is associated with the period just before fully falling asleep.

Alpha = 8 – 12 Hz

- This is a highly relaxed waking state, typically induced under normal meditative circumstances.

Beta = 12 – 16 Hz

- This is our normal waking state in which we accomplish tasks and consider our worries.

The following brain wave states are newly discovered and not fully understood. They constitute immense brain activity when completing certain tasks:

High Beta = 16 – 32 Hz

K-Complex = 32 – 35 Hz

Super High Beta = 35 – 150 Hz⁹⁹

The lowest of these brainwave ranges, Delta, is associated with sleep in humans. The two succeeding brainwave states are the Theta and Alpha waves respectively. At various times and due to many different types of factors and stimuli, human beings enter a state of consciousness which typically spans parts of both the Theta and Alpha states. This state of consciousness is called a “hypnagogic trance.” As the name would suggest, this state of consciousness is most often associated with the process of “falling asleep” and with the work of hypnotists. Unknown to many, children up until the age of about 6 actually spend nearly all of their waking hours in a hypnagogic trance. This is what leads to a child’s typically more robust imagination and creativity.

Culture – Clyde Kluckhohn’s definition, under which I operate as a suitable model for “culture:”

1. The total way of life of a people
2. The social legacy the individual acquires from his group
3. A way of thinking, feeling, and believing
4. An abstraction from behavior
5. A theory on the part of anthropologists about the way in which a group of people in fact behave
6. A store house of pooled learning
7. A set of standardized orientations to recurrent problems
8. Learned behavior
9. A mechanism for the normative regulation of behavior

⁹⁹ Tom Kenyon, *Brain States* (Lithia Springs, GA: World Tree Press, 2015), 39.

10. A set of techniques for adjusting both to the external environment and to other people
11. A precipitate of history
12. Exists simultaneously as similes, a map, as a sieve, and as a matrix¹⁰⁰

Cymatics – the study of how sound waves affect physical matter.

Energy – an object or particle’s ability to perform work. That work can simply be existence, or it can be movement, a change to another state of matter, and so on. In other words, there really is not any matter anywhere. All matter as we know it, is simply energy which has been slowed down by the square of the speed of light ($E=MC^2$). If we follow a Newtonian worldview, one which posits the world, the human body, and all systems, as machines, none of this would make any sense. The most recent development in quantum physics has been to realize that the energy flowing through the universe and the energy within all matter are really one in the same, and are in fact, *not* separated by barriers in the traditional sense.¹⁰¹ Our body and mind both emit several varieties of energy, including, but not limited to: electromagnetic, radio, light, sound, etc.. All of these waves of energy combined form what is called the “biofield”. The biofield interacts with all other matter which we encounter. Some cultures throughout history have called the biofield an “aura.”

Entrainment – the process by which one wave or particle’s oscillations synchronize with another. When humans listen to or participate in creating a rhythm, their brainwaves will not only synchronize with each other, but with the rhythm itself. This is why drum circles are such an effective form of music therapy.

Folk – (an adjective and academic term which refers to) any idea or cultural object which is not mass produced, created by the people of a specific group, and transmitted selectively and orally. Typically, folk objects will also reinforce identity in that specific group. For example, a story told and created by miners about mining that no one knows unless they are a miner, and which does not air on any radio or television station would almost certainly be considered “folk.” Saturday morning cartoons on the other hand are certainly not “folk,” as they do not meet the criteria listed above.

Frequency – the rate of oscillation of any particle or group of particles, and it is measured in hertz (Hz). Hertz refers to how many cycles of vibration occur every second. For example, an object with a frequency of 2 hertz, is vibrating at a rate of 2 cycles per

¹⁰⁰ Geertz, Clifford. “Chapter 1: Thick Description: Toward an Interpretive Theory of Culture.” In *The Interpretation of Cultures*. 2nd Edition. New York: Basic Books, 2000.

¹⁰¹ Bruce Lipton, “Invisible Biology – An Introduction to Quantum Biophysics,” Lecture, The Science of Energy Healing from the Association for Comprehensive Energy Psychology, Online, accessed October 28, 2019.

second. The working processes of the brain emit waves which vibrate at a certain frequency. (See “Brain Waves”)

Genre – in Karl Hagstrom Miller’s book *Segregating Sound*, he historically deconstructs the idea of genre in music. Before the 1930s (considered the “turning point” in the United States), there was no real understanding of “genre.” Songs were just songs, and no matter what style they constituted, if discernible at all, many people of all different races, nationalities, and religions played and sang these songs, usually with their own personal spin. Musicians were simply laborers who travelled the country, pedaling their particular brand of down-home charm. At gatherings, only the crowd would decide if a song was “too black” to have at their function, and there was no tried-and-true way to tell. The only distinction Miller presents is that of “old-time” music and “coon songs,” which in turn became “race records.” Essentially, from about 1920 to the mid 20th century, record companies slowly but surely solidified the concept that there was a difference between certain types of music, and one was meant for white people and the other, was not. As time went on, and with advertising and marketing in full swing, they accomplished their goal of completely racially coding music that otherwise might not have any musical differences whatsoever. In today’s world, music is marketed in a less racially overt way, but the legacy still lives on in the ways people think about music and genre. In conclusion, we must continue to use the genre label in order to accurately express ourselves in terms of musical discourse, but we must also be aware of this unsavory history and the fact that it, in all reality, does not exist. Music, and more broadly, sounds, exist with or without us. We’ve just found a way to put it into a box that we understand.¹⁰²

Hypnagogic Trance – See “Brain Waves.”

Resonance – the act of two objects’ frequency being in sync. All matter in the universe possesses a resonant frequency. Full understanding of this phenomenon with the human body has not been reached, but for an intriguing demonstration of resonant frequency, see “I Am Sitting In A Room” by scientist and performance artist Alvin Lucier.

Thomas Turino’s “4 Social Fields of Music:”

1. **Participatory** – defined by having no audience to musician distinctions. There are only participants and potential participants.
2. **Presentation** – this includes live performances with a distinction made between the audience and the performers. This is how most Western people understand musical performance.
3. **High Fidelity** – defined as an exact recording of either a presentational or participatory performance. Listening to music in this way is its own unique experience.

¹⁰² Karl Hagstrom Miller, *Segregating Sound: Inventing Folk and Pop Music in the Age of Jim Crow* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2010).

4. **Studio Audio Art** – this is defined as the creation of an artistic object in a studio with added electronic manipulations to achieve a desired effect. See: EDM, Trap, etc. Every possible situation which involves music invokes one or more of these social fields simultaneously, as they exist on a sort of spectrum.¹⁰³

Jam Band Glossary

Rail Riders – a widely accepted and proliferated term for an archetype of jam band fan. Rail Riders are those who spend their time at the very front of a crowd, in front of the stage, whether it is a venue with seats, or they have pit or lawn tickets.

Spinners – a widely accepted and proliferated term for an archetype of jam band fan. Spinners are named for the style of dance exhibited during jams, involving bodily rotations, arm

Whippit – typically a balloon, but sometimes an empty cream charger, full of nitrous oxide, a psychoactive substance occasionally referred to as “laughing gas.” The psychological effects typically include heightened euphoria leading to increased laughter, numbing or tingling feelings in the body, and general relaxation, all for a short time. Some harmful physical effects may include nausea, vomiting, sweating, fatigue, chills, or headache.

Wook – a widely accepted and proliferated term for an archetype of jam band fan. The term itself comes from the species of alien from the Star Wars franchise known as “Wookies,” who are known for their long, often unkempt, locks of thick hair all over their bodies. This association arose from many of these fans possessing dreadlocks, a type of hairstyle which involves a process of matting and braiding over a long period of time. Beyond just the physical resemblance leading to the origins of the term, the term itself holds other suppositions. “Wooks” often partake in the drug culture of the jam band scene, and many of them live a nomadic lifestyle, often to follow their favorite artist or band. You will find jam band fans who admire the “Wook” lifestyle and those that deride it, but they are an established group that most people in the scene would recognize. (See “Spinners”; See “Rail Riders”)

¹⁰³ Turino, Thomas. “Chapter 2: Participatory and Presentational Performance.” In *Music as Social Life: The Politics of Participation* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2008).

Suggested Listening, Venues, and Experiences

Band/Artist List:

- Mentioned:
 - Grateful Dead
 - Dead & Co.
 - RatDog
 - Furthur
 - Joe Russo' Almost Dead*
 - Wolf Bros.
 - Tribute:
 - Joe Russo's Almost Dead
 - Darkstar Orchestra
 - Black Muddy River Band
 - Phish
 - Trey Anastasio Band
 - Tribute:
 - Lizards
 - Goose
 - Lettuce
 - Keller Williams
 - Oteil Burbridge
 - Vulfpeck
 - Tedeschi-Trucks Band
 - Pigeons Playing Ping Pong
 - Spafford
 - ALO
 - Big Something
 - Umphrey's McGee
 - Allman Brothers Band
 - Warren Haynes
 - Gov't Mule
 - Widespread Panic
 - Little Feat
 - Edie Brickell & New Bohemians
- Known:
 - moe.
 - Disco Biscuits
 - Tea Leaf Green

Venue List:

- Mentioned:
 - The Caverns – Pelham, TN
 - Belly Up – Aspen, CO
 - Red Rocks Amphitheater – Morrison, CO
 - Hampton Coliseum “The Mothership” – Hampton, VA

Festival List:

- Mentioned:
 - Peach Festival
 - High Sierra Music Festival
 - LOCKN
 - Sweetwater 420
 - Furthur Festivals (1990s)
 - Borderlands Music Festival
 - Trondossa
- Known:
 - Grateville Dead
 - Finger Lakes GrassRoots Festival of Music and Dance
 - Mountain Jam

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Confidential Interview #1. Interview by Clay Douglas Baran. July 1, 2020.

Confidential Interview #2. Interview by Clay Douglas Baran. July 24, 2020.

Confidential Interview #3. Interview by Clay Douglas Baran. August 5, 2020.

Confidential Interview #4. Interview by Clay Douglas Baran. August 13, 2020.

Confidential Interview #5. Interview by Clay Douglas Baran. August 17, 2020.

Confidential Interview #6. Interview by Clay Douglas Baran. August 18, 2020.

Confidential Interview #7. Interview by Clay Douglas Baran. August 20, 2020.

Confidential Interview #8. Interview by Clay Douglas Baran. August 27, 2020.

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