

THE EXPERIENCES OF SISTEMA FINLAND THROUGH VANTAA TEMPO ORCHESTRA PARTICIPANTS

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Abstract

El Sistema, a social music education idea originating from Venezuela, has been active in Vantaa, Finland since 2009. Tempo Orchestra is the central tool for targeting musical and social goals. They include mutual partnerships between children of diverse backgrounds, as well as a good and meaningful life.

This study examines the experiences gained in Sistema Finland's Vantaa's Tempo Orchestra. The study is current and important as it explores "Finnish Model"-like, low-threshold goal-oriented leisure activities. In addition, the study provides information about the school system as a holistic and supportive context for pupils at increased marginalization risk. Sistema Finland's activities are supported by strong socio-cultural animation. This study examines the realization of sociocultural animation through participants' experiences.

The research question is: What experiences have Sistema Finland's Tempo Orchestra participants had in the Finnish school context? We used theme interviews with a retrospective approach as the research method. It was carried out one-on-one and in groups (N=21, 11–16 years old). The data content analysis was undertaken using a phenomenological approach, abductively based on both data and theory.

The results were mostly positive. The action brought enriching elements to the growth and development of participants. The realization of the more profound goals of sociocultural animation could also be found in some of the experiences of interviewees. One clear developmental task is to ensure continuity of operations more broadly for both the whole group and for individuals. According to this study, Finland's El Sistema is music education which functions well when properly funded. Based on this research it seems to suit Finnish society when carried out with "Finnish Model" of pursuits.

Keywords: *social music education, El Sistema Finland, sociocultural animation, partnership*

Background

Finland's El Sistema activities in the form of Tempo Orchestras began in Finland in 2009 in Vantaa as part of the *"Whole World in Suburb"* project. Since then, Tempo Orchestras have been established in Helsinki (in 2012) but have been in hiatus for several years for financial reasons. More recently, operations have begun in Oulu, as in Tampere, Polvijärvi and now Helsinki again.

The action is based on the principles of El Sistema, which spread from Venezuela, but the idea has been adapted to suit Finnish society. Finland's Sistema aims to increase contacts and interactions between immigrants and the population, and to promote partnership between children from different backgrounds also preventing racism while helping immigrant children and their families in integration to Finnish life.

El Sistema Finland is connected to Vantaa Music School, which enjoys municipal funding. The new "Finnish Model of Recreation" offers opportunities for Tempo Orchestras to start in connection with music schools (<https://minedu.fi/suomenmalli>).

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In Finland's El Sistema Model, the field of education and learning meets with leisure activities, thus implementing the democratization of music by bringing the basic education of art managed by the music schools physically into the children's school day.

El Sistema Venezuela

José Antonio Abreu founded "The Venezuelan National System of Youth and Children's Orchestras", better known as El Sistema Venezuela's well-known music education program in Caracas in 1975 (e.g., Nowakowski, 2012; Tunstall, 2013). Above all, the objectives are social and equality-based (e.g., Tunstall 2013). The key concepts of El Sistema are reflected in the basic ideas:

- Child comes first – music is only content;
- Democratization of music and social change;
- Through symphony orchestra and choir instruments towards social order and social development (Pedroza, 2015);
- G. Dudamel's conductor of El Sistema as a beautiful model of society (Baker, 2014a).

However, according to Baker (2018), the concepts of 'poor' and 'social' were not involved from the outset in the rhetoric of El Sistema, with the goals initially being more purely musical.

El Sistema's "Child comes first – music is only content" thesis has been critically assessed, as the program cultivates citizens' loyal to authority rather than educating subjects who take an active part in democratic processes (Baker, 2016). El Sistema changed its name in 2011 to the patriotic "Fundación del Estado para el Sistema Nacional de las Orquestas Juveniles e Infantiles de Venezuela", (FESNOJIV) (English – "National Network of Youth and Children's Orchestras of Venezuela"). Since then, the system changed its name to "Fundación Musical Simón Bolívar" (FMSB), although it is still known by the acronym FESNOJIV, referring to the format "Fundación Musical Simón Bolívar" ("Simon Bolivar's Music Foundation" abbreviated as FESNOJIV). The change of name expresses the transition from the original individually centred activity, to working under the state power (Majno, 2012). The colours of the Venezuelan flag in uniforms worn by musicians refer to the motherland of the musicians (Shoemaker, 2012).

All children and youths in Venezuela have the right to participate in the activities of El Sistema (Driscoll, 2013). Of the approximately 28.6 million people in Venezuela, more than one million children, youths and young adults are involved in activities with more than 200 orchestras operating, offering free facilities, teachers, instruments, and uniforms (Nowakowski, 2012; Slevin & Slevin, 2013). The idea of insolvency and easy accessibility is to remove financial barriers to getting involved in the music hobby, and by extension, into society (Lesniak, 2013). Music education targeting the whole community also aims to secure the classical music audience of the future (Burton-Hill, 2013).

In addition to criticism of the philosophy of action and educational grip, it is clear that Abreu's music education program as such cannot work across societies and states (e.g., Lesniak, 2013; Sæther, 2017). Questions have also been raised about whether any music education idea can be called an El Sistema music education program. El Sistema Venezuela was established in a completely different social situation than where subsequent programs in different countries have been launched (Quinn, 2013; Puromies & Juvonen, 2020).

Finnish El Sistema's Practice and Educational Philosophy

By Sistema Finland, we mean El Sistema's Finnish operating model and organization in its entirety. The Tempo Orchestra is an outward form of activity in the Finnish program, an orchestra in which participant children and youngsters play and perform, and through which their practical activities take place. Of course, being part of the Tempo Orchestra also includes other dimensions, in addition to just learning and performing music; social relationships, community and cooperative activity are an integral part of activities which are therefore not weighted solely on performances. Players are selected for the Tempo Orchestra in partnership with schoolteachers, as they are assumed to know their own students and their life situations best. When choosing, the teachers consider the pupil's enthusiasm, the number of existing hobbies, the need for communal activities and family support. The participant distribution aims to be equal in favour of gender as well as Finnish and immigrant background.

Tempo Orchestral activities promote, according to their own statement, the well-being of children through music and develop life skill aspects such as concentration, attention, self-confidence, and appreciation of others (Antal-Lundström, 1996; Anttila & Juvonen, 2002; Huotilainen & Putkinen, 2008). The importance of schools as a learning environment for social skills is central in Finnish society (SistemaFinland.fi). The group dynamics created by playing music together promotes equality and attachment to the school community. The action itself is also intercultural pedagogy: an encounter between two or more people who perceive themselves as coming from different cultures (Gustavsson & Ehrlin, 2018).

Tempo activities are driven by the idea that every child and adolescent have the right to receive pedagogical support for their growing up and cultural development. The instruction works to make all players learn the pieces of music played together well. However, the technical development of instrument playing is not the most important of the goals, but rather that the child attends the common practice sessions and is engaged in communal pastime activities with other children (SistemaFinland.fi) (see Picture 1).

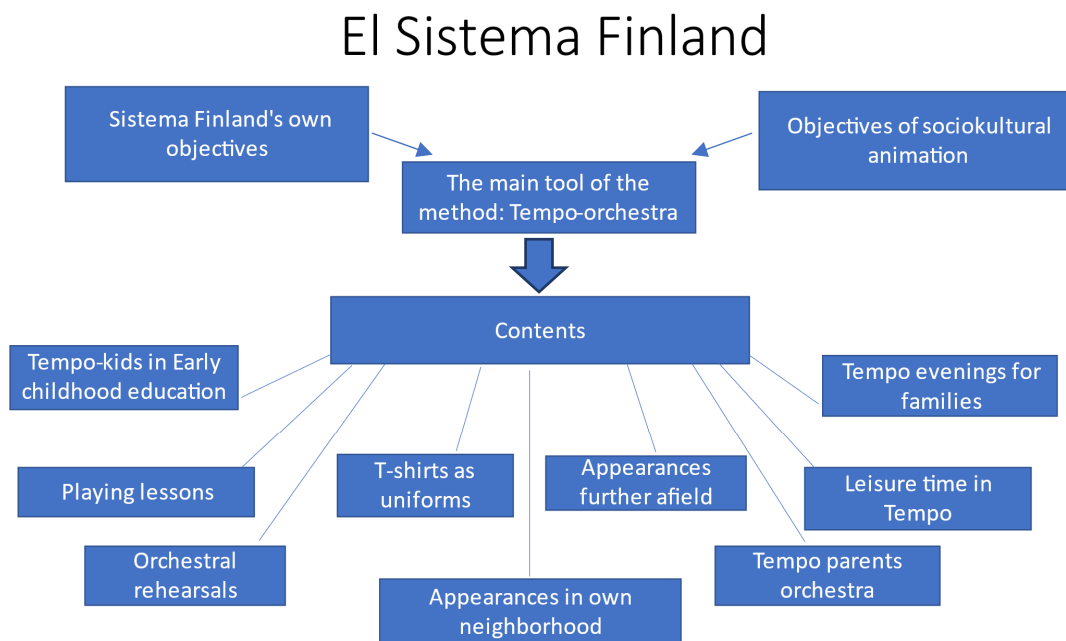


Figure 1. Aims, methods and contents of El Sistema Finland

Currently, Tempo Orchestras in Finland have about 130 players, with one orchestra being of ideal size – 24 players. There are schools from areas with much-needed low-threshold hobby opportunities which were selected to participate in the action.

Working Principles of the Tempo Orchestra

Abreu described El Sistema as being a variable system by nature, adapting to new conditions. It can be said that in equal measure Tempo Orchestra adapts to each school's own microcosm, seeking to reconcile its activities with the everyday life of the school. In the last two years, the Länsimäki School Orchestra in Vantaa, which we have

used as an example in this article, has been colored by the corona in all activities, the limitations, and exceptional conditions. The Tempo Orchestra has tried to run its activities despite the corona pandemic constraints. However, at least partly due to the COVID19 pandemic, participants have left the orchestra and the intensity and activity has significantly silenced compared to normal. Since autumn 2022, the Länsimäki School pupils have been able to choose the Tempo Orchestra as an optional subject. Instruction in the subject has been offered for 75 minutes per week. So far, no private instrument lessons have been offered to pupils. None of the interviewees in this study had yet participated in the “Tempo Orchestra as an optional subject” at the time of the interviews.

Usually, the orchestra’s instrument instructors work in one school on two consecutive days a week. Each participant receives a 15-minute personal instrument playing class once a week. Each pupil’s instrument learning occurs either during recesses or classes. In the event of class-based instrument learning, the school has been prepared to be flexible by allowing students to take instrument classes during the usual school hours. Each week, the Tempo Orchestra has two rehearsal sessions, one with a piano playing professional. Being accompanied by a pianist adds clarity of harmony and the right kind of feel to each composition. In addition, the playing becomes more engaging with an accomplished pianist backing the other players.

Teachers who give instruction in the Tempo Orchestra are either master’s graduates, or graduates music educators and instrument teachers. There are also graduates of the Aalto Art University’s Sibelius Academy. Teachers have thus also studied instrument playing education pedagogy and music education.

There are many ways to organize the teaching of different instruments. For example, the teacher of the viola also teaches violinists, and the cello teacher also guides the double bassists. This kind of practice is by no means strange compared with other institutions in the music sector, and the same is used in music schools and free education institutions, including teaching of woodwind instruments and brass instruments, in which one teacher takes care of the teaching of the entire group of instruments.

Usually, the day’s instrument teaching hours can be held by 2:00 p.m.: orchestral exercises are positioned precisely at this point of day to avoid unnecessary waiting. Each player has two orchestral rehearsals per week. At 2:00 p.m., the so-called B orchestra is set at the beginning of the orchestral rehearsal, to refer to the orchestra of younger children, that is, the players who later began their hobby. They practice until 3:15 p. m. with warmup clips and songs. Then the A Orchestra starts, which is an orchestra of older and more experienced students. This practice also lasts for 75 minutes. Prior to possible joint appearances, the two orchestras rehearse together.

The Tempo Orchestra strives to perform at a lot of varied occasions, with an average of four of them each semester. Routine includes school concerts at Christmas and in spring for the entire school community. On top of that, Tempo receives invitations to perform and is happy to do so. The orchestra is an important activity demonstration channel for the city of Vantaa. It is invited to attend when ministers are present, sometimes down to foreign countries. Neighboring schools are also visited to perform.

Many of the interviewees had been participating in the “*Side by Side*” annual international festival in Gothenburg, which is a gathering of the El Sistema orchestras. “*Tempo Evening*”, an evening for Tempo families and musicians, meets once a semester in Vantaa. Swedish corresponding orchestral nights are celebrated once a week. The organization also runs the Tempo Parents orchestra, an orchestra for the parents of Tempo players, just for beginners. In the recent past, Sistema Finland has also started working with early childhood education. One kindergarten in Vantaa already revolves around an elementary orchestra and early childhood education workers are trained in El Sistema pedagogy. These will also be visited by the Tempo Orchestras of older schoolchildren performing and getting to know their smaller counterparts.

Previous Studies on the Subject

The El Sistema program has been studied from several perspectives. In their qualitative study (2016), Harkins, Garnham, Campel and Tannahill looked at the working of El Sistema in Scotland from a mental wellbeing perspective. The research setup was based on interviews, cartoons, and film making. According to the results, the activity improved participants’ mental wellbeing in three areas. Getting involved in action and making music produced happiness and satisfaction. Being part of the orchestra created a sense of cohesion and security and produced interpersonal relationships that supported the action and its routines. The action was found to increase self-respect, self-confidence, and appreciation for being able to learn challenging musical skills and receiving plaudits for demonstrating his competence in orchestral appearances. The effects of operations were strongly linked to several factors, including conditions, program planning and quality of staff operations (Harkins et al., 2016).

Krupp-Schleußner and Lehmann-Wermser (2018) studied the long-term effects of expanded music education in German primary schools in grades 1 to 4. According to the results, children’s attraction to music and its importance are more important to them than other factors in learning instruments and dedication to music. The program makes children more easily choose music-oriented classes and instrument instruction than their socioeconomic background would otherwise require (Krupp-Schleußner & Lehmann-Wermser, 2018).

Baker (2014b) is probably the leading El Sistema scholar and makes constructive criticism stating that the program does not actually do music education work, but instead teaches participants mainly to play the newly selected songs: it does not make musicians but players, participants become performers and as rulers of technology, not artists.

Rimmer (2018), meanwhile, longs for the children’s own voice to be heard, which he considers having been completely overshadowed by other activities. Specifically, more attention should be paid to children’s own experiences, according to him.

According to Hollinger (2006), the self-efficacy beliefs of children with the lowest socio-economic background conditions improved significantly with orchestral activity. Shoemaker (2012), meanwhile, noted in his study that social music education activities through orchestras (OrchKids and El Sistema) improve living conditions for

participants and their families by providing them with a strong sense of identity and belonging to the community. Each orchestra teaches children a sense of responsibility and a sense of belonging to a large international music community. Shoemaker (2012) notes, that teachers in the United States come from higher social classes than the participants, while Venezuelan teachers and students represent the same social class.

The Two Pillars of Socio-cultural Animation: Cultural democracy and cultural democratization

According to our main theory of socio-cultural animation (Kurki 2000; Lahti 2014) the general concept 'culture' has various semantics and can be roughly divided into three meanings:

- Elitist, for the few, high culture, civilization. A certain upbringing and education can open a door for becoming a cultural person;
- Each nation's inner-born own culture. The full scene of people's lifestyle, which makes all people civilized. Each cultural way of living separates people from other peoples;
- The culture that we create together. The initiative comes from the people. People take responsibility for their own lives and civility manifests itself creatively in living in their own humane existence, now and in the future.

Culture, in this case playing in the Tempo Orchestra, is not just a high-cultural privilege of the few and the chosen. From Tempo's point of view, music belongs to everyone, and everyone who wants it is given the opportunity for musical expression (Tempo Guide, 2021).

Cultural democracy reflects an individual's involvement in the production of culture. The aim is to increase cultural participation so that participants act as cultural producers. Cultural democracy is seen as an advanced view of culture. It means that culture is not just an embellishment of life or art of beauty, but specifically a structure of human behaviour. Therefore, all actors in sociocultural animation activities have a vocation to participate in it from the planning of the action until its implementation. Participation is therefore considered to be one sign of achieving cultural democracy. Cultural activity is primarily a tool to improve human conditions (Kurki, 2000).

Cultural democratization, on the other hand, aims mainly for the emergence of cultural dialogue. Cultural inspirers act as intermediaries between art and people with the aim of allowing as much of the people as possible to enjoy the products of culture. It is intended to reduce the gap in the population caused by different groups having different opportunities to gain access to education and culture. Cultural democratization has also been seen as a necessary step in moving towards cultural democracy (Kurki, 2000). Authors of this research reflected sociocultural animation and its occurrence in light in Figure 2.

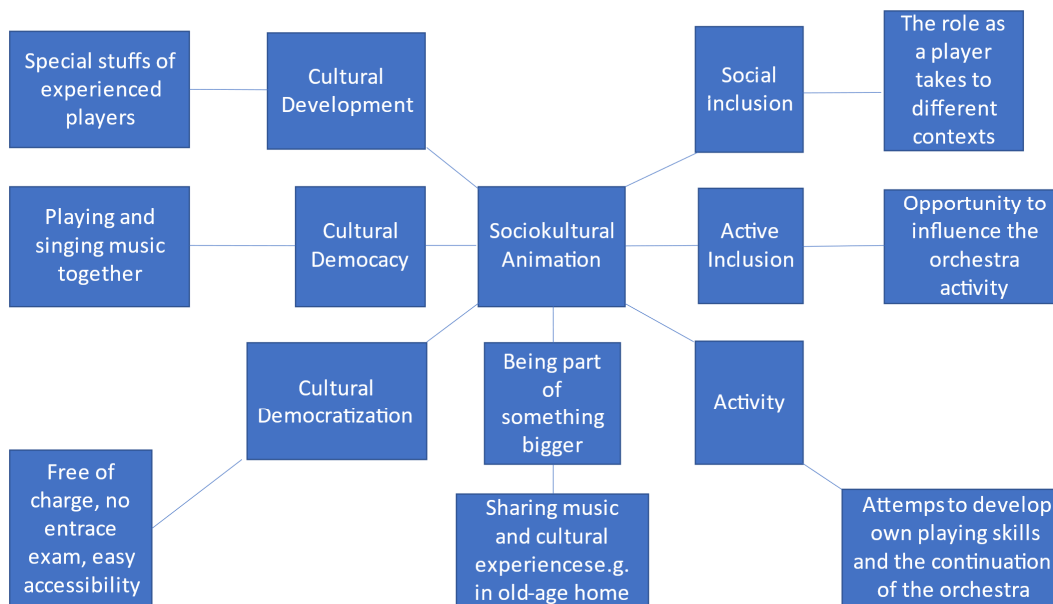


Figure 2. Socio-cultural animation and its occurrence considering this research's results

Social Pedagogical Starting Point in the Background of El Sistema

In social pedagogy, the subject of review is the social nature of individual growth and man as a social being. Social pedagogical theory combines the educational and social science perspectives by placing the focus of thinking on the examination of the overall situation of an individual or group. The goal is to integrate individuals and groups into society, to find their own place in society. The aim is to confront the grievances of society, to help the underprivileged and promote welfare, justice, social balance, individual freedom, social responsibility, experience, and inclusion of community, and prevent exclusion and becoming stigmatized (Hämäläinen & Kurki, 1997; Lomaa, 2007; Úcar, 2012). Social pedagogy defines education as a wide-ranging activity: the processes of civilization and socialization, and support for identity building. Social pedagogical thinking and activities live and evolve continuously within the sphere of influence of various concepts of human, social, morality and science and it can be seen as a social movement, scientific pedagogy, or independent scientific doctrine (Hämäläinen & Kurki, 1997; Nivala & Rynnänen, 2019) (see Figure 2).

Socio-cultural animation is a trend in social pedagogy that combines educational, social, and cultural activities, incorporating theory, ideology, methodology and practice. It has a long tradition of inspiring minority cultures in Central Europe and Latin America (Karpinen, 2005). Inspiring can be carried out with the help of various activities. Sistema Finland's music education and other activities are strongly motivated specifically by socio-cultural animation. The activities of orchestras, like all socio-cultural animation and motivation, are oriented towards increasing cultural democracy (Tempo Guide, 2021).

The cultural understanding of animation is broad: it includes elite culture as well as people's various cultural lifestyles, but in particular it emphasizes people's own cultural creativity in their own everyday life. Through their choices and activities, people create and develop their culture and their own future while living in and

operating in everyday life. Culture, in this case playing in the (Tempo) orchestra, is not only the high cultural privilege of the few and chosen – but music also belongs to everyone, and everyone willing is given the opportunity for musical expression (Tempo guide, 2021). We didn't directly ask our interviewees for development ideas, – we reasoned these ourselves. Social pedagogical research involves research-based development of social pedagogical activities.

The Research Question and Sub-questions

The main research question of our study is: *What experiences have the children and youngsters participating in El Sistema in Finland and playing in the Tempo Orchestra gained in terms of its different dimensions?*

To this main question, we are looking for answers using the themes which were picked up for the interviews as sub-questions. These included: a) the overarching memories of playing in the Tempo Orchestra, b) instrument playing lessons, c) appearances, d) family attitudes, e) freedom to choose self about their participation, f) interaction, g) mates, coping and managing, h) discontinuation of participation in the orchestra, i) cultural democratization, democracy, and development, j) being a part of something bigger – community, k) social inclusion, active inclusion, and activity as a continuation of community, l) music educational model or not? and m) negative dimension. The structural elements of socio-cultural animation described by Kurki (2000), and El Sistema Finland's own stated operational descriptions and objectives are mirrored through interview questions using the following perspectives: line of music education offered, community, sociality relevance.

Sample and Participants

In this article, we explored first-hand experiences of the action by children who played in the Tempo Orchestra. In addition, we examined the perspectives of the three structural components of socio-cultural animation in the implementation of Sistema Finland. According to Kurki (2000), they are philosophical-ideological roots, a methodological-strategic framework growing from them, and practical activities using a wide range of methods.

Method

The approach of this study is empirical: we interviewed the children who participated or had participated in the activity and analysed their interviews to outline their experiences. Our research is a qualitative case study in the frames of a phenomenological approach. As an ontological and epistemological pre-understanding, we believe in this study in human change and the power of intervention. Our method of collecting material was a retrospectively themed interview.

The target set of our research consists of children attending primary school (N=18) and three young people who have already left the primary school (N=3). Of those interviewed, 18 were of first- or second-generation immigrant backgrounds. There

were 17 girls and four boys. The age spread was from 11 to 16 years, meaning those attending school were 5th to 8th graders. The sampling corresponds to Vantaa Tempo's reality in terms of both immigrant background and gender distribution. For practical reasons, the interviews were carried out as group interviews and individual interviews. Some of the interviews were conducted face-to-face in attendance and some remotely via the Internet (see Table 1).

Table 1. Execution of interviews and number of interviewees

Interview Number	Present/Remotely	Number of Interviewees
1	remotely	3
2	remotely	1
3	remotely	1
4	remotely	1
5	present	3
6	present	5
7	present	1
8	present	4
9	present	2

Some of the interviews were carried out according to research authorization granted by the City of Vantaa and some according to the research permission provided by parents and guardians of Tempo pupils. Guardians of pupils aged 15 and over were informed of the study, when the youngsters themselves showed their willingness to participate in the research interviews.

We estimate that 21 interviewees are a particularly good number and the sample also representative (Nummenmaa, 2009); the interviewer (M.P.) felt that the material was already saturating at certain point. It is difficult to estimate the size of the whole population: from two to three hundred Tempo-players, approximately.

The interviews were carried out during a distance education period of primary schools and hobbies. From the music school in Vantaa, we received a list of players from the Tempo Orchestra and their guardians over the years with out-of-date contact information. Students who had already left primary school were selected from the list and all (guardians and youngsters) received an informative request for participation in an interview. As a reward for participation, a cinema ticket was promised. Eventually, 11 interviewees were found with help from two school principals and the interviews were conducted in a school setting. Six interviews were conducted in conjunction with the Tempo Orchestra gathering.

According to Eskola and Suoranta (2000), the group interview is suitable for use as either complementary or substitute interviews with individuals. A group interview is a good form of data collection when themes touch common experiences even in some respects (Sulkunen & Egerer, 2009). The issues under investigation are discussed with the interview team and with the interviewee at the same time speaking to several members of the group, but in between directing their questions to the individual participants. Pair interviews and punctual group interviews were also read as covered by group interviews (Hirsjärvi & Hurme, 2001).

In group interviews, interest may be oriented towards comments made by individual interviewees or the collective, jointly produced speech, reminiscence or meaning of the group. It is well suited for being the method used in the context of the study at hand. This type of reminiscences can be used, according to Hirsjärvi and Hurme (2001), when examining a thing or phenomenon that has happened in the past. Group interviews can be used to establish a common view based on what kind of speeches they use and justify their positions.

A traditional themed interview body is suitable for implementing a group interview, the themes of which the interviewer takes care of and considers that all areas are going through discussing. The use of a structured form is not suitable for this type of interview situation, as the conversation should be a free form. The size of the group should be carefully considered, as too large a group will complicate recording and may complicate the discussion. There may also be more than one interviewer, allowing the atmosphere to be more relaxed (Eskola & Suoranta, 2000).

In a group interview, participants may remind each other about certain topics or issues, contributing to obtaining the information provided by the interview. In the group, information is also obtained from many participants at the same time. If the group spirit is good, it may also contribute to supporting and encouraging more active participation in the group interview.

The method we use can be called 'Individual interview in a group situation' (Valtonen, 2005). We did not study the interplay between participants, group dynamics, or other similar phenomena in it. We brought children together primarily because we hoped they would be more courageous together to express themselves and help each other remember things that were experienced together.

It is possible to implement an interpretive, phenomenological objective in a situation that has been reassured only for the purpose of that discussion. In between, the interviewer played the role of an empathetic observer, in between becoming more actively involved in guiding the group more keenly in conversations (Moilanen, 1995). In the conducted interview situations, the raising of themes was natural and conversational, however, taking place under the direction of the interviewer. Dominance of strong personas in groups was avoided by starting shifts sharing (Kananen, 2008).

The themes changed to questions were presented as clearly as possible, based on a shared understanding and a world of experience. The concepts were defined well enough to find consensus. The scope of interpretation and its potential require a qualitative research strategy in this study (Sulkunen & Egerer, 2009). We evaluated the questions and themes of the theme interview to be validated in content, reaching the meanings that we seek to find with our research design (Hirsjärvi & Hurme, 1982).

The interviewees' experiences corresponded closely with the official descriptions of Tempo activities: ideal and practice seemed to meet, except for the cessation of activities at both individual and community level. The orchestras met twice a week, as soon as possible after the school day. Playing lessons were in the middle of the school day in between or during orchestral rehearsals, before or after.

Analysis as a Framework for Data

In the transcription of the recordings, the convention was to use a lexical and colloquial formulation (Kananen, 2008). The transcripts were initially read by the informant and several times. First, the data were thematised, i.e., raw analysis, which is a rough, thematic division of the data that outlines the overall picture (Ruusuvuori et al., 2010). At this stage, the Word text editor provided many good tools.

The next step in the analysis was a more detailed analysis that broke the boundaries of the original theming (Ruusuvuori et al. 2010, 18). Interesting metaphorical nodes were extracted from theories of socio-cultural animation and from the action goals stated by the Finnish El Sistema, to which this data could respond. At this stage, the Atlas.ti analysis software was of great help in managing and analysing the 228.7 KB of data.

The interviewees here were primarily children, and adolescents. But also, players, participants, and experts as well as witnesses (Alastalo & Åkerman, 2010). As researchers, we approached our research data with the understanding that every sentence produced by children and young people is important and significant. With such a small number of interviewees, it was not appropriate to produce quantitative or other statistical results. The content of the interviewees' quotes that are sampled by the reader are either truly general statements that synthesise all the responses, or they are particularly significant or exceptional.

Results

Here we review the results of our research through sub-questions, to perceive larger entities and answer our main question in as diverse way as possible. To begin with, we will look at the issues raised in the interview from the following perspectives: the overarching memories of playing in the Tempo Orchestra, instrument lessons, performances, family attitudes, freedom to self-choose about their participation, interaction, mates, stature, and cessation of participation.

A. The overarching memories of playing in the Tempo Orchestra

The overarching memories of those interviewed seemed positive. Young people spoke about their playing lessons, rehearsals and assortment of songs, particularly frequent appearances, and especially the journey taken together. Acting in an orchestra seemed to some at first nice and later boring.

"It was pretty nice at first. But finally, I don't know what, but it started to get a little more boring."

"The best part was that trip to Sweden... when there were so many of us there. Other countries became those guys involved, then it was so funny."

"At the top, I must have thought of the exercises."

Based on what was said during the interviews, peer collaboration and togetherness played an important role in orchestral activities. Performances and tours clearly strengthened them.

"I thought it was nice when we were there for 'Side by Side'. It brought wonderful feelings to be with everyone. And travel because I've never travelled with friends, but I've travelled."

"Our performances and we had a really good group spirit that everything got along really well with each other, that it was really nice."

Naturally, the togetherness mentioned by many interviewees is likely to lay the groundwork for friendships and their emergence, one of El Sistema's original goals on the road to preventing exclusion.

B. Experiences of instrument playing lessons

Based on interviews, participants liked instrument lessons, and felt they learned a lot there, despite only fifteen minutes elapsing. The teacher taught new pieces, but often also the technique of the instrument, as well as the theory of music.

"It's something like 15 minutes, but you learn a lot during it."

"The most in it is played and at the same time Anna shows us the techniques for playing the violin."

"When you have your own class, you'll learn a little more, when it takes more attention to you, the teacher that it knows how to help you if you get a little wrong."

"We went through notes and how to play it. Juha taught the technique, because that bow goes a little to the side and there, there is no sound, so Jari was in it, learning how it happens."

Many of the interviewees compared their own learning in private lessons to learning in an orchestra and felt they learned more easily and more in private teaching because the teacher had more time to focus on each player in person, which is impossible when playing in an orchestra.

"When there is an instrument lesson, the teacher notices and shows how to play it better. It's been easier to play in the orchestra when you've got private lessons in instrument."

"Solo playing was easier when you got more support from the teacher. Jari was able to help me more if I played wrong and we were able to start it again. In a big crowd, it was a bit harder."

"I liked to focus on a single thing, which in the orchestra didn't necessarily work. But, as a whole, it was a nice experience for me."

What's clear is that you learn more in private lessons than you do by playing in an orchestra. In fact, it is not very common for the beginning of the instrument playing hobby to even attempt orchestral play in a serious sense. In Suzuki and Kodaly teaching, group playing has been carried out with very small pupils with good success, but this approach involves co-playing and performing perhaps even more emphatically.

C. Experiences of appearances

Appearances are an important part of the pedagogy of the Tempo Orchestra. They increase the training motivation of players as well as their self-esteem (Tempo Guide, 2021). The musicians consistently felt the many performances in Tempo Orchestra had made them ready to perform and more audacity in other than Tempo contexts. Individual and communal experiences of success in appearances create a positive circumference that always encourages in new appearances.

“I have become even more daring, and I still want to perform in more places and it’s nice to present to other people and I want to do more of it.”

“In a way when you learn, you feel so brave that you’re doing it. There’s going to be good self-esteem when you can call.”

“At the beginning, I can remember the first appearance, and it was pretty exciting because I had never been on stage or anywhere. But after that it started to become more fun when I got used to playing.”

When asked, we used the words shy and bold about the performances. They seemed to resonate, as the responses showed the causal relationship: shy at first, finally much bolder – as appearances became more familiar.

“Well, I don’t know. At least you get the courage because if you’re pretty shy, and there are a lot of people out there and you have to play, then that’s why you get quite a bit of courage to do that.”

“I don’t remember the name of the place, but I guess it was some school, and we got on the stage, and we played. And I have this kind of fear, and I don’t dare appear before everyone, I feel a little bolder, I feel brave because I have that creep. Good for my creep. I felt that my social status was lifted, as we could later talk about prestigious appearances, when at the Music Hall, when in Martinus Hall or other such well-known venues.”

“It’s hard to imagine if it hadn’t been when it’s been such a big part of my life. But I’m sure I have gained some self-assurance, so that it probably won’t be as thrilling when I go and make other appearances.”

Being in a large orchestral line-up was safer than even in the Tempo Quartet. But it is an exciting and accurate work to play in the orchestral composition, especially with the claims of classical music and uniform playing. On the other hand, a good rehearsal with your own orchestra leads to a good performance.

“It was nice when we started performing, but I got scared if something went wrong. When you’ve done quite a lot of performances for lots of people, I start to freak out if I’m doing something wrong in it, some notes, because there are quite a few notes that I should practice. I don’t know how the appearances affected me.”

“I feel brave to perform in front of people these days. But still, I’m scared that I’m playing the wrong notes, or starting wrong.”

The fear of playing wrong seemed to play a pretty big role in the pupils' speech, so it seems that the importance of playing correctly has been particularly targeted in rehearsals.

D. Role of the players' families

Tempo also aims to activate the participant's families and help them integrate into society when there is a need to do so. This is the question the children of their families answered both as experiencers and experts.

Family support was perceived as being important, and the musicians enjoyed it. The support received is not play-technical, as this sample of respondents did not show the musician parenting which is typical for instrument players. Support takes the form of encouragement, participation, buying a music stand and transporting the children to and from rehearsals (as instructed by the Tempo Guide). Both parents and children feel conscious about the non-aesthetic benefits of playing. The action has clearly activated families and created networking opportunities for those who crave such. Grandparents' involvement is also mentioned. The action traditionally reflects a good childhood. You can find experience respectful to Tempo from interviews.

"My family came on some evenings when they have something to do and stuff. And they encouraged me to continue in Tempo program much longer. And they support me and everything. My cousins were there, and when my parents were there, they hung out with the others."

"My father always came to our concerts to listen and see. And this Tempo... this Tempo has brought like, for example, me and my brother sometimes play songs together and my father sometimes listens to it. The family went to "Tempo nights", they almost always visited then. Father got a couple of new friends when they started talking there and we played and sometimes they just started talking together."

"In a way, my family likes when I play. Because the brain develops, and it helps a lot with things. And I learned more things. And it's also nice, for me."

"Yeah, my parents supported me in the violin playing, but they didn't go to those "Tempo evenings" whenever my grandma and grandpa go there."

E. The freedom to choose for themselves about their participation for the day's activities

The model of socio-cultural animation (Kurki, 2000) supports people's freedom and self-initiative at individual and group level. Based on interviews, children and youngsters seemed conscientious. Tempo seemed to have succeeded in its goal of acting as a regular hobby in the child's everyday life. Children are also motivated by feeling important: the task in the orchestra waits and obliges in a positive sense. Based on the interviews, orchestra staff was visible during the school day, which also motivated going on with orchestral activities. The motivational activities of the action supervisors were noticed, and they seemed to work well.

"It was somehow, like you got used to it and that you had to go there and didn't feel like obligatory to go there, but it was my own will, and that it was really funny to see guys and all this stuff."

“Sometimes it was the case that when the Tempo starts like at three o’clock, the school days ended at two o’clock. I was so much like tired, and I couldn’t go, but I still went because I remembered that I learned new things. I’m gonna play my instrument and I have to be brave.”

“If I’m tired, I’ll still go to Tempo. I’m not gonna go to Tempo when I’m sick. But I try to go to Tempo even if I am tired.”

F. Interaction between Tempo actors and participants

Tempo adults were generally considered to be more relaxed and comfortable compared to adults at school. The necessary maintenance of order at Tempo was also successful.

“Those adults out there were really supportive and motivational; it was really nice to play together when we had that good group spirit.”

“They’re calm, but it depends if you run around too much and you don’t focus on playing, even if you wanted to come there in the first place. And sometimes they do not speak normally, but they try to help you, so that it is worth focusing on music this time. But they are otherwise calm.”

G. Social skills and mutual partnership between children of multiple backgrounds

No bullying occurred during Tempo action. The structure of the action was also nice, as everyone could participate. Many friends of the players have followed their example with enthusiasm to try playing in an orchestra but were not permanently involved in the activity. Continuing participation requires a strong commitment. Committed players also received certain respect as orchestral instruments are demanding instruments.

“At least I got some friends. I’m still on such terms with some people that I’m talking to them. Those of my own friends who didn’t play in the orchestra wanted eagerly to come along and play. They came along sometimes went to practice, but they never became permanent members.”

Almost all interviewees reported finding new friends from Tempo – or at least getting to know new people. Playing together and sharing experiences forms a large part of orchestral activity.

“I have not got friends from Tempo, but I’ve gotten to know people there that through Tempo.”

“Friend stuff is going pretty well. There have been a lot of friends; at least almost all Tempo members are my mates. There have been no nasty comments from others, everyone is friendly at Tempo.”

If no attention is paid to the structure of the group, the environment may become harmful for someone in a solid community may experience being closed out (Salminen, 2021). Tempo starts at the same time for everyone in autumn and children come from the same annual level, and from the same school. In that sense, too, the system is a little peculiar.

H. Discontinuation of participation

After finishing elementary school, continuing to play in the orchestra has proved impossible for many. Many of them had a desire to continue, but it was not possible to organize rehearsals. Many respondents said they wanted to continue but had been left waiting. For some, the music playing could go on continuing in the secondary school, for some it was not possible.

“The reason I had to quit was that I left primary school and there was no longer that opportunity in middle school. As I remember, I still asked the instrument teacher if it was possible to get to play when I was in 7th grade, but he said that all the places for players had already been taken at our school and that he couldn’t really help. He said that he would call if there was a place for me, but I never heard anything from him. But I’d love to play music if I could, but...”

In some cases, the action of an entire orchestra ended for some reason.

“I didn’t really want to stop playing, I didn’t stop it, but because all the other players stopped participating in the Tempo, program and then there were only me and two others left. The teacher came to tell us that we would not be able to play anymore, because there were so few of us left. And then we stopped doing it to it. This happened this year, in the sixth grade.”

Sometimes it took so much time to undertake other hobbies that there was no room for orchestral activities. For some pupils, participation was complicated for schedule reasons, which is understandable when a secondary school student tries to participate in the elementary school orchestra. Also, school homework became more difficult and took time, such as studying one’s mother tongue was mentioned. This is particularly bad, as it is for students from multicultural and multi-background pupils and to promote the opportunities of their lives that Tempo has been established for.

“Now in COVID-19 times, I only play in private. I don’t get instrument lessons. There is no organized orchestral activity now. And I should stop because I’ve been playing too long, and it takes too much of my studying time. Still, quitting feels a little strange, because I’ve been playing for so long and I’ve got used to it. It’s weird when you give up something. It depends on the age. I’ve just played too long. The teacher gave me a lot of time to play there and now I’ve done it a long time. And now it, it goes over my studies, there are going to be too many tests, and I don’t think I’ll have time to continue playing anymore.”

“It was like...that... it was nice, but it wasn’t my thing, because I had other stuff anyway, I had to study a lot. And I wanted to get home earlier, so music playing me wasn’t really my thing.”

Orchestral activities carried out remotely during the COVID-19 period took the base from playing together and the motivation from future appearances. Although the operators of Tempo managed to carry out the operation during the pandemic period as well as possible, even this form of animation could not prevent those who were dropping out of action due to the exceptional period.

I. Cultural democratization, democracy, and development

Tempo represents the democratization of art and other animation activities in its purest form when it provides the participants with a unique opportunity to do something, join something, and enrich their leisure time with something which is perceived as being important, and receiving significant experience from it.

"It was a nice and interesting experience because I had never played anything in my life, so it was a new thing to start. The trip to Sweden was the best experience."

"Lovely hobby and good that it's free and that everyone can participate."

"I played for six years; it began at the same time with the schools starting. I went to Tempo as soon as I started school. I left it after the sixth class. Now I'm in high school. Middle school went without Tempo, so there was no orchestra with which I could have gone to play."

Instrument playing as a hobby without the context that Tempo brings doesn't really seem to stay constant. This is one of the reasons which makes Tempo a unique base for a hobby.

"Well now I don't play anything, but I listen to music. But I might play later, I'm not sure, but I just might play a little as an adult, but I'm not sure. It depends on my school and so... But just now I don't plan on playing or anything."

The parents and guardians of respondents seemed to be happy considering their children's experiences that their child is engaged in playing an instrument in an orchestra. A big appreciation of the hobby opportunity appears through children's perceptions.

"It was just a big thing for them that I started playing something and started a new hobby because it's not such an easy thing to start a new hobby. Music playing was a big thing for my parents."

"Yes, my family came to my concerts and that way they tried to encourage me. They always said I should play cello, but I didn't practice much."

The encouragement and other motivation of instrument teachers was shown in the responses of interviewees, playing music is one way for art to reach every one of us.

"They always tried to motivate us. They always said positive things, so they motivated and encouraged us, and then yes it all went better this way."

The music school was known to be a little bit different from Tempo as the entrance was not free. In fact, the cost was quite high.

"My teacher said that if I want to continue playing in the junior high school, then I should move to a music school and it is subject to a charge, which makes it a different matter."

"If your parents can't afford to take you to hobbies, then Tempo is one to which parents can take their children for free."

Audience education is also a part of the democratization of art.

“I think that all our gigs were really nice. Often, we played only for our own school, but sometimes we made trips to Helsinki, somehow a little bit bigger journey. I think it brought up this orchestra in a nice way. At least I didn’t know what this orchestra was like before, and many of my friends had never heard of it before I told them about it and participated in Tempo program myself. I thought it was nice to get visibility for our orchestra.”

“It was pretty nice to play with friends. In rehearsals everything was played and sung. And then we always went to play for others, to another school and show people how we can play.”

Based on this research material, it can be stated that Finland’s El Sistema is at the stage of cultural democracy in cultural development (Kurki, 2000). Music is played (and sung) together as a solid group. It means not only giving and getting a taste of something sublime and beautiful coming from above, but also implementing culture with strong participation. The next step in this continuum is to create one’s own new unique culture together – cultural development.

J. Being a part of something bigger – community

From point of view of an adult, community is one goal of socio-cultural animation, being connected to something bigger (Kurki, 2000) can appear in something as insignificant as visiting another school in rehearsals. However, for a child it can be a big leap and practice to how making music can open doors.

“I played as long as my friend did. The last time I played was maybe a year and a half ago in Tempo Orchestra. I’m now in the first class of high school. I played at the same school with some primary school kids. We owned something significant that we could carry forward.”

“The old-age home concert stuck to me because the listeners were happy, and they also felt good when we played there.”

“I thought the funny things at shows were nice, especially when we went to perform somewhere, because we are children, so somehow that childlikeness brought it more to the fore. And those songs, then they were more aimed at children. It was nice to bring some vivacity into it, that it wasn’t just that playing. That brought something extra into it.”

Appearances differed from a wider inclusion in society. After an appearance, an opportunity is sometimes offered to get to know the context more deeply and it is appreciated. In those situations, the participants experience community spirit, there is something special taken and given.

“Was it in Heureka Center? Yeah, and Martinus Hall. When we performed in Heureka, we got free tickets to go in Heureka and we all went there. In the Martinus Hall we went many times to play when people come and go all the time, so we played the same at a concert several times. And we were videotaped, and pictures were taken. We got some good cake.”

The feeling of being a part of something bigger than just a physical space, was also observable, including a contact with other languages and cultures. And the idea of being united in one's own language and culture, united with other countries and everyone's former or other homelands could be sensed in many interviews as well.

"We had the Dear-Jaakko song, which was old and known everywhere. Then we also used different languages, for example, Turkish and Russian, in songs like Uskudara and Katjuysa. And we also sang during our performances."

The community singing builds togetherness and cohesion in a group of people. Estonia's independence and South Africa's breaking away from racial segregation policy are good examples (Salminen, 2021). When mere joy of singing together has such impact, we may ask what could be achieved with deliberate sociocultural motivation.

K. Social inclusion, active inclusion, and activity as a continuation of community

Interviewees raised things such as music participation, facilitated arrangements as needed and above all when they requested it. They could also participate better when they got personal assistance in music playing.

"Also, it depends again if you suggest you would like to play something easier. Sometimes those kids who have just started are given an easier version of the music, and then they learn to play it too."

"If I ask teacher if we can play something he easily finds something to be played. Or if you don't know how to play a song, then he will make you an easier version of it. Then it is not too difficult to play."

Courage, such as traveling without a family for the first time to another country, represents an active grip on life.

"I thought it was nice when we were in the Side by Side gathering. It brought wonderful feelings to be with everyone. And travel because I've never travelled with friends, but I have travelled."

During the playing season, Tempo teachers do not give homework, but they recommend playing at home and it also happens. The participants recognize the benefits. This can be considered to represent activity and commitment to the hobby.

"I'll play between a rehearsals (at home), that's why I'll learn a little more to play."

Interviewees might have recommended Tempo as a hobby that adds both learning and activity to life. They are also glad about the whole achievement to be free of charge. The respondents have also understood that what is needed is a real interest in music, too.

"If you are interested in music and musical instruments, then it is worth coming to Tempo."

One player of the orchestra, which ended its activities because of the lack of participants as they went into higher grades at school, tried to entice his quitting buddies along so that the orchestra could continue. Unluckily she failed in it.

"I tried so much that I could get those who quit starting playing in an orchestra again. I tried to create a good feeling for them to come. I told the teacher that I would love to continue playing, but he could not help with it because there were too few players. If I wanted to continue, I would be alone, and all the rest would have quit."

Activity in terms of playing may also be increased by a sibling still playing in Tempo Orchestra or having at least one parent active in music in some way. Also, having your own or a sibling's orchestral instrument borrowed from Tempo would increase the playing activity. Of course, the decline in a playing skill in case of playing a demanding instrument was noticeable, which weakens the activity in playing at home.

"I quit because I'm focusing now on school and football, and we only have one violin at home and it's my little brother's. I tried to play it a month ago, but my skills were lower."

"... Me and my brother sometimes play songs together and my father listens to it. The family came to Tempo nights almost every time they were organized."

Tempo has also successfully motivated its players to the education offered by music schools – playing has continued when support has continued. This shows that it is possible to move into music education and even start playing other instruments applying the basic skills gained in Tempo Orchestra.

"I'm trying to go to music school. I've done the entrance exam, but the answer has not yet come back. I am waiting for the answer. If I can get there, I'll probably finish playing in Tempo, but I'm not sure. The entrance exam went well, yeah."

"And we played Beethoven. Once I played for Elise on the piano."

"Oh, you can play the piano too. Yeah."

Participants who have already ended their careers at Tempo Orchestra are sometimes asked to join in random Tempo appearances. The message which is being passed on is probably: you have the skill and now you are needed, which means you still belong to this crowd.

"When I had already left, I was invited to play in one of the orchestras."

"I played the double bass. It was when we had a Christmas show at our school, then someone had to play bass, and I played it then. But since that I have not played anything. I sometimes went to listen to Tempo at school."

Salminen (2021) reflects on choral pedagogy with 'new eyes', aiming for inclusion and artistic quality, balance between choral activity and empowerment, a sense of communality and belonging, together with security and strengthening cultural capital

in continuing harmony between related endeavours. The constant balance aiming to spiral the growth lies in between the above objectives.

In the responses, the pleasure of being able to participate in the selection of the song to be played and performed was highlighted. However, the flip side of the phenomenon is that only a small, extroverted group is usually involved in the selection of songs. This group gets through their own favourite songs. How do the quieter ones feel about the situation? We may ask if cultural capital and having a sense of security disappear from them. Also, the use of a common limited time requires balancing and ingenuity between management and inclusion.

L. Music educational model or not?

The lines and features of educational pedagogy and thinking behind the Tempo Orchestra activities can be picked up from the stories of respondents, when analysing their experiences of activity practices. El Sistema orchestral activity cannot clearly be defined as a music educational or pedagogical system or model. Still, it has certain elements which justify calling it an activity which has a social education approach in music. Pedagogy used in Tempo Orchestras contains dimensions and targets of social education, which seem quite suitable for Finland and in this case, Vantaa.

When conducting interviews for this research, Tempo's distance learning time was fresh in the minds of the interviewees. Still, our goal was to perceive an image and conception of an entire Tempo period, including pre-corona time when analysing and interpreting the respondents' answers. During the remote activity time, private instrument lessons were offered remotely via social media. In place of orchestral music making, the time meant for playing together was spent learning music history and theory (oral comment of Juha Ahvenainen 5 January, 2021). The practices of the derogation time also reflected in the respondents' comments.

"This year, some of individual lessons were held using Zoom. Some pupils had their lessons in the middle of the school lessons and some during the breaks. There we played alone with the teacher."

Both orchestral rehearsals and personal playing lessons focused heavily on the pieces of music played in the next performance. The performance experience is harmonizing and forward-looking when the musician knows the song to be presented by heart. In such a case, the appearance can be enjoyable also for the performer. The time for a guided training in Tempo activity is limited and the procedure is not based on training a lot at home. The participants understood this too, though practicing the same pieces of music week after week may have been boring.

"In principle, the rehearsals were a little difficult, because every time we rehearsed the same piece of music and some of us didn't have the strength to do it, but we have to learn it and play it well enough to perform."

"If you've played normally and regularly in your orchestra and you're going to play in the concert, then you feel OK, there's nothing serious about it or anything to be afraid of. If you have been practicing and you can play your part well, then it's all right. Yeah, and if you are playing for the first time in a concert, then it's going to be serious and you are afraid of everything."

In El Sistema orchestras, it is customary for instrument instructors to accompany the children in rehearsals according to the situation, and often in appearances. Music making must not be too exciting or frightening. The experience should be positive, successful and the situation safe. Interviewees unanimously perceived this as a good practice. The orchestra playing together compared to solo performance was also perceived as an empowering factor.

"It's nice when the teachers are playing together with us."

"I felt more supported when I saw some friends playing with me too, I wasn't feeling lonely."

According to responses, the program for the concert performances is carefully learned by heart. It is built in such a way that it operates on both in national and international contexts. Older players or children who have played longer can also express an interest regarding the program to be played. It is a natural trajectory from the elementary level to continuation.

"And when we were older (we could hope for the songs), so teacher's brother made us some arrangement from a song that we had hoped for ourselves. I thought it was a good song. What song was that? I don't remember its name."

The basic idea of Tempo Orchestral work and the whole activity around El Sistema is built on a joint and solo playing; they are the elementary and most important starting points. Without the participants' own instrument playing lessons, no orchestra would work. Instrument lessons were perceived as being very important in supporting the joint orchestral playing in the background.

"I also liked how I could focus during personal lessons on a single issue, which we didn't necessarily have time enough to look at in the orchestra. But individual lessons were a nice experience for me."

"Those private instrument lessons were good, because then that teacher had more time to advise and learn, and it left us with good vibes. Still, quite rarely, they were perceived as being heavy or dull."

"I didn't like playing classes when they were pretty boring."

Baker (2014b), in his study *"El Sistema Orchestrating Venezuela's youth"*, criticized the way El Sistema Venezuela embodies musical education as being equal to rehearsing the works performed in an orchestra.

This is one of the reasons why El Sistema cannot be called a defined music educational system, but rather a way to carry out social education aimed at integrating immigrants into Finnish culture and way of life, and to prevent the marginalization of certain children and youngsters. Through the experiences of the interviewees, we surveyed whether the same phenomenon and basic problem of learning only the pieces of music which are performed also occurs in El Sistema in Finland. We found that, to some extent, music education also takes place, especially during the COVID-19 distant education period when the orchestral rehearsals could not be held. The instrument

lessons also included other ingredients in addition to music, which was played at performances, that is, rehearsing the piece to be performed.

“We practiced technical solutions and right finger positions too. Also, how to hold the violin properly so that the left hand goes to the right point. We also practiced new stuff, and we weren’t just practicing one piece of music in the practice lessons.”

“Mostly we played and at the same time the teacher showed the techniques of how to play the violin. I always try to use the right technique when I play, as it helps me to play violin the right way.”

The fact that the young player is told about the piece of music which is to be played is an elementary music education, putting it on a music-historical map and opening eyes to the internal events of the music. Still, the total number of hours spent on parts of music education (like music history, music theory or music analysis) other than the instrument’s basic technique (like how to hold the instrument, the position of hands and fingers, and other basic elements) are represented too poorly to describe the Tempo Orchestra activity as a general music education model.

“At least in my opinion, before we started playing, we were told a little bit about the piece of music we were about to play. And then we practiced, sometimes with the teacher individually, sometimes all together as an orchestra. We didn’t get a lot of information about everything we played, but sometimes something was explained to us.”

“Sometimes we were told about a song, something specific and so. But I don’t think much was explained about every song.”

Sometimes, the meta-level of the orchestra and the repertoire were learned by players in the appearances when explanations about the songs and the orchestral instruments were given to the audience. Of course, this is positive and can be strongly supported as an idea, but it does not meet the requirements of a model for music education on the whole.

“During the lessons we were told that this and that song are going to be played at that concert. Then we just rehearsed them properly to be able to play them well at those concerts. The audience was told where and by whom the music had been composed.”

Tempo Orchestra playing is an activity that is complementary to the elementary school curriculum of music education and basic knowledge of music eras in Western art. The foundations of music theory and the music of different cultures can be assumed to be obtained from school. Only limited time is available for the social music approach represented by Tempo activity in the Finnish school context. Still, there has been extensive research which has shown that pupils in the Finnish elementary schools do not acquire these mentioned basic elements of music (or music education) during school time. This means that Finnish teenage students still lack a lot of musical knowledge (Huhtanen & Hirvonen, 2013; Kosonen, 2009; Vesioja, 2006).

Sometimes the music pedagogy offered in Tempo also seemed to be personified by the conductor or the instrument teacher, which is quite natural. Hsu (2017) highlighted this in his study *“El Sistema USA: An exploratory study of the pedagogical approaches in beginning violin classes the lack of clear uniform string instrument pedagogy in El Sistema applications in the United States”*. Everything depends just on the teacher (that is technology, theory, or playing guidance).

“The first two teachers taught me only the songs we were going to play or perform, but then my third teacher, sometimes taught me not only the songs that we were going to performance, but sometimes also the technique of violin playing. That is, a little more technique and note reading and a little more theory stuff and things.”

Among other things, Hsu recommends a carefully and professionally prepared method of peer teaching, alongside the Classroom Assessment Techniques (CATS method) as single uniform violin pedagogy. The CATs method includes the following:

- The Background Knowledge Probe (a short, simple questionnaire to students at the start of a course designed to uncover students' pre-conceptions);
- The Minute Paper (this asks students *What was the most important thing you learned during this class?* and *What important question remains unanswered?*);
- The Muddiest Point (ask students *What was the muddiest point in teaching?*);
- The What's the Principle? (this asks students to define the principle that best applies to each problem);
- Defining Features Matrix (use the matrix to identify which characteristics are giving your students the most trouble).

N. Negative dimension

A small number of interviewees brought to light the unease that occasionally occurred during rehearsals, which resulted from the participants' fatigue. The players just were not able to concentrate, and then Tempo teachers had to raise their voice or otherwise show their harshness to normalize the situation. These statements were uttered in an understanding atmosphere towards the teachers.

“It was just one of those days when you were too tired and couldn't learn new songs and everyone was restless and feeling uneasy, but it was just a couple of times, not very often.”

“Those Tempo teachers are calmer than the usual teachers at school. They are also kinder and don't shout that much. A couple of times the teacher had to shout because almost no one listened as everyone just spoke, and it went on and on.”

Booth (2011) names as one of the cornerstones of El Sistema's idea of “Sustaining the dynamic tension between polarities”, the extremes being order and chaos. Maybe this illustrates the situation which the pupils described in their last few comments.

Conclusion

Most statements about the Tempo Orchestra were positive or neutral in nature. The objectives of the action were reported to be bringing out good points of view about the growth and development of participants. The practical solutions of El Sistema in Finland work mainly according to the plans. Similarly, the elements of socio-cultural animation can be mirrored in El Sistema in Finland. There were inconsistencies and clear places for improvements in Tempo Orchestra's practices and ways of working, especially in the various processes leading to stopping participation in orchestral work. A range of resources, both financial and mental, should be adequate for both individually controlled starting to play the instrument as well as concluding with the orchestral performances.

Reflection

We will consider the reliability of the research including the significant experiences obtained and believe that the interviewees, knowing that the researcher knew the teachers and other staff of the Tempo activity, had no impact on their comments and their reliability. The first author's (M.P.) position as an interviewer (Pöysä, 2010) was not to be seen as an ally of the director of operations, but sooner as a friend of the Tempo Orchestra. We also believe that conducting some of the interviews at school did not produce any negative effect. This is because some of the interviews took place without any institutional context, and some of the students are no longer involved with Tempo, so there was no need to speak more glowingly about Tempo than what is true (Cocks, 2006; Ruusuvoori, Nikander & Hyvärinen, 2010).

The interviewees representing different ages made the data rich. Due to the temporal perspective, the depth of responses was more specific considering older respondents compared to younger ones. The younger respondents offered a fresh and unfiltered point of view on their experiences, and although the interviewer tried to keep up a positive atmosphere during the interviews, she still verbally confirmed the importance of speaking about all kinds of experience. There were no right or wrong comments in the interviews. The only clear development target according to the results was ceasing to play in the Tempo Orchestra. When children are offered an opportunity to take part in such a large, expensive and demanding program with personal and social targets, an adult must bear the responsibility until the end of the whole activity.

There must be enough resources for Vantaa's flagship Tempo Orchestra and every participating child's needs for playing a musical instrument must be satisfied. Social pedagogical research always strives for solutions and at least for the development of issues. Next, we present a list of things for the development of which an immediate solution should be found, so that to make the Tempo activities more functional and more effective:

- Easy versions of pieces of music should be used in all children's and youngsters' orchestras to make it possible for every child to participate in a common music making in an orchestra. They should experience the joy of playing music together at the level which their skills allow at that moment. The

same should also be possible for those who start instrument playing in an older age. This idea works nicely in the Tempo Orchestra;

- Tempo's solutions at the time of COVID-19 isolation were inventive, creative, and aimed at music educational targets. The children in the orchestra didn't feel abandoned;
- Problems caused by the school's schedule were mentioned as making the continuation of playing in the Tempo Orchestra difficult and among other things, participants' own native language classes were mentioned (problems were also caused by special education lessons, Finnish as the second language, and lessons in the pupil's own religion). In the Vantaa Tempo Orchestra participation is one of the optional school subjects. Then it would be a pupil's own choice, and not as an obstacle to any other important school subject. This is already working as an experiment in one of the comprehensive schools in Vantaa;
- Running an orchestra for a heterogeneous group of children requires a lot of adults, not just instrument teachers and music educators. The employment of workers such as school counsellors and practical nurses would be appropriate, for the start, end, and transition of orchestral activities, for breaks and for travel to performances. The individual needs of participants, both as players and as participants in general, would thus be better considered. Tempo could serve as an internship for social work students. This is already in the process of being done.

The student lists of art focusing high schools contain names of native-born Finnish pupils. The path from baby music schools to art focused high schools and universities is not available to everyone in the same way. This obstacle is the gate which the adults in our mainstream population should be trying to open. Children with immigrant backgrounds showed great motivation to learn and develop in this study, also enjoying great support from their families. The school as an institution was also appreciated and not taken for granted. The orchestra could gain added value when operating in a school context, but it was still based on voluntariness.

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