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NON-WESTERN MUSICIANS AND WORLD MUSIC

Exploring Pathways to Achieve Sustainability for Colombian
Folk-Related Artists

By Alejandra Restrepo

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1. Introduction:

As a Colombian songwriter who makes use of Latin American folklore elements, I often wondered how other Colombian artists like *Totó la Momposina*, *Sidestepper* or *Meridian Brothers* have managed to build a sustainable career -abundant in European Tours, album releases and exposure- when they come from a country where the music industry does not seem to have a relevant place for their sound. Having noticed that folk-related artists tend to struggle when it comes to monetising from their craft, the cases of these two bands and the legendary *cantadora* seemed exceptional. Looking into their trajectories, I noticed that their music has been categorised as World Music (WM) –in spite of their aesthetic differences- and that they have been signed to WM record labels and booking agencies that have played a significant role in the development of their careers abroad. With this common denominator in mind, the focus of this research project is to elucidate doubts around the following questions:

1. What are the implications of being categorised as a WM artist?
2. How can non-western artists who work with traditional musics access the WM industry?
3. What are the obstacles and incentives WM artists face when developing a sustainable project in their country of origin? (The Colombian case)

Since there is a significant amount of literature providing answers to question 1, secondary sources will be used to understand the WM sphere. But considering that the topics referred to in questions 2 and 3 have not yet been addressed by the literature, this research aims to fill the gap through primary sources.

In order to navigate the topics that arise from the questions, this text will begin with the literature review to provide a contextual framework that gives answers to question one. The idea of this segment is to provide non-western musicians with considerations about the WM genre-market. Perhaps knowing the beneficial and critical aspects of the WM will allow them to determine if it is worth committing their efforts and resources into accessing

this industry. The next section concerns about the methodology used to provide answers for questions 2 and 3. Afterwards, a section aims to propose strategies to get in touch and develop a balanced relationship with industry personnel. The final section addresses whether it is possible to develop a sustainable WM music project in a country that produces it.

2. Literature Review: Understanding the World Music (WM) Sphere and the Implications of Participating in this Genre Market

This section is devoted to understanding what is WM, who is the audience for this genre, what are the aesthetic parameters and which aspects have been criticised by the academic community. Each of these topics has been assigned a sub-section that will display a dialogue between their benefits and disadvantages.

2.a. What is WM and the history of this designation?:

Even though this term generates controversy -as it groups diverse sounds and cultural identities into two words-, it is worth exploring its history and meaning to understand why it became necessary and how it keeps providing exposure to the music categorised under this designation.

Its first use can be traced to the late 1970s, when ethnomusicologist Bruno Nettl employed it in *The Western Impact on World Music* to talk about how Western music has affected the music traditions of the non-western world (Taylor, 2014, p. 2). From this point on, the term established a distinction between the music of the West from the music from the rest. Although it is worth mentioning that the context in which Nettl used it did not intend to erase the cultural particularities from the different genres of the non-western world; and it is also pertinent to clarify that the designation wasn't commonly used and wouldn't acquire its current meaning until later (Laing, 2009, p. 14).

Nowadays the term WM is used to describe a sub-set of the global music industry that agglomerates “traditional and folk musics, newly composed traditional musics, as well as vintage and contemporary popular musics from outside Europe and North America” (Whitmore, 2016, p. 332). The reason for assigning a unitary designation to a vast array of differentiated music genres from many countries arose from the need to create an identifying category that would persuade record shop owners to stock the albums of international artists. Without an appropriate browser card and niche for the consumers, music from around the world was being rejected by record shops in England (Taylor, 2014, p. 2).

The idea was to release a modest promotion campaign during the month of October (1987) to spread the use of the term World Music via cassette compilations, press and the distribution of browser cards for the record shops. Within three years, the designation was commonly used in North Europe, the United States and England (Taylor, 2014, p. 2-3). In 1990 a WM top ten list was introduced by *Billboard* and one year later the *Grammy Awards* created a WM category. Additionally, record labels devoted to WM started to surface, the WOMAD (World of Music and Dance) was created and WOMEX was inaugurated in 2000 as the first annual trade fair for the WM industry (Laing, 2009, p. 26).

Taking into consideration that the term WM has opened spaces for international recognition to genres that haven't had the opportunity to consolidate a strong market in their countries of origin (Laing, 2009, p. 25), world musicians might have to weigh the benefit of exposure versus the disadvantage of being labelled under a term with such wide field of reference. This consideration might be particularly tough for those musicians whose creative activities are fuelled by a sense of cultural pride.

2.b. WM Audience:

When it comes to the audience, world musicians might feel uplifted by the altruistic characteristics of their listeners; however, a deeper look into the audience's values might bring out consequences that hinder the artists' possibilities of sustainable development. This sub-section will explore both.

Earlier it was mentioned that the WM Market barely exists in the countries that originate the music, but it is pertinent to add that this market is predominantly strong in Europe, North America and certain parts of the Asia Pacific Region (Laing, 2009, p. 25). Thus, WM audience is integrated mainly by two forces. On one hand, European and North American citizens concerned about international affairs; on the other hand, immigrants that share nationality with the artists (Taylor, 2014, pp. 2–3). Besides their international awareness, WM concert attendants are also characterised by being people older than thirty five who oppose global corporations and seek in WM the opportunity to connect to new music, to a sense of community, spirituality, non-western intimacy and affective connections as they escape from commercialism, mainstream tendencies and mass production of culture (Whitmore, 2016, pp. 334, 335). However, there is a downside from associating WM to spirituality and non-commercial values, as the audience expects WM musicians not to aspire for success. In the words of Philippe Constant, director of the WM subsidiary of Island Records:

As long as the producers of this music do not forget its spiritual dimension, as long as they are not too obsessed by the desire to get into the top 50... all will go well. This music has existed as long as the human race, it is not intended to conquer the market, and that is good. It is just intended to be heard by more people (Cited in Taylor, 2014, p. 26).

Which necessarily implies that the music industry “excludes virtually all world

musicians from the venues, visibility and profits that might make them appear as sell-outs to their fans” (Taylor, 2014, p. 23). Having a limited possibility of growth and being excluded from the more favourable opportunities granted to Western genres might seem unfair to some of the artists who undergo the implications of the WM term in favour of an opportunity for exposure and sustainability.

Other altruistic values of the WM audience have an impact on the way world musicians are seen, and consequently, in the aesthetics of their music, image and narrative. Such impacts will be explored in the following sub-section.

2.c. The aesthetic of sound, image and narrative:

As mentioned earlier, WM listeners are characterised by having noble pursuits and an interest in charity and education; thus, it does not come as a surprise that some WM events feature workshops and the presence of charity organisations. According to Whitmore, listeners of WM seem to be concerned about the consequences of their nations’ colonial pasts, so their attitude towards WM, education and their critical position towards capitalism reflects a desire to compensate for such consequences (Whitmore, 2016, p. 338).

In spite of their good intentions, WM listeners might not be aware that some of their expectations regarding WM replicate post-colonialist dynamics. As they search in WM for something that they think is truly authentic, they are prone to impose sound and image stereotypes to world musicians; stereotypes where non-western musicians become primitive and happy natives whose culture can be consumed as a commodity without the need of worrying about the historic or contextual aspects in which their music is embedded (Taylor, 2014, p. 19). These stereotypes are based on changing impressions of what Europe and North America consider authentic. Racialised, ethnicised and pre-modern notions of the non-western world are commonly expected from world musicians, even if those attributes do not

correspond to their reality. This implies that WM audiences might reject certain sorts of hybridity between Western aesthetics and WM, even if Western sounds have authentically permeated the culture and music of the countries where world musicians come from (Taylor, 2014, p. 21; Whitmore, 2016, pp. 335, 336).

Although purity is a key component of authenticity, WM listeners are open to embrace hybridity as long as it emerges from a context of creative sound exchange and artistic curiosity rather than an imposition from the industry. In addition, “uncorrupted music” is currently perceived as music that has stagnated (Whitmore, 2016, p. 336).

Even though it is arbitrary to assign a unitary set of production values to music from different parts of the world with different aesthetics and social usages, some WM record labels tend to prefer a natural, technologically unmediated sound. WM records aim to sound like a live performance, just to give listeners the impression of being with the musicians during the recording session. But according to Whitmore, producing a sound that listeners will interpret as natural and unprocessed, requires a curatorial mediation to satisfy the audience’s expectations. Sometimes the changes made in the recording studio are transferred to the on-tour sets in Europe and North America, giving listeners the impression that what happens live is exactly the same to what has been recorded (Whitmore, 2016, pp. 341, 342).

In terms of image, there seems to be a needed balance between the exotic and the common, the relatable and the different, and the local and the global (Whitmore, 2016, p. 344), due to the fact that the audience needs to find familiar elements in order to identify with the foreign music and musicians that are being presented (Whitmore, 2016, pp. 333, 334). For this reason, labels like World Circuit present their artists as popular musicians using both traditional garments from their country (the exotic) and Western clothes (the familiar). By doing so, they prevent their

artists from being perceived as objects of ethnographic display with no relation whatsoever to music (Whitmore, 2016, p. 344).

Since audiences in North America and Europe have a difficult time remembering the name of foreign artists, promoting them can be quite challenging. To overcome this difficulty, stories about the artists' trajectory that pinpoint their extra-musical virtues are exposed. Such stories sometimes speak about the artist's political involvement or humanitarian deeds as they often align to the values cherished by the WM genre culture (Whitmore, 2016, p. 349). Initially these are written by producers or promoters, but the involvement of journalists is essential, since their attention to details allow the audience to engage with the artist and their music in a rich and deep way (Whitmore, 2016, pp. 348, 350, 351).

In order to gain an understanding of the personnel that negotiates aesthetic aspects with the artist, the upcoming sub-section explores the reasons why WM personnel has been criticised by the academic community and provides a counterbalance that takes into consideration the voice of the industry intermediaries.

2.d. WM Industry Personnel:

Aside from being critical with the wide field of reference of WM designation, scholarly discussions have also been very critical about WM industry personnel, for they are described as colonialist explorers that not only “reinforce the (asymmetrical) power dynamics between the West and the ‘rest’” (Whitmore, 2016, p. 333), but also perpetuate stereotypical misrepresentations of non-western musicians, musics and cultures as “pre-modern” and “primitive” (Whitmore, 2016, p. 330). On the first scenario, WM Industry personnel is criticised for being responsible of assigning a commercial value to WM (sometimes providing inadequate pay) and for creating relationships where world musicians depend on European or North American personnel to gain access to Western Markets. Thus

creating an environment where musicians feel reluctant to complain or challenge the decisions made by the industry out of fear of losing the opportunity to build up their careers (Whitmore, 2016, pp. 333, 339). On the second scenario, they are blamed for making a straw man out of world musicians, a misrepresentative figure “against which Westerners define themselves, (which) justifies treating the ‘Other’ differently” (Whitmore, 2016, p. 333).

Even though it is not common to hear the voices of WM personnel in academic discussions, Whitmore’s research brings out their side of the story. *The Art of Representing the Other: Industry Personnel in the World Music Industry* exhibits that WM personnel is aware not only of the academic criticism, but also mindful about the views and expectations that the audience, musicians and journalists have about WM and what makes it valuable. In addition, they are knowledgeable about the dynamics of the music industry in Europe and North America. Their job is to mediate between these perspectives as they respond to the demands of the market and economic priorities (Whitmore, 2016, pp. 330, 331).

Whitmore found that in most cases WM industry personnel is integrated by WM fans, thus they share values with the audience described in section 3.b. and are genuinely interested in widening the reach of WM (Whitmore, 2016, p. 331). By working closely with the artists they even develop long lasting friendships (Whitmore, 2016, p. 339). For these reasons, they:

do not want to be seen as profit-driven business people who intentionally misrepresent musicians and cultures and take advantage of asymmetrical power dynamics purely for the sake of making money. Defensive about the criticism that they have received, industry actors represent themselves as well-meaning participants in an innately unequal market. Just like their audiences and musicians, they too are caught up in a neoliberal system

governed by market forces... Industry actors understand the criticism surrounding their work and are reflective about the ways in which they may misrepresent artists and reproduce colonial dynamics. They are defensive, however, both about the ways in which their motives are misconstrued, and about the amount of responsibility they are ascribed in producing meaning in WM contexts (Whitmore, 2016, pp. 338–339).

When it comes to dealing with misrepresentation and assignation of commercial value, WM industry personnel have to negotiate with the artist the creation of a product that is respectful with the musicians' identity and mindful about the way the audience is going to perceive it, for the commercial value is determined by what the audience reads of the artist (Whitmore, 2016, p. 331). As mentioned earlier, the idea of authenticity plays a key role in this matter and WM industry personnel – being on one hand, well informed on the European and North American changing notions of authenticity; and on the other hand, willing to make the artist's career thrive- play their role as curators and mediators by taking some aesthetic decisions that grant them the scholarly criticism for creating stereotypical representations.

Regarding the accusation of creating asymmetrical relationships of dependency, Whitmore justifies the need of such dependency with the following statement:

European and American industry personnel generally have better language skills for communicating in international markets, the capital needed to acquire travel and work visas, and a better understanding of the European and North American music industry -skills and capital many musicians lack- (Whitmore, 2016, p. 339).

Arguing that WM industry personnel creates asymmetrical relationships of dependency might give the impression that world musicians do not have to depend

on European or North American intermediaries to develop their projects abroad. It fails to acknowledge that the time consuming activities of these intermediaries and the network of contacts they have established create better windows of opportunity for the artists, opportunities that might be unavailable if the artist tried to access them independently. Appendix A contains a list of key texts to understand the value, roles and tasks carried out by different agents of the music industry.

Now that two of the most polemic aspects of WM have been addressed, the next sub-section will delve into a third one.

2.e. Cultural Appropriation or Appreciation:

Cultural appropriation is one of the aspects that have generated more controversy with the emergence of WM. This type of appropriation occurs as a by-product of a cross-cultural interaction, and it is not negative by itself, as many genres have been created out of the exchange between cultures. The problematic implications of this situation surface in the following situations:

- When a dominant culture incorporates and modifies the sounds of a dominated culture “without the permission or collaboration of those who originally made the music” (Taylor, 2014, pp. 40, 50). The ethical implications are aggravated when the non-western “collaborators” who made the music are not given recognition or remuneration for their participation. And unfortunately the development of the publishing industry in the West has allowed Western musicians to exclusively own the copyright of music that was created with the cultural input of foreign collaborators who are not receiving any royalties for their participation (Taylor, 2014, p. 50).
- When a member of the more powerful culture makes use of a foreign instrument, a sound or a rhythm without making the effort to understand the original context in which it is used (Aharonián, 2002).

The connotation of the cultural interchange varies and becomes acceptable under the following circumstances:

- When the musician from the dominant culture makes an effort to understand the history and context of the foreign sounds. By doing so, he or she is being respectful towards the culture who originated the sound, for this effort allows him or her to share a common code with the people that have lived the context and history of the shared cultural aspects (Aharonián, 2002)
- When the cultural exchange occurs as a consequence of admiration or appreciation and not for the sake of making profit by renovating the resources of the dominant culture (Aharonián, 2002).
- When the dominated culture makes use of the cultural resources of the dominant culture, resources that were imposed through colonialist dynamics (Aharonián, 2002). During Colonial times, cultural imposition had a physically violent component and was part of a process called acculturation. In current times, the imposition of the dominant culture happens through the financial muscle of record labels, as they have enough resources to promote Western music through mass media worldwide.

Even though this concern refers mainly to Western musicians who incorporate traditional and folk elements of non-western music into their music, it is worth to note that the discourse of unbalanced interchange between cultures can also be applied to musicians from the city who use music elements that were originated and developed by fellow countrymen in rural areas. In that sense, non-western city musicians should probably take this aspect into consideration to avoid replicating colonial dynamics in a local scale.

For artists interested in making part of the WM industry, Appendix B references sources that provide lists of WM Labels, Festivals and Trade Fairs where world musicians can

showcase their music.

Now that the secondary sources have answered what are the implications of participating in the WM market, it seems pertinent to move to those questions that haven't been addressed by the literature. But before delving into the gaps that this paper intends to fill in, the next section details the methodology used in this research and the contribution of the primary sources.

3. Methodology:

Six interviews were conducted to provide answers for questions 2 and 3. Most of them took place in *Skype* except Pete Bernard's, which was conducted in person (the questionnaires can be consulted in Appendices C, D, E and F). In addition, a presentation organised by the Musicians' Union featuring British promoter, Jay Taylor, shed some light into how to get the attention of industry personnel.

Colombian songwriters Victoria Sur, Juanita Áñez and Valentina Áñez were selected due to their notorious careers and involvement with Latin American folklore. Sur has built her career in Colombian territory for over twenty years and during her trajectory she has interacted with different agents of the industry. Her experience gives an insight into the obstacles faced by Colombian musicians who are independent and also about the efforts and persistence required to develop a project. Twin sisters, Valentina and Juanita Áñez started their first project, *Bituin* in 2011 and recently, they have toured in Europe, Latin America, North America and Colombia with their duet, *Las Áñez*, their trajectory speaks about the importance of having organizational skills in addition to musical excellence.

María Angélica Valencia, saxophonist and founder of Colombian independent record label *La Distritofónica* gave an insight into the obstacles and incentives faced by musicians and shed light into the functioning of Colombian indie record labels. To understand the barriers to access the music industry in Colombia, Santiago Martínez was interviewed. His

background as a jazz guitarist with a Master in Arts Management at Carnegie Mellon University were also key to understand the role and value of the industry personnel in the development of a music project, a topic that was also enriched by the input of Scott Guillot (founder of *Soyouz* booking agency) and Jay Taylor. Valencia, Martínez, Guillot, Taylor and Bath Spa Lecturer, Pete Bernard supplied valuable advice about how to approach industry personnel.

4. Accessing the WM Industry:

In order to gain visibility, widen the reach of the music, organize tours away from home or generate audience growth, musicians might need at some point to interact with industry personnel. Whether they need to get in touch with bookers, promoters, P.R.s, record label staff, it is important to know basic strategies to approach them in order to maximise the opportunities to catch their attention and receive a reply from them. This sub-section will provide some recommendations given by the interviewees.

4.a. Establishing Contact With Industry Personnel:

4.a.i. Recommended Procedures:

Valencia, Taylor, Guillot and Martínez strongly recommend musicians to do research on the people they are about to email, as it is important to make sure if they are appropriate for the musician's project, for it is common for record labels, booking agencies or venues to be associated with a particular kind of aesthetic. If the artist's sound is not in line with the preferences of the email recipient, the chances of hearing back from that person are very slim regardless of the quality of the project. As they receive many emails everyday, they tend to engage in conversation only with the artists that catch their attention and share elements with their catalogues (Guillot, 2018; Taylor, 2018; Valencia, 2018).

Since effective time management is important to any business, industry personnel prefer to receive concise emails. Guillot, being a booker, appreciates emails composed of three lines and a live video that shows the quality of the band. Taylor, as a promoter, is also interested in seeing bands that are great at what they are doing, in addition, he is interested in knowing how many people can the artist bring to the venues he represents, so he appreciates emails brief emails with the following information:

- Music with link and the name of the band.
- Short biography
- Press quotes. Previous shows and noteworthy shows.
- Links to social media
- Short live music video
- Audience size. Give a real number, that way the promoter can know what to do.
- Contact information

Consequently, they would advise artists to avoid sending them long emails with large files such as high quality photos (the artists should make sure these are available at their website if the promoter needs to download them for promotion purposes).

4.a.ii. Follow-up and Persistence:

Persistence is an important value in the career development of any artist. It is implied when learning how to play an instrument and it makes part of the entrepreneurial aspect of being a musician. Sur recognizes that she has been able to build up her reputation as a renowned songwriter out of trying over and over, despite the deceptive experiences with music industry intermediaries. In her case, it meant engaging with managers, labels and P.R.s over the years without seeing life-changing results. But she recognizes that during the process of trying, she developed her music, craft and image, factors that paved the way for her current status of sustainability and exposure (Sur, 2018). Just as Sur's career has demanded persistence, the simple act of establishing contact with intermediaries requires a disposition of trying repeatedly.

Artists who email industry personnel might take it personal after not hearing back from their interlocutors. However, Taylor, Guillot, and Bernard highlight the importance of conducting written follow-up after a week has passed (Bernard, 2018; Guillot, 2018; Taylor, 2018). If nothing happens after this, Bernard advises giving the person a phone call as a last resource. To avoid feelings of frustration, Bernard suggests two strategies. Firstly, he recommends creating a spread-sheet that includes the emailed personnel and the dates on which the first, second email and following call were made. For the sake of mental health, his second recommendation is to avoid spending more than two hours per week doing this task (if the artist is self-managed) (Bernard, 2018).

4.a.iii The importance of Being Recommended by Someone:

Getting a call-back depends on the strategies mentioned in the previous subsection; however, there is another aspect that needs to be acknowledged: The

importance of being recommended by someone. According to the interviewees, email recipients are more prone to reading and replying if they have previously received an email from a known contact recommending the artist (Bernard, 2018; Guillot, 2018; Taylor, 2018; Valencia, 2018).

If the artist cannot get a recommendation, then she or he should consider the option of making part of the roster of artists, for being backed by a label or booking agency can open many doors. As the agents that run them act like curators who have a reliable reputation and a defined sound, artists under their wing have more chances of being taken into consideration (Guillot, 2018; Valencia, 2018; Whitmore, 2016, p. 337). The question would be how to get signed by these agencies? In order to get their attention, the artist can follow the steps recommended in Section 5.a and additionally, get press exposure, build a story (Halloran, 2017, p. 188) and find opportunities to showcase, especially at trade fairs such as Womex or Mapas (Áñez and Áñez, 2018).

4.b. What happens after being signed?

There was a time in which signing a 360° deal with a label meant gaining access to certain benefits such as having a team in charge of P.R., distribution, marketing, management and funds to record and tour (investments that would later be recouped by the label through the artist's revenue streams). However, the rise of piracy and the emergence of streaming services has led "major record labels to offer fewer record deals... and the deals they do offer, overwhelmingly go to safe artists with radio friendly commercial stats" (Halloran, 2017, p. 187). Since WM represents a small niche market, major labels do not seem too invested in WM projects (Laing, 2009, p. 28); hence, world musicians have a better chance of being signed by an independent label. The conditions and benefits will vary depending on the label, but

most of the times the artist might need to find external financing, for the agreements signed with indie labels probably would not cover all the expenses.

Setting goals, devising a plan and making a budget will allow the artist to know how much money will be spent, how much funding will be needed and if the artist needs to hire personnel to achieve the goals. The following step would be to find sources for financing and to tailor a business plan to present to investors. Appendix G suggests literature that gives advice on how to set goals, create budgets and business plans.

As the financial and musical aspects unfold, the artist might want to keep track of the development process of the goals and the role played by the strategies and tactics employed, to measure their effectiveness or if they need adjustments.

In order to sustain a long-lasting and balanced relationship with a manager, booker, publisher or label, Guillot recommends cultivating transparency. In his experience as a booker, he has noticed that showing the artist what are the fees, the costs and the money that is coming in creates an environment of trust. In addition, he strongly recommends sharing the plans with the artists, not only because they deserve to know, but because they usually come up with new angles and ideas that nourish the experience (Guillot, 2018).

For world musicians who live in their country of origin it might be tough to make a living out of one or two European tours per year. For this reason it is important to consider sustainability options in their home countries.

5. Developing a career in the country of origin (the Colombian case):

Since Laing reported that the markets for WM are non-existent or barely existent in the countries that originate WM (Laing, 2009, p. 25), it seemed pertinent to investigate the

development status of such market in Colombia and analyse which factors make it thrive and which delay its progress.

5.a. Is there a market in Colombia for genres that fit into the WM category?:

According to Santiago Martínez, there are two markets in Colombia for folklore-based music. The first one is an expression of a purist wing that aims to protect and promote the musical traditions of a territory. As a market, it is most visible during regional festivals that happen once a year and revolve around folklore contests such as the *Petronio Martínez* or the *Mono Núñez* (Martínez, 2018).

The second market integrates traditional sounds and musicians to Western genres such as hip-hop, jazz or rock. The creative outcomes of this market continue to evolve as rural musicians transition to the cities and urban musicians become increasingly interested in traditional music from different regions within the country (Martínez, 2018). Independent record labels such as *Polen Records* or *La Distritofónica*, and festivals such as the *Festival de la tигра* group and showcase the work of artists that have chosen this hybrid path (La Distritofónica, n.d.; Martínez, 2018). Most record labels and festivals interested in these practices have been consolidated by musicians that feel reluctant about strategies of the mainstream industry that seem “to give more relevance to the creation of a social media façade than they are concerned about music” (Valencia, 2018). And even when the founders of these collectives become increasingly aware of the organizational implications of providing a space for these musics to be heard, they refuse or cannot afford to participate in the dynamics of the mainstream industry.

Considering that this research project is concerned about the economic development of folk-oriented projects, it seems pertinent to ask if the two markets mentioned by Martínez present the adequate conditions for artists to create a livelihood out of their craft.

5.b. Is it possible to develop sustainable projects within the folk-based market?:

Even when the interviewees provided different answers to this question, their descriptions of sustainability didn't seem to be related to making a living out of music, but rather related to recouping the funds invested in recording an album. Valencia claims that every project implies a different experience, but also reports that none of the projects she is involved in are 100% sustainable, meaning that most of these bands do not recoup the funds invested in recording and manufacturing the album. However, she clarifies that the degree of sustainability depends on the scene, the genre and the audience (Valencia, 2018).

Singer-songwriters Juanita and Valentina Áñez expressed a different opinion, as their experience has proved that creating a budget that takes into consideration the expenses and sources of income has allowed them to acquire a reasonable amount of debt, slowly recoup their investment and fully cover the expenses of future recording and touring projects. However, they recognize that achieving sustainability is also a matter of discipline, perseverance and luck (Áñez and Áñez, 2018).

Martínez' perspective seems to take into consideration the previous two statements. On one hand, he mentions that most independent musicians in Colombia focus their attention into creating an album, but after they have managed to manufacture it, they do not seem to know about the strategies required to commercialise it beyond a small niche of friends and family. On the other hand, he suggests that the sustainability perspective of this market would be quite different if musicians knew how to create and execute a plan and a budget, and if they were aware of the functions of different agents of the industry and the role they could play in the development of their project (Martínez, 2018). The latter information could be used either to hire the needed personnel -which might not be a possibility for an

upcoming artist in the Colombian context-, or to be aware of the self-management tasks the artist would have to commit to in order to expand the possibilities of his or her endeavour.

Looking at these testimonies it seems worth asking what has been the involvement of the music education system in Colombia when it comes to acquiring skills that would allow their students to make a living out of their practice.

5.c. The role of music education in sustainability:

When asked if music academia in Colombia provided knowledge to help students develop a sustainable career, Martínez answered it definitely did not. According to him, conservatories and universities are only focused in developing skills and knowledge that are music related. His academic experiences indicate that music education institutions in Colombia do not seem to be researching the music related employability rates of their graduates due to the following fact: they have not changed the undergraduate programmes to include music business or entrepreneurial skills modules. Despite of the generalized absence of entrepreneurial education on an undergraduate level, he recognizes that there are three or four institutions that provide postgraduate courses where music business topics are covered without much depth (Martínez, 2018).

Guillot, Valencia and other artists such as Victoria Sur and *Las Áñez* recognized during their interview that the lack of entrepreneurial education entails negative consequences; their testimonies will portray some of them.

- False expectations: Guillot remembered when he was offering Eblis Álvarez a booking contract to represent *Meridian Brothers* in European territory. As other French booking agencies had already been in touch with him to offer representation in France, Álvarez could not avoid feeling excitement about having several sources of representation in one country, for he imagined it would increase his possibilities of having his band booked. Guillot had to explain that by signing with one of them, he was committing to an exclusive agreement where only one of the agencies would have the right to find venues and concerts for the band in a determined territory. Since Guillot's agency, *Soyouz*, was offering European coverage, Álvarez was inclined to sign with them. This has resulted in a fruitful and long-lasting relationship (Guillot, 2018).

- Stagnation: The following case begins with false expectations, but unlike the previous anecdote, this one does not have a beneficial outcome. At the early stages of her career, singer-songwriter Sur made part of the duet *Sombra y Luz*. After wining at the prestigious Andean folk festival, *El Mono Núñez*, they managed to catch the attention of *Codiscos*, a record label that offered them a contract to record their third album. Sur thought that the relationship with the label would give them access to promotion and better circulation opportunities, but they soon discovered it would not be the case, as the label only committed to include them in their catalogue. During the term of the contract, their project was stagnated, as none of the things they expected, happened. The duet chose to record their fourth album independently (Sur, 2018).
- Unfair deals and loss of trust: In the exercise of developing self-taught entrepreneurial skills, *Las Áñez* began doing some research regarding publishing sources of income to monetize from their Mechanical, Public Performance and Streaming Mechanical Royalties. Unfortunately at the time of their research, the information displayed by the Colombian Collection Society, *Sayco*, was not clear about the registration process for songwriters who had written less than twenty songs. This was their case. Since the website and workers of *Sayco* would only provide information for the registration of authors that had released more than twenty songs, they were advised to sign with a publisher who would collect the royalties on their behalf, and so they did. The agreement stipulated that he would represent them during three years. In this time, they performed tours in Colombia, Argentina, Uruguay, Germany and Spain, but after signing the agreement they were not able to get hold of their publisher, who never paid them the collected royalties. Had they been informed that there was an alternative for artists with fewer songs in their catalogue, they might have avoided this abuse. After this incident, they have felt reluctant about signing a

contract with industry personnel and when they do, they get legal advice to assess the risks. Since the organization of tours abroad requires the participation of a booker, they have made verbal agreements on a concert-to-concert basis. Most of the administrative and organizational tasks are performed by themselves with the occasional assistance of their mother, who sometimes performs the duties of a P.R. in Colombia (Áñez and Áñez, 2018).

The gathered testimonies depict how the absence of entrepreneurial education has hindered the economic development of music projects. In the first place, it has deprived musicians from developing planning and budgeting skills and strategies. Secondly, the lack of standardised information regarding the roles of the different agents within the industry has created an untrustworthy environment and the perfect context for unfruitful or unfair relationships. Since this paper is concerned about providing information that would allow non-western musicians to have a better opportunity of achieving a sustainable career as performers, the following Appendices provide lists of books that can inform musicians about the following topics.

A. Industry Personnel: Value, Roles and Tasks

G. Planning: Goals, Strategies, Tactics, Budget and Business Plans

H. Sources of Income

I. Finding Funding and Setting a Money Deal for a Music Project

However, it is important to clarify that the information contained in these sources is meant to provide musicians with a point of reference from which they can form an idea about what to expect from an agreement with agents of the music industry (fair fees, functions) and which things to take into account when sketching a plan and a budget. Considering that these texts were written in countries where the music industry seems to have reached more standardised practices than Colombia, it seems

pertinent to take a flexible approach towards the information they present, for there may be contextual differences in the Colombian markets that might require the adjustment of certain parameters. This clarification seems to be in line with the perspective of Valencia, and the Áñez twins, for the three of them agreed on the importance of structuring different approaches, efforts and strategies for the different needs of different artists.

5.d. Barriers for achieving sustainability:

Aside from misinformation, folk musicians in Colombia face other obstacles when it comes to widening their audience, monetizing and developing their projects. This sub-section collects some of the barriers described by the interviewees.

- The Economic Barrier: There are occasions when promoters offer musicians a concert out of their hometown. When the promoter's budget cannot cover the expenses related to transportation, hotel fees, promotion and sound-tech among others, the self-managed artist has two options: either to accept the invitation, find external sources of funding and assume the losses; or to decline the offer. Martínez claims that in most cases not being paid enough money is a consequence of not having enough bargaining power. This leverage is usually obtained through the networking capacity of the person or agency that represents the artist. According to him, there are three ways in which artists can increase their bargaining power:
 1. When the artist or artist's manager has been recommended to the booker or promoter.
 2. To have built a relevant name or reputation.
 3. To be presented as part of a large catalogue of renowned artists.(Martínez, 2018)

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- The Industry Barrier: Even though major labels operate in Colombia, they only represent artists from genres like *vallenato*, *norteña* and *reggaeton*. As their research on Colombian audience and consumption patterns show that artists within these genres sell more albums and tickets, they are the only ones receiving the benefits of networking, promotion, distribution, market research, recording time, tour support and management a major label can offer (Martínez, 2018). Since only artists signed to major labels can afford to stay visible in mass media channels, unsigned artists have less opportunities of widening their audience and no chance of having their music massively consumed. That phenomenon is described by Valencia as mass media manipulation, since the latter are successfully dictating what the audience must consume (Valencia, 2018).

Martínez notes that aside from the major label arena, there is another market in Colombia with significant cash flow and potential sources of income for musicians; a market financed by public and private funds that gathers a massive crowd around rural regional fairs, festivals and beauty pageants. Even though this scenario looks promising for the folk artist, there are aspects that require adjustments in order to become a perfect opportunity for growth audience and a better chance at sustainability. Martínez highlights that there is no organized circuit in this market, which means that there is no data collection from the audience, a valuable asset that could be gathered to give continuity to the circulation of music in the region. This has a negative side effect, for the musicians that play in these festivities are granted fifteen minutes of fame and then seem to vanish. The access folk artists have to this market is limited by the barriers mentioned in the next sub-sections (Martínez, 2018).

- The Social Barrier: As most Colombian artists consider that their listeners belong to their same social class and region, they do not seem too concerned

about promoting themselves in other cities or villages, nor are they concerned about widening their audience by making a plan that promotes their music in other economic strata (Martínez, 2018).

- Cultural Habits Barrier: Finding funding for culture related enterprises is particularly difficult in Colombia because the distribution of public funds doesn't particularly favour the culture sector. When comparing Colombia to France, Valencia notes that the French policies and private sector seem to be more supportive with the artists, for it is not uncommon to have private companies and individuals from the audience, sponsor the arts (Valencia, 2018). Whereas in Colombia, the audience seems to be used to attending concerts for free (Martínez, 2018).
- Time Management Barrier: Due to the scarce economic sponsor to the arts, musicians in Colombia are forced to engage in full-time jobs that are not performing or recording-related. In order to pay the bills, they have to limit the amount hours to work on their music project (Valencia, 2018). Considering that most upcoming and folk artists are self-managed (Áñez and Áñez, 2018; Sur, 2018; Valencia, 2018), the adverse effects of this barrier are more aggressive, as it is not possible to devote an adequate amount of time to focus on the musical and organizational aspects of the project.

5.e. Incentives for keeping the market alive:

Despite the considerable barriers faced by unsigned musicians in Colombia, the number of folklore related projects seems to have grown in the last decade. According to the interviewees, these are the stimuli that have kept folklore related music alive and growing.

- The desire of musicians to keep on creating. (Valencia, 2018).

- Growth of the niche audience: Since the creation of *La Distritofónica* in 2004, Valencia has seen how the niche audience has been nurtured by generations who are curious about music that isn't promoted by the mass media nor part of the mainstream trends. Seeing new listeners and artists every year motivates her to keep on organizing *El Distritofónico Festival* and excited about playing in different bands (Valencia, 2018).
- Trade Fairs: Even though the presence of these spaces in Colombian territory is quite recent, *Circuitart* and *Bomm* have provided artists with opportunities to interact with *Colombian* and international industry, allowing them to widen their network and tour abroad (Áñez and Áñez, 2018).
- Public Funding: Even when the Cultural sector is not present in the budgetary priorities of the Colombian government (Tiempo, 2017), it is fair to say that Ministry of Culture does run a programme called *Programa Nacional de Estímulos*. Artists of different disciplines can compete in order to win the scholarships, internships, financial awards and recognition offered by the programme (Mincultura, 2018). Throughout these competitions unsigned musicians have achieved the economic support to improve the circulation of their music, manufacture and release their albums, widen their audience or tour nationally or abroad (Áñez and Áñez, 2018).

It is evident that the barriers outweigh the incentives, which can explain why -in spite of the talent and great quality of the music- the market for genres that can be categorized as WM is just emerging in Colombia. Although the conditions that would make this market fully sustainable are still not within reach, it seems important to name and know the obstacles to be able to propose solutions; and equally important to consider the incentives, so that

musicians can keep on using them to achieve some of the conditions that might make their projects sustainable in their home country.

6. Conclusion:

Even though it would be ideal to live in a world where musicians could develop a livelihood by exclusively focusing on their creative processes, the truth is that sustainability and opportunities only seem achievable when the entrepreneurial aspect is also taken care of. Since major labels do not seem to be interested in genres that can be catalogued as WM, artists have to forge their own path to access the industry and monetize. Unfortunately, evidence shows that Colombian musicians do not have easy access to an education meant to develop entrepreneurial skills, nor do they have enough knowledge to create strategic plans and allegiances with industry personnel. This creates the perfect environment for unbalanced and unsatisfactory business relationships where musicians feel that intermediaries have taken advantage of them without helping them achieve their goals. These impressions might be aggravated in the context of teams composed of non-Western musicians and Western industry personnel due to the history of colonialist dynamics.

The results of this research suggest that when artists are aware of 1) how to develop an execute a business plan and 2) what are the roles of the personnel working with them, it is more likely to reach goals and avoid feeling exploited by the team of intermediaries. Knowing what are the standard fees for the industry agents and their responsibilities might help the artist to engage in fair agreements (the advise of a lawyer is also key in this matter) and create an atmosphere of trust. For further research it would seem appropriate to make a study case of a group of Colombian self-managed musicians with great quality music and entrepreneurial training to test if the results of this research are accurate.

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APPENDIX A

Industry Personnel: Value Roles and Tasks

Artist Management for the Music Business by Paul Allen and *The Musician's Legal and Business Guide* compiled by Mark Halloran are great resources to understand the functions and skills an ideal manager should have. In addition, both of these texts provide clear outlines for an artist management contract and management fees. Other chapters in these books delve into the functions of record labels, distributors, producers, booking agents, promoters and PRs. The nature of the contracts and standard fees established by these agents are also detailed by Allen and Halloran (Allen, 2011; Halloran, 2017).

When it comes to understanding the function and fees of the agents in the Publishing Industry, Halloran's compilation offers a brief chapter. In order to get a deeper understanding of the publishing personnel, *The Art of Music Publishing* by Helen Gammons is recommended (Gammons, 2011).

APPENDIX B

WM RECORD LABELS, FESTIVALS AND TRADE FAIRS

- A list of WM record labels compiled by Paula E. Kirman can be found at <http://www.insideworldmusic.com/msub18.htm> (Kirman, n.d.).
- A list of WM festivals is available at *World Music Central*: <https://worldmusiccentral.org/world-music-resources/world-music-festivals/> (World Music Central, n.d.).
- A list of WM trade fairs is available at *World Music Central*: <https://worldmusiccentral.org/world-music-resources/showcases/> (World Music Central, n.d.).

APPENDIX C
QUESTIONNAIRE FOR COLOMBIAN ARTISTS
(Recordings will be submitted upon request)

1. What has been your experience with WM Recording and Performance Industry Actors?
2. Did you expect any benefits after being catalogued in a WM label and booking agency? If so, are your expectations being met?
3. Has your audience grown as a consequence of being catalogued as a WM artist?
4. Have you found windows of opportunity for your project in your home country? If so, can you describe them and tell how did you access them?
5. How does your career development in Europe and North America compare to your career development in your home country?
6. Is the Audience different in Europe and the U.S. different from the audience in your home country? Do they buy different merchandise?
7. Rumour has it that world musicians need to demonstrate a level of success abroad, before being acknowledged in their country of origin. Has this been your experience?
8. Is there anything you wish you knew before accessing the WM Industry?
9. How was the process of engaging with a record label?
10. Can you describe the role that the press, labels, bookers, promoters, managers, PR, distributors had played in the development of your project(s)?
11. What are your sources of income as a world musician?
12. Where did you find funding for recordings, promotion and tours?
13. Did knowing how the industry works (who are their actors, what are their responsibilities and the scope of their actions) allow you to structure a better plan for your project or career?

APPENDIX D

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR MARIA ANGELICA VALENCIA, MUSICIAN AND FOUNDER OF *LA DISTRITOFONICA* RECORD LABEL (COL)

(Recordings will be submitted upon request)

1. Is it possible for Colombian musicians that use folklore elements to develop a sustainable project in Colombia?
2. Which are the tools or agents that contribute to the development of folk-oriented projects in Colombia?
3. Which are the difficulties faced by musicians when developing their project in Colombia?
4. Do you consider that musicians who are informed about a) The dynamics of the cultural industry, b) The tasks performed by the industry personnel c) The efforts required for music commercialization, are more capable of devising and executing a sustainable project?
5. At which point did you find out about the function that labels, bookers, managers, promoters and distributors perform?
6. There is plenty of information about the functions that major labels perform regarding the financial support they can provide to artists, but there seems to be little information about the support that independent labels can provide artists (probably because that support varies immensely depending on the label). So I wanted to ask you what are the benefits a record label like *La DISTRITOFÓNICA* can offer to musicians in their roster?
7. When you receive an email from a band or artist who wants to belong to *La DISTRITOFÓNICA*, which elements make you think “it’s worth giving this project an opportunity”?

APPENDIX E

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR COLOMBIAN MANAGER, SANTIAGO MARTINEZ

(Recordings will be submitted upon request)

1. From what you have seen in the Colombian music industry, do you think there is a market for traditional folk musics, newly composed traditional musics as well as vintage and contemporary musics from Colombia and Latin America? If so, can you describe it? Is it a strong or an upcoming market?
2. How easy or difficult is it for local musicians to access this market?
3. How easy or difficult is it for local musicians to participate in the Colombian music industry?
4. Which are the factors that hinder the audience growth and promotion and diffusion of traditional folk musics in Colombia?
5. How informed are local musicians about the dynamics of the music industry and the markets to which their music belongs to?
6. Is music education in Colombia (or academia) a good provider of knowledge that would allow musicians to develop a sustainable career?
7. Do you consider that artists that are aware of the dynamics of the industry and the role of its' agents (managers, bookers, promoters, labels, P.R., Producers) have a better chance of engaging relationships with the "right" agents in order to devise and execute a plan focused to develop their project?
8. Is Music Business education in Colombia institutionalized? If so, what is its' degree of development?
9. How educated is the industry personnel in Colombia in music business?
10. How aware are they of the traditional functions or responsibilities an agent carries with an artist?
11. Rumour has it that world musicians need to demonstrate a level of success abroad, before being acknowledged in their country of origin. Has this been your experience?

12. When receiving emails directly from world musicians that want to work with you, what elements in the email make you consider the proposal?

APPENDIX F
QUESTIONNAIRE FOR SCOTT GUILLOT, EUROPEAN BOOKER
(Recordings will be submitted upon request)

1. What are the benefits that world musicians experience when being catalogued as world musicians (when they are featured in the roster of WM labels or management and booking agencies)?
2. What makes a music project interesting and worth giving it an opportunity?
3. When choosing artists to work with, do you give priority to the ones that are being referred to you by your network contacts or artists that contact you directly?
4. When receiving emails directly from world musicians that want to work with you, what elements in the email make you consider the proposal?
5. Also, when receiving emails directly from world musicians, which are the elements in the email that make you ignore or reject the proposal?
6. What are the elements an artist should already have developed before getting in touch with you?
7. When creating any entrepreneurship, the entrepreneur (in this case the artist) has to make an investment that will be recouped in the future. In the case of organizing a first European tour:
 - a. Which expenses need to be covered by the artist?
 - b. What are the sources of income that will help the artist recoup the investment?
8. What are the elements that catch the attention of festivals and venues?
9. Which circumstances help create a long-lasting relationship with an artist?
10. How familiar are upcoming world musicians with the dynamics of the recording, performing and publishing industry?

APPENDIX G

PLANNING GOALS, STRATEGIES, TACTICS, BUDGET AND BUSINESS PLANS

The musician's journey: crafting your career vision and plan by Jill Timmons is a great resource for those musicians who feel reluctant about engaging in the entrepreneurial side of music, as it does not have a “one size fits all” approach. Her methodologies and questions invite musicians to employ their creativity into modelling a self-taylored vision for their career. Instead of being written in an impersonal business language, it employs a narrative that is more aligned with the sensitivity of creative practices. Outlines for business plans and questionnaires to clarify goals can be found in this text, among other valuable materials (Timmons, 2013).

The sixth chapter of *Artist Management for the Music Business* by Paul Allen offers tools to set and achieve goals and parameters for planning a budget for the artist (Allen, 2011).

“Getting Started: Music as a Business” is a chapter in *The Musician's Business and Legal Guide* that contains valuable information about how to plan goals, strategies, tactics and how to create a budget and a business plan (Halloran, 2017).

APPENDIX H

SOURCES OF INCOME

In order to build a Business Plan, artists might need to have a clear idea about their sources of income, since investors might want to know about the revenue streams the artist will use to repay them. *Future of Music Coalition* – “a Washington D.C.-based nonprofit organization supporting a musical ecosystem where artists flourish and are compensated fairly and transparently for their work” (Future of Music Coalition, n.d.)- has created a list of “45 distinct ways that US-based musicians and songwriters can generate revenue from their compositions, performances, sound recordings, brand, and/or knowledge” (Future of Music Coalition, 2012). It is available in the following link:

<http://money.futureofmusic.org/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2012/01/revenue-streams-handoutlist.pdf>

APPENDIX I

FINDING FUNDING AND SETTING A MONEY DEAL FOR A MUSIC PROJECT

Edward R. Hearn wrote a chapter for *The Musician's Business and Legal Guide* titled "How to Set Up a Money Deal for Your Music Project". As the title suggests it, it recommends strategies for calculating and creating fair money deals for the artist. In addition, it provides a list of sources for financing and what they imply for the artist (Halloran, 2017).