Esperanto, as the world’s most widely spoken artificial language, provides a unique opportunity from an anthropological perspective. Since there are few native speakers of Esperanto, almost everyone who speaks the language has made a deliberate choice to learn it, creating a unique language community unified not by heritage nor geography but by individual choice and ideology. However, in conversation with those unfamiliar with the Esperanto movement, or those who only know of Esperanto as a past event, people often express confusion at our interest in the language. We are frequently asked why we are studying a failed movement, or a doomed movement, depending on the perspective of the interlocutor. Such questions fail to acknowledge Esperanto’s contemporary history and current status as a lively and growing community.

This is a critical moment for Esperanto, for reasons both within and without the movement. For the movement itself, the growth of the Internet and other new technologies has led to great changes within the Esperanto community, most notably a sizeable increase in the number of people from all continents interested in Esperanto. Technology is driving an Esperanto revival, especially among young people, a previously difficult to reach demographic. More broadly, Esperanto has also become increasingly relevant in the context of some of the most difficult social and cultural problems facing modern society. Questions regarding language, assimilation, nationalism, globalism and multiculturalism have shown their remarkable capacity for societal disruption and destabilization. In addition, the increasing importance of language as a form of soft power among major powers has added another dimension to the complexities of
international language politics. These are the pressing cultural and political issues of our time, and they are the same issues that the Esperanto project has always sought to address, from its founding to its modern manifestation. With these developments in mind, we sought to investigate the movement’s trajectory and goals in the modern world, the motivations of individual Esperantists, and Esperanto’s capacity to fulfill its aims of facilitating international communication on a politically neutral basis.

Our investigation took us to Esperanto gatherings in seven European countries over the course of eight weeks. We conducted interviews, acted as participant observers in Esperanto conferences, and collected survey information online from Esperantists around the world. Through our research, we developed a fairly comprehensive understanding of the status of the modern Esperanto movement, from the culture and politics of its individual members to the modern evolution and goals of its largest official organization. Ultimately, we found that Esperanto is a lively, diverse, and adaptive movement, whose members are often much more pragmatic and realistic than the prevailing stereotypes would suggest.

**Esperanto politics and the modern movement**

One of our central research questions concerned the political beliefs and goals of modern Esperantists. Early Esperantists were broadly united by a utopian goals, from their central mission of peace through communication to a range of related humanitarian goals. The utopian power of Zamenhof’s vision was a strong motivation for many of these early Esperantists, who were generally left-leaning, with a humanitarian orientation. The utopian zeal of these early adopters has fueled criticism and derision from Esperanto’s detractors from its founding to the present, and is often cited as a primary reason for what has been perceived by outsiders as the
movement’s failure. While maintaining some of this enthusiasm and hopefulness, modern Esperantists are considerably more pragmatic in their political ideals. Most consider the *Fina Venko* [“final victory”], or universal knowledge of Esperanto leading to international understanding and ultimately world peace, to be a misguided and unrealistic goal. Instead, the primary goal of modern Esperantists is much more reasonable, namely to ensure the growth and vitality of the Esperanto community and to secure greater respect for Esperanto as a legitimate language. Beyond the political aims of the Esperanto movement itself, modern Esperantists are loosely in agreement over a few general political ideals, though the range of positions represented by Esperantists is much greater than many observers might anticipate. In general, Esperantists lean fairly decisively to the left on both social, economic, and environmental issues. However, this orientation is neither set in stone, nor wholly appreciated by all Esperantists. Not everyone appreciates the activist tone which sometimes dominates Esperanto proceedings, either. One librarian whom we encountered went so far as to say he considered himself a speaker of Esperanto but not an Esperantist – after all, English speakers are not “Englishists”. Some speakers resent the implication that they should share political opinions about Esperanto, or have political opinions about Esperanto at all, simply because they speak the same language.

If there is a specific set of political positions that characterizes the modern Esperanto movement, language politics is undoubtedly the central issue. Language politics is the main political interest shared by a large number of politically active Esperantists, and it generates considerable discussion and debate at gatherings in Esperantujo (“Esperanto-land”, an idiomatic term for the world community of Esperantists). For Esperantists, the priorities of language politics are generally the rights of minority languages and resisting the hegemony of large national languages. There is often a strong skepticism towards projects promoting English or
other national languages as international languages. This issue is particularly intense in the European Union, where there exists a single-issue political party devoted to language politics, which advocates for policies affirming the EU’s linguistic diversity and against English and French as official languages.

One theme that frequently arose in our interviews and conversations was the importance of linguistic choice. Time after time, we heard Esperantists argue that the most important battle being waged in the arena of language politics is the resistance to hegemonic language policies that reduce language diversity, privilege native speakers of hegemonic languages, and reduce freedom of choice. One participant in the UK, an Esperanto teacher from Hungary, explained that his political priority was fighting for the freedom of students to choose which foreign language to study, without the immense pressure to learn English, French, or Mandarin Chinese. While he didn’t support the idea of fina venko, his definition of victory for political Esperantists would be the elevation of Esperanto in the world of international languages as a politically neutral option, unique among the hegemonic national languages. From an outsider’s perspective, this is perhaps the strangest and least realistic tenet of mainstream Esperanto language politics. English, French, and Mandarin, among others, all provide the language learner with access to a large population of speakers and economic opportunities. Language, in this case, is about much more than the exchange of ideas and information, providing the learner with tangible benefits. However, by and large, this issue is simply not addressed in the majority of Esperanto discussions on language diversity, which is viewed as a value in and of itself, and rarely as an effect of economic or political processes.

One of the most interesting, as well as the most divisive, developments in current international politics is Britain’s departure from the European Union, and the topic has garnered
considerable attention within the Esperanto community. At the Universala Kongreso, we attended a sufficiently illuminating lecture and discussion on Brexit, which gave us a strong impression of Esperantists’ political stances regarding the proliferation of English as an international language, as well as the galvanizing power of language politics within Esperantujo. While the talk was initially intended to cover the causes and potential effects of Brexit, that topic was quickly abandoned in favor of a heated (and fairly one-sided) discussion of the prominence of English within the European Union. The speakers argued that using English as an official language gave native speakers an unjust advantage compared to other EU members. Parents complained that their tax money was spent to teach their children English. One commenter went so far as to say that the English were never European at all, and had no business in the EU, a sentiment that was met with cheers from the audience. Overall, there was a strong current of antipathy towards the British and the sense that Brexit was their just desserts was impossible to ignore. This was perhaps the only significant departure from Esperantujo’s comprehensive atmosphere of niceness we experienced during our travels, which truly speaks to the overwhelming significance of language politics within Esperantujo.

While the town hall discussion at the Universala Kongreso was certainly interesting, it did little to clarify our questions regarding modern Esperantists’ positions on either Brexit or topics like nationalism and immigration. Luckily, while visiting England, we had the chance to ask the president of the Esperanto Association of Britain about the positions of British Esperantists on Brexit. He reported that public opinion among Esperantists is split on the issue, much like in the greater population. He mentioned that younger Esperantists are generally more internationally inclined, in keeping with the national trend, and noted that in his view, while ideally Esperantists should be internationally minded, this isn’t always the case. So while
internationalism may be an Esperanto value generally, it doesn’t always predict specific political positions, especially on contentious issues that prove more powerful than Esperanto’s rather disorganized political identity.

The primary organs of Esperanto politics are the worldwide Esperanto organizations, chief among them the Universala Esperanto-Asocio, (Universal Esperanto Association), or UEA. UEA is responsible for organizing the Universala Kongreso (Universal Congress) each year, which serves as one of the most important meeting places for Esperantists worldwide. UEA describes itself in a promotional booklet as the gvidŝipo [“guiding ship”] of the Esperanto movement. Its current General Director told us that she believed the role that UEA ought to play in the Esperanto community is to form a link between various Esperanto organizations and to give Esperanto legitimacy by representing it to the outside world.

Such representation, however, is easier said than done. Though the UEA likes to advertise that it is in “oficialaj relatoj kun UN kaj Unesco” [“official relations with the UN and UNESCO”], no governmental body has ever adopted Esperanto as an official language or even passed more than a brief resolution in support of the language. In addition, the political conflicts of Esperantists become most evident within the UEA and between the UEA and partner organizations elsewhere. A board member of the Italian Esperanto Federation said that her greatest hope for the Esperanto movement was “pli da paco” [“more peace”], in reference to her belief that the governing boards of local organizations were too frequently in conflict with each other and with the UEA.

Another particularly pressing issue in the contemporary Esperanto movement is that of modernization. As an artificial language, Esperanto in most cases cannot rely on parents to naturally pass on the language to their children, and therefore Esperantists are often concerned
with maintaining the spread-out Esperanto community and ensuring its continuation and survival. For these reasons among others, Esperantists have always relied on evolving technology as a method of keeping in touch with each other and spreading the language. In various times, Esperanto has been spoken in correspondence courses, Usenet groups, and IRC channels, each waxing and waning with the popularity of the related technology.

The Internet has proved a godsend to the Esperanto community. In fact, from the very beginning of the Internet, Esperantists were uniquely well positioned to take advantage of it. On the one hand, Esperantists are generally geographically spread-out, but linked by common interests and social networks, and therefore have an obvious need to send information over a distance quickly. In addition, Esperanto tends to attract the kind of analytically-minded people who enjoy operating ham radios, and such Esperantists quickly saw the possibilities offered by the early Internet and took hold of them. The Usenet newsgroup soc.culture.esperanto was founded around 1990 and still exists today; according to esperanto.net, in its heyday the newsgroup had a readership of thousands. There is an Esperanto group on almost every social media site imaginable, not to mention the many personal websites maintained by Esperantists. The most recent example of such early adoption by Esperantists is what has been called the “Duolingo revolution”. In May of 2015, a course on Esperanto for English speakers debuted on the popular language learning app Duolingo. As of the time of this writing, over 677,000 people had signed up for the course, creating perhaps the single largest influx of new speakers since Zamenhof first published the language. Many of the Esperantists we met – from longtime speakers to komencantoj who had themselves learned the language from Duolingo – agreed that Duolingo presents an enormous opportunity for the Esperanto movement, but that the difficulty
will be in helping these new learners to move from learning the basics of the language to understanding and participating in the unique culture of Esperanto.

**Esperanto Culture**

One of the most common complaints about Esperanto is that unlike national languages, Esperanto has no associated culture. Detractors note the lack of high quality Esperanto language films and television, literature and poetry (although Esperantists chafe at these claims, and for good reason: the Esperanto literary canon, while small, is a fascinating topic on its own). Furthermore, some argue that the lack of identifiable national culture makes Esperanto unattractive to language learners; learning French opens the door to French cuisine, French literature, French history, and the opportunity to wander the physical world of the French, but Esperanto is decisively lacking in such obvious and well known cultural markers. But such criticisms could only come from an outsider, as spending any time in Esperantujo makes the existence of Esperanto culture unquestionably clear. Esperantujo is a remarkably strong imagined community, despite its total lack of territorial claims, relatively brief history, and sparse distribution of its members around the globe. Esperantists are united by somewhat vague but cherished common ideals, their knowledge of the movement’s history and their identification with its goals and struggles, as well the powerful sense of community that characterizes the movement today.

The ideology of Esperanto as a movement is difficult to pin down, simply because its aims represent so many different things to different people. Take, for instance, *la interna idea*, the “internal idea” or fundamental ideological basis of Esperanto. L. L. Zamenhof, Esperanto’s creator, said in a speech in 1912 that “the internal idea…. is, on the foundation of a neutral
language, to remove the barriers between peoples and to accustom humanity to see all only as 
people and brothers.” Though most Esperantists would probably agree with at least some of 
these humanistic goals, they disagree widely on implementation and scale. Zamenhof himself 
specified that the *interna ideo* should be viewed as the guiding principle of Esperanto 
congresses, but not an obligation on the part of any individual Esperantist. The *interna ideo* 
inspires some to political activity against linguistic hegemony; for others, it merely means 
hospitality toward fellow Esperantists.

The individuality and diversity of Esperantists’ ideals is reflected in their myriad paths to the 
Esperanto movement. In every interview, we asked participants to tell us their Esperanto story, 
and the resulting narratives were a fascinating insight into the many different ways people from 
all walks of life encounter Esperanto. These stories highlight both the power of Esperanto’s 
ideology and its practical applications. Many, like us, joined Esperanto clubs or correspondence 
courses out of sheer curiosity. For others, there was an ethical or political driving force; for 
instance, the current General Director of the Universal Esperanto Association began as a 
physicist who turned to Esperanto after becoming frustrated with the primacy of English and 
communication barriers in international scientific publishing and collaboration. A few native 
speakers of Esperanto told us that their parents, speakers of different national languages, had 
used Esperanto in the home as a neutral language. Many Esperantists were drawn initially to the 
novelty of an artificial language, or the desire to add another language to their polyglot arsenal, 
but ultimately stayed because of the strong Esperanto community. Even Esperantists who spoke 
many languages noted that there was something special about Esperanto as a community, *a bona etoso* [“good atmosphere”] that kept them coming back. For young people in particular, 
Esperanto has in many cases served as their first gateway to the larger world. A former director
of the Universal Esperanto Association described his first Esperanto congress as an “incredible experience” in contrast to his childhood in rural Finland. Esperanto provided him with an unprecedented access to international interaction and understanding, for instance with Japanese members of the congress with whom he would otherwise have had no way to communicate.

We encountered such an ethos of international communication in every Esperanto community which we visited. The precise definition of this “spirit of Esperanto,” like the interna ideo, seems to vary from Esperantist to Esperantist, but it is certainly a powerful force within Esperantujo, as a critical component in the maintenance of Esperantujo’s unique sense of community and an in attracting like minded new members. Broadly, the key tenets of Esperantism could be described as openness, equality, internationalism, individuality, and humanitarianism. To some extent, these central values were established at the movement’s point of origin. Zamenhof intended for his language to be a force for equality, democratization, and peace between communities and nations. His goals have remained at the forefront of the Esperanto movement, shaping the face of the modern community. These initial values have developed organically within Esperantujo over the course of the movement’s history, as a result of years of interaction between diverse Esperantists from around the world, evolving slightly in response to the changing challenges of the times, with the modern take on language politics being a good example.

There is a tendency toward insularity in Esperantujo which is increased by the extreme interconnectedness of the Esperanto social network. There are several reasons for this: the community is small enough that a few enthusiastic figures and large gatherings can play a major role, Esperantists on the whole enjoy travel and meeting other Esperantists, and the community places strong importance on gathering and keeping in touch despite physical separation. In addition, Esperanto gives its speakers not only a shared language but a kind of shared ideology.
Even those Esperantists whom we met who had no interest in advancing Esperanto as a movement were extremely hospitable, regardless of age, profession, or country. The friendly term for a fellow Esperantist is *samideano*, “one who shares the same ideals.” This is not necessarily true, of course, as many different political and social elements rub shoulders in Esperantujo. A more idiomatic translation might be “comrade”. As the former director of the Hungarian Esperanto Association put it, “Esperanto ne nur estas lingvo, estas komuna sento, amikeco” [“Esperanto is not only a language, it is a common feeling, a camaraderie”]. Between this “common feeling” and the fact that many Esperantists are friends of each other’s friends by the sheer small size of the community, it’s no surprise that the Esperanto community is so closely linked.

This is not to say that all Esperantists are peaceful *samideanoj* of each other. Like any movement, Esperantujo has its internal politics. While the *interna ideo* can prove a moderating sentiment, it can also inflame tempers by leading some strong believers to insist that others are not only taking Esperanto in the wrong direction, but downright betraying a moral ideal. Such a clash of ideals particularly occurs across the generation gap; some of the more cynical of our interviewees used phrases like “moneychangers in the temple” to describe younger Esperantists who want to see Esperanto used in commerce and the growth of careers in Esperanto. More modern-minded Esperantists, however, see the Internet and commercial opportunities as an essential way to spread Esperanto more widely. “Oni devas vivteni” [“One must make a living”], remarked one professor of Esperanto, who told us that he believed Esperanto would be taken more seriously if it were easier to make money from it. Though they may disagree bitterly on methods, however, almost all of these Esperantists still hold Esperanto dear and hope for its
wider reach. Though they come from all walks of life, Esperantists often have a surprising amount in common.

For instance, one of our most unexpected findings in our exploration of Esperanto culture is the surprising popularity of a handful of hobbies among Esperantists. We found that Esperantists disproportionately flock to a specific set of hobbies, pastimes, and professions, from the predictable, like travel and linguistics, to the unexpected, like bicycling, aikido and ham radio. The unusual popularity of these pastimes among Esperantists reveal subtle but significant characteristics and values shared by a large number of Esperantists.

Hobbies related to travel are perhaps the least surprising and most popular pastimes, for both young and old Esperantists. Many Esperantists are motivated to learn Esperanto by a desire to see the world, make new friends, and connect with different cultures; travel, especially international travel within Esperantujo, is for many the most satisfying way to achieve these goals. The popularity of travel also speaks to importance of discovery and communication among Esperantists. There is an extremely high value placed on cultural diversity and the exchange of cultural experiences in the Esperanto community. Kulturlingvafestivaloj, gatherings where guests share elements of their national culture, from cuisine to performance arts, were held at every conference we attended, and are a good example of this widespread interest in cultural exchange. This is in part due to the abstract mission of Esperanto, which aims to facilitate communication and understanding among dissimilar linguistic groups, and also due to the Esperanto value of openness and an unusual receptivity towards internationalism among Esperantists.

Linguistics and foreign languages are another unsurprising choice. Language enthusiasts, from polyglots to conlangers and academics, are a frequent sight at Esperanto congresses. The
draw for linguists is fairly obvious, as Esperanto is the world’s most successful constructed language, featuring a host of fairly interesting linguistic innovations in its construction. Polyglots are also well represented in the Esperanto community. Some people initially drawn to the novelty of Esperanto, or seeking to add another language to their lengthy polyglot credentials, later find themselves drawn into the ethos and community of Esperanto, a community that is deeply interested in languages and their effects on their speakers and on the relations between different language communities. For polyglots who have come up against these questions in their studies, Esperanto offers an opportunity to dig into these ideas with a group of like minded peers. Among the language interested Esperantists we talked to, many explained that Esperanto fit into a larger area of interests, be it language learning in general or the study of constructed languages. Many Esperantists enjoy the puzzle of learning a language, and because it was intentionally designed for rapid learning and intuitive use, Esperanto offers a unique learning experience--an Esperantist writing for *The Economist* described his experience learning Esperanto as an encounter with “a puzzle piece designed to fit the human brain.”

Aikido is another common hobby for Esperantists, and while this might seem strange to an outsider, it makes perfect sense within the Esperanto community. Aikido, a martial art form that emphasizes self defense as well as protecting the attacker from injury, was invented by a follower of Oomoto. Oomoto is a religion originating in Japan and related to Shinto, and it has a unique relationship with Esperanto. Oomoto and Esperanto share similar visions of international harmony and peace, and within Oomoto, Zamenhof is considered a deity. Oomoto’s spiritual leaders have promoted Esperanto as a mechanism for achieving their own goals of spiritual harmony, and the warm relationship between the religion and the movement continues to this day. As for the popularity of Aikido, the martial art’s pacifist approach to self defense is an
attractive feature for many Esperantists who identify with the movement’s aims of peace and cooperation in international and interpersonal interactions.

Ham radio and bicycling, while perhaps not as obvious as linguistics or travel, are also popular Esperanto hobbies that reflect common values and preferences among Esperantists. Bicycling is one of the most popular pastimes among Esperantists. As an individual sport that can be enjoyed as a group, bicycling reflects the importance of both individuality and community for Esperantists. It also makes for a fine hobby for those that enjoy travel: BEMI, a large Esperanto bicycling organization and a well known institution in the world of Esperanto, organizes trips for Esperanto cyclists around the world. The popularity of ham radio among Esperantists is similarly fitting, reflecting the importance and love of communication among Esperantists, and their desire to express and share ideas. It’s also either an anachronistic or offbeat pastime, depending on the age of the participant, which indicates both the age distribution of Esperantists, with an overrepresentation of older people, and the preference for the offbeat and quirky, a consequence of the prioritization of individuality.

Despite this emphasis on individuality, after a few minutes of reading about Esperanto culture, or stepping into an Esperanto congress, a few stereotypes and symbols of Esperantujo become immediately evident: the green-starred flag, the omnipresence of L. L. Zamenhof (Esperanto’s author and founder), a certain extreme earnestness. All of these phenomena spring from Esperanto’s 19th-century utopian roots, and they serve to both unify and divide Esperantists. Enthusiastic as most Esperantists are about the language, nobody wants to be known as a verda papo – a “green pope”, that person who talks on and on about the lofty goals of Esperanto. In fact, after talking to dozens of Esperantists, we found not a single person who would admit that they supported the idea of “final victory” – in short, virtually no Esperantists believe that the
entire world population should speak Esperanto, much less that the world would become materially better off if they did.

In our experience, Esperantists are remarkably interested in the history of their movement (a one-man play on the life of Zamenhof which we attended opened to a packed house, much to our surprise) and often playfully aware of how utopian or silly they can seem from the outside. The Esperanto Internet is rife with self-deprecating inside jokes. A typical example is Rolando Bonkorpa’s satirical self-nomination video for the Esperantist of the Year 2015 award, in which he professes that “mia plej ŝatata plantajo estas herbaĵo, ĉar ĝi verdas!” [“My favorite plant is grass, because it’s green”] – a joke which is uproariously funny only to those who are familiar with both the use of a green flag to represent Esperanto and a certain idiomatic verb usage relating to colors. Modern Esperantists (left-leaning and academic as they tend to be) may have moved away from what might be called the more evangelical goals of the original movement, but the movement as a whole remains nostalgic and insular. Though attracting more young speakers was a high priority for most Esperantists whom we interviewed, they seem to have no interest in watering down Esperantujo’s quirks for more general appeal (an interesting contrast to those who advocate for greater political neutrality within the movement in order to attract a broader range of new members).

Utility of Esperanto

One of our more concrete goals in this project was to evaluate the utility of Esperanto for international travelers and academic researchers. During our 8 weeks of conferences, interviews, and field research, we were able to get a sense of Esperanto’s usefulness as a tool for international communication, both as a practical language for daily life, as well as for
communicating more complex and abstract ideas. Through our personal experiences, as well as through our conversations with other Esperantists about their own language-learning journeys, we have emerged with a fairly positive evaluation of Esperanto’s utility in the modern world.

The Esperanto Internet is rife with descriptions of how easy the language is to learn, often citing Leo Tolstoy’s claim that he learned it in just a few hours. On the other hand, detractors of the language insist that it is odd, difficult, and ugly (The Verge described the sound of Esperanto as “like someone speaking Italian slowly while chewing gum”). As often occurs, the truth is probably somewhere in between.

Our own experience tends toward supporting the claim of Esperanto’s ease of learning. Both of us had informally studied Esperanto for approximately a year before embarking on our voyage, and found ourselves able to communicate effectively about relatively complex topics. In both of our cases, we found that Esperanto was significantly easier to learn to fluency than any other language we had studied. This experience is fairly common among Esperantists; the current General Director of the Universal Esperanto Association said that she initially learned Esperanto to put claims of its ease of use to the test, and confirmed that the language was indeed as easy to learn as was advertised. Another young Esperantist we talked to mentioned that despite her interest in languages, Esperanto was the first foreign language in which she had achieved a sufficient level of proficiency to enable effective conversation. This is not an uncommon experience; for many who struggle to learn foreign languages, Esperanto acts as a gateway language. Its regular grammar and innovative system of compound construction makes it an encouraging experience for those who doubt their ability to pick up languages. Furthermore, recent studies have suggested that those who study Esperanto actually improve their ability to
learn other languages; researchers hypothesize that this benefit stems from Esperanto’s regular and logical construction, which demystifies the logic of grammar and syntax.

However, though Esperanto may be easy to learn, it is not effortless. Many Esperantists rarely get a chance to practice the language in person, and therefore are not nearly as fluent in speech as they are in writing. Some Esperantists whom we encountered who did not speak English natively still preferred to use English with us, being so rusty in Esperanto that they were embarrassed to speak it. In fact, we encountered a few examples of people who had been active in the Esperanto movement for years but were not fluent in the language, raising the interesting possibility that Esperanto can sometimes serve more as a gateway to the Esperantujo social network than as a practical linguistic tool.

**Conclusions**

Throughout our voyage, we were able to observe and participate in the use of Esperanto among various cultures and contexts. Through this process, we discovered first of all that, despite its detractors, Esperanto remains alive and well as a subculture and a linguistic community, even experiencing rapid growth due to the rise of the Internet. We also confirmed by our own experience that Esperanto is usable for essentially all of the same purposes as any other language, including literature, travel, and political discussion. Through this hands-on experience, we developed a deeper understanding of the culture and ideals of the Esperanto community, who hold dear a unique blend of humanism and individualism. Within Esperanto organizations, we explored modern Esperanto’s approach to questions of soft power and linguistic hegemony, questions that are increasingly important in a time of rapid linguistic and cultural change within Europe. In short, our voyage made it possible for us to survey the Esperanto community broadly
in space and time, from its origins in Warsaw to its modern spread worldwide, and to discover the universal commonalities between Esperantists in all of these locations.