

# Seán Williams

SO303k – Soundscapes of Youth

Linda O’Keeffe

**Topic:**

Do people of different ethnicities and cultures in Ireland consume music in different ways  
or by different methods?

**Astract:**

*In so many ways, music has become a defining aspect of the 'global village' in which we live today. Whether heard on sound recordings or through sources like the radio, television, the internet, in supermarkets, waiting rooms, restaurants, religious services, concert halls, the work place, sporting events, or while listening devoutly to it alone at home, music forms an inportant part of modern life (De Nora; 2000). This study focuses on the comparative consumption of music across different ethnicities on the Island of Ireland. To begin with, it is the theoretical standpoint of this research that the creation of music, it's significance to people and it's consumption patterns vary across Ireland's population according to culture and context. In addition, the work of Gantz et. al (1978), suggests that adolescents listen to music in order to relieve stress, pass time, fill uncomfortable silences, alleviate feeling of loneliness and to manage their moods. However, it is expected that the findings of Gantz et al. (1978) will prove to be dated and less applicable to contemporary society than society of the 1970s and 1980s. Finally, it is deemed fundamental to outline whether people of different ethnicities and cultures in Ireland consume music as a means of expressing their own cultural identity as migrants in a foreign land. In this study, qualitative measures are applied in order to investigate these three core tenets.*

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## **Introduction:**

The consumption of music, be it listening to, buying, or interacting with others through is an integral ingredient of day to day twenty-first century life, and a key element of the cultural material through which social action is constructed and organised (De Nora; 2000). For the purpose of this study, music will be defined as “an ordered arrangement of sounds and silences whose meaning is presentative rather than denotative” (Clifton; 1983). Clifton states that:

*“Music is not a fact nor a thing in the world, but a meaning constituted by human beings. . . . To talk about such experience in a meaningful way demands several things. First, we have to be willing to let the composition speak to us, to let it reveal its own order and significance. . . . Second, we have to be willing to question our assumptions about the nature and role of musical materials. . . . Last, and perhaps most important, we have to be ready to admit that describing a meaningful experience is itself meaningful”* (Clifton; 1983:5-6).

Music is one of the oldest forms of human communication, a human universal which can be found in all cultures, all ethnicities, at all times. (Von Feilitzen & Roe; 1992). In many ways it is a defining aspect of the ‘global village’ in which we live today (ibid). Music surrounds us and we listen to it in the most varied forms and contexts. Whether heard on sound recordings or through sources like the radio, television, the internet, in supermarkets, waiting rooms, restaurants, religious services, concert halls, the

work place, sporting events, or while listening devoutly to it alone at home, music forms an important part of modern life (De Nora; 2000).

It is the theoretical viewpoint of this research that the creation of music, its significance to people and its consumption patterns vary according to culture and context, and it has become clear that people of different ethnicities and cultures in Ireland do not all experience or consume music in a uniform fashion. The structure of this paper aims to demonstrate the profound relationship between this theory and facts gathered through qualitative research methods. As Harris (1979) states, facts do not speak for themselves:

*“facts are always unreliable without theories that guide their collection and that distinguish between superficial and significant appearances”*

(Harris; 1979:7).

In the same sense, factless theories are meaningless. Science, be it natural or social, functions on the premise that experiment and observation of phenomena have absolute domination over reason, ideology and intuition (Bail; 1942).

## **Literature Review:**

There exists an arsenal of research which outlines the methods by which people of Western ethnicities consume music. Lonsdale & North (2011) state that much research has been conducted indicating that people of this culture listen to music for a variety of reasons. They cite the work of Gantz et. al (1978), which illuminates that adolescents listen to music in order to relieve stress, pass time, fill uncomfortable silences, alleviate feeling of loneliness and to manage their moods. Although undoubtedly important in providing an initial insight into why adolescents listen to music, these studies are now somewhat dated. Recent technological developments, for example, the CD, the internet and the mp3 player and iPod, have made listening to music increasingly accessible, convenient, portable and cheap (Bull; 2000). For example, Bull (2005) argues that the iPod now offers the listener the unprecedented ability to continually readjust his or her mood whilst “*on the move*”, which previously was not possible with earlier music formats, limited by their restricted mobility and access to musical choices.

The main limitation of the research reported here is that it fails to convey that the overwhelming quantity of music reaches us through the media. In Western culture, media distribution determines the largest part of daily music consumption and leads one to believe that this is a fact that cannot be overlooked. The placement of music in advertisements can have a profound effect on our consumption patterns as a whole (Schramm; 2006).

A second limitation of this research is that it assumes that people listen to music for the same reasons, regardless of individual differences, the sociocultural context and the music itself. In Western culture, many contrasting subcultures and social

movements exist, all of which use music as an element in defining their individual identities. Indeed, North et. al (2004) found that the reasons why participants in their study listened to music differed significantly according to who they were with, the social setting and the time of day.

With regard to consumption patterns of music of other ethnic groups within Ireland, far less research exists, and indeed none at all which charts the comparative modes of consumption between these groups. According to Eileen Hogan (2011),

*“cities as hosts to multi-ethnic and multi-cultural communities, are key locations for the creation, production, performance, diffusion and transformation of music”*

She continues to outline that a focus on musical production and consumption provides an outlet through which to explore how migrants experience a new place, how they consider the place they have migrated from and the reasons for their migration, as well as their place within the host city and their opportunities within that place (Hogan; 2011). While this work is helpful in the sense that it establishes a base from which to view a migrant's consumption of music as an integral part of assimilation or lack thereof into a host community, it is more applicable to first generation migrants rather than an entire minority ethnic diaspora living in Ireland.

Due to the lack of work which attempts to chart the modes of musical consumption among minority diasporas in Ireland, it is the intention of this research to shed light on how people of different ethnicities listen to music and to reveal if they conduct their music behaviour as a means of tension relief, passing time, filling uncomfortable silences, alleviating feelings of loneliness and managing their moods as Gantz et. al (1978) and Lonsdale & North (2011) state that people of Western ethnicities do. A second intention of this research is to test whether the work of Gantz is still applicable to modern

Western society. It is possible that the modes of consumption studied by Gantz may not still be relevant in the twenty-first century and it is necessary to confirm that his findings still hold true. A final aim of this research is to outline whether people of different ethnicities and cultures in Ireland consume music as a means of expressing their own cultural identity. According to Fornas (1992), since at least the 1950's, it has been evident that music plays a central role in the process of identity construction of young people. This process includes not only elements of personal identity but also important aspects of national, regional, cultural, ethnic and gender identity.

## **Methodology:**

The methodology of almost all research stated in the previous chapter has been centered around qualitative methods, these being in-depth structured and unstructured interviews and focus groups. As it appears to be the most feasible method of attaining the answers needed in order to test the theory of this research, qualitative methods have been adopted. A structured interview is an interview that has a set of predefined questions and these questions are asked in the same order for all respondents. This standardization is intended to minimize the effects of the instrument and the interviewer on the research results (Corbin & Strauss; 2008).

Definitions of unstructured interviews vary. Minichiello et. al (1990) define them as interviews in which neither the question nor the answer categories are predetermined, instead relying on social interaction between the researcher and the informant. Punch (1998) describes them as:

*“the best way to understand the complex behaviour of people without imposing any categorisation which might limit the field of inquiry”*

(Punch: 1998).

While definitions are not standard, there is generally agreement about the advantages of such an approach and for these reasons, unstructured interview methods have been adopted for this research. The researcher arrives at the interview with no predefined theoretical framework and thus no hypothesis or questions about the social realities are under investigation. Rather, the researcher has conversations with interviewees and generates questions in response to the interviewee's narration.

When investigating different ethnic backgrounds and their comparative methods of music consumption it is difficult to apply a list of exact questions to each interview. As it is acknowledged that a totally unstructured interview plan, free from any basic skeletal framework would lack credibility when portraying findings, initial guiding questions and core concepts are used in order to map out the protocol for each interview. However, the interviewee is free to work in any information which he or she deems relevant. This protocol focuses on the contextual, explanatory and evaluative functions of social research.

All in all, the conducted interviews are 'goal free' ensuring that the information collected is actual rather than intended. Interviewees are free to discuss their personal thoughts and experiences without a template of questions restricting them. This makes it possible for them to describe and display phenomena as they are experienced by the study population.

While the flexibility of unstructured interviews offers a number of advantages, there are certainly challenges to be faced when using them as a data collection method. The primary challenge is that this method requires a vast amount of time to collect the necessary information (Patton; 2002). When the researcher first enters the field and has little knowledge about the setting, it can take time to gain trust, develop rapport, and gain access to interviewees. This can therefore make it difficult to develop a sample from the population to be studied.

Because of these potential difficulties in gaining access to a sample, non-probability snowball sampling is employed in this instance. While there is relatively little problem gaining access to participants of Western descent, gaining access to interviewees of non-Western descent poses a significant issue. Researchers use snowball sampling if the sample for the study is very rare or is limited to a very small subgroup of

the population. This process has therefore been adopted here. This type of sampling technique works like chain referral. After observing the initial subject, the researcher asks for assistance from the subject to help identify people in a similar circumstance to themselves (Patton; 2002). The process is cheap, simple and cost effective and also requires little planning, ensuring that the sampling method does not become over complicated.

However, snowball sampling does present a number of disadvantages which must also be alluded to. Representativeness of the overall population in the sample is not guaranteed. The researcher has little idea of the true distribution of the population and of the sample. Also, sampling bias is a fear when using this sampling technique as initial subjects tend to nominate people that they know well. Because of this, it is highly possible that the subjects share the same traits and characteristics, and thus, it is possible that the sample obtained by the researcher is only a small subgroup of the entire population (Patton; 2002).

Over the course of the interview method, four subjects were interviewed; an Irish male (respondent 1), a Polish female (respondent 2), a Chinese male (respondent 3) and a Nigerian male (respondent 4). All respondents have been resident in Ireland for over three years. Only respondent 1 currently holds an Irish passport. Over the course of each interview, the respondent was asked four core questions. These were:

- Where and when do you consume music in your daily routine?
- What methods do you use to consume music?
- Does a given situation appear different to you if there is or is not music in the atmosphere?
- Does the consumption of music help you to develop your sense of self / identity?

In all cases, grammatical errors are corrected in the transcripts to allow for unhindered reading and analysis.

With regard to the ethics of such data collection, no huge problems arise. All respondents are over the age of 21 and the subject matter is not particularly invasive or personal to begin with. All participants have been given an explanation of what is being studied and how and why it is being studied. They have all been asked and agreed to give informed consent as to whether they want to take part in the study, under the guarantee that only the recorded interview conversation will be used. No further information regarding the informants private lives has been published. All participants were aware that they were free to withdraw from the study at any time, both during the interview and during the pre publishing phase. (See 'Participant Consent Form' attached: Appendix 3)

All recorded interviews have been transcribed into Microsoft Word documents. It is these transcriptions that were later analysed. In addition, throughout the entire process of data collection and analysis, a series of memos were recorded. Memos are the recording of reflective notes about what is being learnt about the data. In order to keep track of all insights and ideas, thoughts were recorded for later amalgamation into the discussion and conclusion chapters.

Once collected, the data was divided into elements of similar themes by the process of coding. Coding is defined as the marking of data with symbols, descriptive words or category names in order to relate it to a similar piece of data. Here, transcribed data was carefully read, line by line, and divided into analytical units. Whenever a meaningful segment of text was found, it was assigned a code to signify an analytical unit. This process was continued until all data was segmented into relevant units and therefore making it clearer to analyse. Although this coding process allowed for grounded

theory to emerge, it was primarily focused on *a priori* ideas. In essence, the system revolved around already identified themes and pre-existing theories rather than relying on codes to emerge from the data set as it was read. These *a priori* codes were identified from a number of sources:

- Previous research and theories (Gantz et. al; 1978).
- Research questions that are being addressed.
- Questions and topics built into the interview schedules.

## **Findings and Results:**

In order to present the results of such research, one must first redefine the research question and secondly, its sub elements. The intention of this project is to test whether people of different ethnicities and cultures in Ireland consume music in different ways, by different methods or for different reasons. In order to examine such a question, specific guiding questions have been phrased in order to extract the exact information necessary from each respondent. These are:

- Where and when do you consume music in your daily routine?
- What methods do you use to consume music?
- Does a given situation appear different to you if there is or is not music in the atmosphere?
- Does the consumption of music help you to develop your sense of self / identity?

The responses to these questions given by each informant differ greatly. Informant 1, an Irish male, reveals that he listens to music all of the time, effectively whenever he is alone and has time to himself. He uses predominantly his iPhone, as he likes to choose the music he listens to at any given time. He also sheds light on how music can have an effect on his mood.

*“It’s just boring without music. I’d arrive down to a lecture in worse humour in that case than if I had my music available” (Informant 1).*

Music acts as a companion to him and is not actively consumed in any social situation.

*“I prefer to listen to music in my own time so it’s not really a social outlet for me. If it’s there in social situations, well and good. But if it’s not, I wouldn’t have a huge issue with it”* (Informant 1).

Informant 2 illuminates very different reasons for music consumption. For her, a Polish female living in Co. Kildare, music is not a very personal thing. She listens to music in the car on the way to work or on the radio at home. However, further probing about her use of the radio reveals that she has access to Polish music on a Polish radio station via the internet. However, when asked if it helps her to reaffirm her identity as a Polish person in Ireland, she replies:

*“No it’s nothing like that I don’t think. It’s not really Polish Polish music”* (Informant 2).

She went on to clarify that point by stating:

*“I don’t feel particularly Polish from living here for so long [5 years and 3 months]. I’m paid by an Irish company, and spending my money in the Irish economy so I feel more part of Ireland than I do of Poland, even if I do socialise within a group of Polish people”*  
(Informant 2).

Additionally, while she reveals that an mp3 player would not drastically change her day to day life, she does shed light on the fact that it may help to alleviate boredom in certain circumstances. She pinpoints how she may go out walking more if she had access to an mp3 player of some kind. However, all in all, music acts solely as background noise for informant 2 and listening to Polish music on the radio does not enhance her feelings of identity as:

*“I don’t feel particularly Polish from living here for so long”*  
(Informant 2).

To informant 3, music is of huge importance in every day life. While he reveals that he is currently studying a B.A in music, he insists that his reasons for consuming so much music go much further than the attainment of educational credentials. His interview pinpoints how he listens to music all the time and it is something he does alone predominantly, using his personal mp3 player. He portrays in depth how he consumes music in order to manage his mood.

*“I am a worse man when I don’t get to calm down with some music. A personal flaw which I have come to recognise over the years!”*

(Informant 3)

He also adds that he listens to a lot of Guoyue music, a form of politically charged classical music in a traditional Chinese style. However, when asked whether it helps him to keep in touch with his identity as a Chinese man, he replies:

*“Emmmm...yes and no. While I am very proud to be Chinese, that is not why I listen to it. I just like the music really”* (Informant 3)

He states that while listening to Guoyue music, he does think of home and family members, but adds that:

*“It’s not the music particularly that keeps me aware of my identity. It’s my friends and family”* (Informant 3).

He reports a close contact with his family and friends in China by phone and concludes that it is this that helps him to keep in touch with his roots.

Informant 4, a Nigerian taxi driver, reports numerous methods of music consumption. While he primarily uses CDs and the radio, he also owns an iPod shuffle which he uses in the gym. He states that his heavy consumption of music results in it being omni-present in the atmosphere around him. When asked why he listens to music, a number of factors arise. Firstly, as a taxi driver, often late at night, he uses music to drift

off into his own world and ignore drunken conversations coming from the back seat. In this way he uses it to manage his mood and to keep himself calm.

*“I would be more awkward with drunk people if I wasn’t concentrating on the music playing. They talk such crap, spill food in the car...all that. The music stops me from getting annoyed and I just get on with driving.”* (Informant 4)

He also states how music on the radio helps him to wind down and go to sleep at the end of a work shift.

*“Then the late show on Q102, I forget the name of it, always plays relaxing music so it’s good to put me to sleep”* (Informant 4).

Informant 4 also reports listening to some African music in his daily life. Afrobeat, what he describes as *“like jazz or soul but more...African sounding”*, features heavily in his interview transcript but while he states that,

*“Listening to African music does remind me of playing football with my friends and having meals with my family”*,

*“I’ve moved on from that and it doesn’t make me sad”* (Informant 4).

All in all, informant 4 regards music as both a form of escape and as a method of winding down after a working shift.

Below (table 1), is a summary of findings and all informant's responses to individual noteworthy questions and concepts.

**(Table 1 – Summary of Interview Transcripts)**

<b>Question</b>	<b>Informant 1</b>	<b>Informant 2</b>	<b>Informant 3</b>	<b>Informant 4</b>
<b>Where and when do you consume music in daily routine?</b>	All the time. Any time I have time to myself.	While driving. At home.	All the time. Any time I have time to myself.	While driving. At home before bed. In the gym.
<b>What methods do you use to consume music?</b>	iPhone. Mp3 player.	CDs. Polish radio.	Mp3 player.	Radio. CDs. Mp3 player.
<b>Does a given situation appear different if there is or is not music in the atmosphere?</b>	Alone: Yes. Socially: No.	Never.	Often.	Often.
<b>Does the music you listen to help you to express your individual identity?</b>	No.	No.	No.	No.
<b>Do you use music as a means of relieving boredom?</b>	Yes.	Yes.	Yes.	Yes.
<b>Do you use music as a means of escape?</b>	Yes.	No.	Yes.	Yes.
<b>Do you use music in order to manage your mood?</b>	Yes.	No.	Yes.	Yes.

## **Discussion:**

In order to present an analysis of the data collected, one must first reiterate the aims of the research. Firstly, the intention of this project is to test whether people of different ethnicities and cultures in Ireland consume music in different ways and by different methods. It is also paramount to explain whether music plays a role in defining a person's identity within Irish society. While table 1 represents a summary of the research findings, it is also a portrayal of the recurring themes which arose during the coding process.

From the data collected, there are both surprising and unsurprising elements. Firstly, the methods of active music consumption by all informants are quite uniform. CDs, radio, mp3 players and iPhones feature as the only platforms used by the sample. This finding is firstly, not surprising and secondly, not revolutionary as Bull (2000) has already pinpointed the important role that personal stereo systems play in contemporary society. There is no trend across the study sample portraying that people of different ethnicities prefer different methods of consumption. The use of different methods of consumption stated by the sample participants are personal preference and informants do not suggest that any socio-cultural factors are at work. Prior to investigation, the possibility that minority groups gather together at specific events in order to listen to ethnic music was considered. However, as no respondent reported that music consumption has any social effect on their lives, nor does ethnic music play an important role in their definition of cultural identity, this consideration can be rejected.

Secondly, another unsurprising finding is that members of the sample consume much more music than they were ever aware of before the interview process, be it simply filling time or more actively, listening to music alone. Music consumption

appears to be an integral part of contemporary Irish society, regardless of race, class, gender or ethnicity issues. All respondents consume a vast amount of music throughout the course of day to day life and it has become clear that, with the exception of informant 3, all were unaware of the important role that music plays for them, even when conducting the simplest of tasks, prior to the interview process. Each interview sheds light on the respondent's reliance on music, which was not only critical to the research, but was also informative and educational for each respondent.

Each informant's reasons for their heavy consumption of differ greatly however. The work of Gantz et. al (1978) provides inspiration for a number of topics within each interview and creates a backdrop for much of the information gathered in the process. Although focusing primarily on adolescents, aged between 14 and 18 years of age, they conclude that teenagers listen to music in order to relieve stress, pass time, fill uncomfortable silences, alleviate feeling of loneliness and to manage their moods. All respondents in this study are above the age of 21 but there are segments of each interview transcript that bear a striking resemblance to the results of Gantz et. al (1978).

Firstly, all informants report that they listen to music in order to alleviate feelings of boredom. Even the mundane tasks of driving somewhere, walking somewhere or getting a bus somewhere appear to each member of the sample as being drastically different without the presence of music. In all cases, music is a commodity that is always at hand, and therefore, always utilised. As informant 1 states regarding his walk to college every day:

*"I'm going to be honest and say there is always a lesser chance of me actually going to college or to the gym whenever my headphones break for instance. It's just boring without music"* (Informant 1).

Respondent 2 agrees with the above statement. When asked whether an iPod would alleviate the feelings of boredom when out walking or keeping fit, she responds:

*“Yes in that situation it would I think. I’d like to think so and that I’m not a total slob! [laughs]”* (Respondent 2).

Therefore, it can be concluded that young people, just as they did in 1978, listen to music to alleviate feelings of boredom.

One of the most interesting topics raised by the interview transcripts is the revelation that 3 respondents out of the sample of 4 listen to music in order to manage their mood and as a means of escape from reality. Informant 1 even agrees to the researcher’s statement that music acts as friend or companion that he is in total control and one that he is in total control of:

Interviewer: *“Does music act as a companion you are in control of in that regard?”*

Respondent 1: *“Absolutely. That’s it. While the house I live in this year is fairly active and there is always something going on, I do like to take a break and relax on my own from time to time. And listening to music is definately my preferred option of doing so. It’s the same for the walk to and from college. It’s a bit of time to myself and listening to music is how I like to spend that time.”*

These views can cannot be taken as individual either as they appear to be relevent to many young adults in Ireland (18 years of age to 25 years of age). It is very often that one encounters a person of this age group on public transport or simply walking from place to place, with earphones embedded, paying little or no attention to their immediate surroundings. It is not in order to hear the music that they listen to it, but in order to soothe the vacuum in their minds with sound. As a result of this, it can be acknowledged that

music does not force them into thinking about themselves or experiencing the real world of perception and sensation. This depicts how music is used by adolescents and young adults as earplugs to block away their connection to the world around them, to silence their troubles, if only for a moment.

Respondent 3 and 4 also refer in depth to the concept of escape through musical consumption. In response to questions regarding music acting as an escape from reality and a method of managing his mood, respondent 3 states:

*“Very much so. I am a worse man when I don’t get to calm down with some music. A personal flaw which I have come to recognise over the years! [laughs]. I think I can apply myself to tasks better when I am relaxed and motivated and it is the music that I listen to that grants me such calm”* (Respondent 3).

This pursuit of calmness has become ever present in modern society. Music, in this sense, appears to offer the respondents a medium through which to enter their own serene world where stress does not exist, a place of comfort and dedication to oneself rather than others. For informant 4, reasons for consuming music are notably similar.

*“I would be pissed off the whole time and rude. I don’t want to be rude. I like my job when I work during the day. Just at night it can get annoying. So I keep relaxed with music”* (Informant 4).

Three out of four respondents report that many situations would appear drastically different without the presence of music. For these reasons, it has become clear that contemporary Irish society, in the most part, has become conditioned to having music available at all times and therefore, encounters feelings of ineptitude when conducting many aspects of life without it. It’s omni-presence in most people’s lives illuminates that we do not attempt to enhance reality through music, but to escape it. According to the

interview transcripts, music functions as a mood-altering device utilised in order to make the listener feel a sense of relaxation, happiness, or sorrow. The different genres of music can be used to describe a certain group of people, whether it be by clothing, style, attitude, or one's social class.

However, a third intention of this study is to investigate whether people of different ethnicities and cultures in Ireland consume certain music in order to express their own identity as a member of a minority group within the country, or as a means to keep them aware of their roots and where they come from. According to work of Hogan (2011), "a focus on musical production and consumption provides an outlet through which to explore how migrants experience a new place, how they consider the place they have migrated from and the reasons for their migration, as well as their place within the host city and their opportunities within that place" (Hogan; 2011). The interview transcripts from the three non-national informants in the sample clearly state however, that their consumption of their own ethnically specific music neither makes them consider the place they have migrated from nor the reasons for their migration. When analysed as a single document, the three transcripts reveal that these informants' consumption of ethnic music is much less about keeping in touch with their own ethnic and cultural identity, and more about simply enjoying those genres of music. This is a particularly unexpected segment of data given how each respondent overwhelmingly denied the use of music to keep in touch with his or her ethnic background. As respondent 4 states:

*"I like it here and I want to stay here. Some day I will bring my brothers here and they will like it too. I make so much more money here and I have my girlfriend and my own place to stay here. Life is good here for me. Not that it wasn't in Nigeria. I was never without anything thanks to my parents. But I would like to stay in Ireland for*

*the rest of my days. Listening to African music does remind me of playing football with my friends and having meals with my family. But I've moved on from that and it doesn't make me sad"* (Respondent 4).

All informants appear to have an awareness that, in this modern age of technology and transport, home, family and friends are not as far away as they were to previous waves of migrants in the twentieth century. Respondent 2 affirms this deduction by mentioning:

*"Sure my husband is Polish, and so many people around where I live too. We all speak Polish together. Plus, I get home plenty as well; maybe twice a year. I've plenty of time to be Polish then! [laughs]. But then again I don't feel particularly Polish from living here for so long [5 years and 3 months]. I'm paid by an Irish company, and spending my money in the Irish economy so I feel more part of Ireland than I do of Poland, even if I do socialise within a group of Polish people. My husband feels the same I think"* (Respondent 2).

All in all, and to great surprise, the evidence of this research suggests that no relationship can be charted between the musical consumption patterns of independent ethnic groups in contemporary Irish society and the formation and maintenance of their cultural identities. These findings are somewhat in contrast to the work of Dolsma (1999), which was consulted during the phase of analysis of this research. While Dolsma agrees that by consuming any genre of popular music, people wish to express who they are, to which social of cultural group they belong and what their social identity is. He then continues to argue that, contrary to common belief, identity is not strictly individual.

*"Instead, people's identity is highly social and draws on the socio-cultural values (what I here propose to call VALUES) in society -*

*VALUES that become 'objectified' or institutionalized and may thus be communicated to others"* (Dolfsma; 1999).

He continues to explain that if such socio-cultural and institutional values are not understood, and if one is unable to grasp how institutions function in moulding people's identities, the very existence of popular music cannot even be explained.

However, this concept of Dolfsmas may have some bearing on explaining why the ethnic minority participants in this research's study sample do not use music to express their own cultural and ethnic identities. It is possible that all respondents in question, given the positive experiences they have had in Ireland as migrants, feel more at ease adapting to the social and cultural norms and values of the Irish host society than they do projecting their own ethnic background on it. Indeed this theory can be reinforced by respondent 4's response of "*Well I hope to be Irish in a few years so to hell with that! [laughs]*", when asked whether listening to Afrobeat music help him to keep in touch with his African identity. In this way, it can be seen that to many migrants who are permanently settled within a host society, home can become a more alien place than the new city and economy which provides them with greatly enhanced economic and educational opportunities. In this case, contemporary Irish society is the institution responsible for moulding these migrants' identities.

While this research has presented many interesting and valid ideas, a number of issues arise on careful examination of the process. Firstly, the lack of existing research regarding modes, methods and causes of musical consumption among minority ethnic diasporas in Ireland identifies a large research gap, considering the vast quantities of previous research based on the musical consumption of people of Western descent. While this void has invited such a project, it also provides little or no guidance as to what approaches to take to the problem. There was no research available which reviewed where

previous studies had gone wrong and what the likely mistakes were when conducting a study of this topic. Therefore, I hope that future social scientists, when adopting a study of this nature, will be able to draw upon my study, tamper with my methods, and if necessary, arrive at different conclusions.

Secondly, as unstructured interviews were the method used for extracting data from the sample, each interview was not uniform, either in structure or in length. While the use of four guiding questions worked well and ensured that each interview moved forward rather than stagnated, the lack of a skeletal structure resulted in a number of answers, as well as their preceding questions, being scattered throughout each interview rather than in a segment of conversation dedicated to that particular topic. A consequence of this was a difficult and arduous coding process.

Thirdly, several problems arose from the use of non-probability snowball sampling as a way of contacting participants to represent to overall population. Several challenges arose which are inherent to snowball sampling, the foremost being that snowball sampling does not yield a random sample. As a knock on effect, the results from this study are not generalizable to the population. This is because of the potential biases present in the process. Initial subjects tend to nominate people that they know well. As a result of this, it is highly possible that the subjects share the same traits and characteristics, and thus, that the sample obtained is only a small subgroup of the entire population (Patton; 2002).

## **Conclusion:**

In order to introduce the concluding statements of this study, it's aims, for the last time, must be summarised. Firstly, it was the theoretical standpoint of this research at it's beginning, that the creation of music, it's significance to people and it's consumption patterns vary across Ireland's population according to culture and context. Secondly, it was expected that the findings of Gantz et al. (1978) that adolescents listen to music in order to relieve stress, pass time, fill uncomfortable silences, alleviate feeling of loneliness and to manage their moods would prove to be dated and irrelevant to contemporary society. Finally, it was deemed imperative to outline whether people of different ethnicities and cultures in Ireland consume music as a means of expressing their own cultural identity, as the work of Fornas (1992) indicates.

Approaching the initial standpoint, from analysis of the qualitative data collected, it can be understood that cultural context and ethnicity have little or no impact on musical consumption patterns across Ireland's population. There is no trend across the study sample portraying that people of different ethnicities favour different methods of consumption. The use of different methods of consumption stated by the sample participants are personal preference and informants do not suggest that any socio-cultural factors are at work.

However, music consumption appears to be an integral part of contemporary Irish society, regardless of race, class, gender or ethnicity issues, and therefore, provides the perfect backdrop in which to test whether the statements of Gantz et. al (1978) remain credible. While it was expected that some different reasons for music listening would appear on analysis of the interview transcripts, it was found that many of their findings still

hold true. Results reveal that the study sample do listen to music in order to relieve stress, pass time, fill uncomfortable silences and also, alleviate feelings of loneliness. This is a remarkable finding as 75% of respondents agree that music is something which they rely on to manage their moods and have become conditioned to having music available at all times. These informants admit that they experience feelings of ineptitude when conducting many aspects of life without it.

Finally, interview transcripts from the three non-national informants in the sample clearly state however, that their consumption of their own ethnic specific music neither makes them consider the place they have migrated from nor the reasons for their migration, contrary to what the work of Hogan (2011) states. The three transcripts reveal that these informants' consumption of ethnic music is much less about keeping in touch with their own ethnic and cultural identity, and more about simply enjoying those genres of music. Each informant credibly rejected the use of music to keep in touch with his or her ethnic background. While this finding is unexpected, I propose that all respondents in question, given the positive experiences they have had in Ireland as migrants, feel more at ease adapting to the social and cultural norms and values of the Irish host society and that their own ethnic cultural differences have become ever more alien to them with time.

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