Chapter 3 - Our Music and Their Music: Issues on Identity in Christian Music Use among South Africans and Nigerians in Durban

Rhoda T.I. Patrick
ORCID iD: https://orcid.org/0000-0002-1384-8233

Ruth Teer-Tomaselli
ORCID iD: https://orcid.org/0000-0002-0275-1006

Abstract

This discourse provides a religious perspective on the integrative dynamic of migrant Nigerian Christians in Durban. It also engages the adaptive views among Christian South Africans as the host community towards migrant groups (such as Nigerians) through a shared platform – their consumption of Christian music. Responses to otherness and diasporic presence are mostly polarised and often attributed to cultural differentiation. For this reason, the disparity and unappreciation of otherness become widened. In the context of this paper, our music and their music may connote a differentiated pattern of Christian music use among those within the 'home' context (South Africans) and those who are 'the diaspora' (Nigerians). This paper aims to demonstrate how their cultural, diasporic, and religious identities are construed in their preference for Christian music, how these identities interact within similar religious but distinct cultural backgrounds, and the results of these interactions. This study's samples are examined at the group (observing their church services through ethnography/participant observation) and individual levels (through interviews). At the group level, there was a higher exhibition of musical ethnocentrism – a preference for songs from their own cultures. However, at the individual level, openness, and knowledge of 'otherness' in celebrating cultural diversity, Christian music use, and preference were

identified. Through the medium of Christian music, the diasporic group has sustained its cultural heritage in the face of globalisation and has become exposed to the heritages of other people. These practices can be advantageous in facilitating interactions that promote cultural diversity to mitigate clashes and xenophobic attacks between the 'self' and the 'other.'

Keywords: Music; identities; differentiation, ethnography; religion; home-based; migrants; South Africa.

Introduction

Within this study, how South Africans and Nigerians sustain their identities and accommodate others within similar church contexts, as observed in their modes of worship and individual experiences, are examined and identified. This was coined from a larger body of work (see Abiolu 2020a). These outcomes are recognised through the cultural and religious representations of language 'verbally' (that is, linguistic construction as regards their different language backgrounds) or 'objectified' (particularly cultural practices). This was achieved through an ethnographic study of two Pentecostal[1] churches – eThekwini Community Church (ECC), a South African church, and the Living Faith Church, aka Winners' Chapel, Durban (WCD), A Nigerian-affiliated church. The eThekwini Community Church (ECC) has positioned itself as a ministry that caters to people in Durban and its environs to restore *ubuntu*[2] and empower its members to have a well-balanced life and outlook (ECC website n.d.). The Winners' Chapel, Durban

[1] Pentecostalism is 'an offshoot of Christianity in search of revival and personal relationship with Christ. [It] heralded and witnessed the adaptation of new [Christian] musical genre of emotional expression by lifting up of hands' and is inclusive of other gestures such as dancing, prostrating, shouting, and jumping (Udok & Odunuga 2016:55).

[2] *Ubuntu* is all about acknowledging and promoting collectiveness among people. It involves taking care of one another in the society to ensure social cohesion, bearing in mind that the society is an extension of the family, hence a member of society is viewed as a family member. And to achieve this, *ubuntu* celebrates the connectedness within the African context (Patrick 2020).

(WCD), places itself as a ministry targeted at no specific group, race, or ethnicity but works as 'a vehicle for the rescue and preservation of all peoples' (WCD website 2021). Both churches signify an inclusive and welcoming environment for all, irrespective of culture, ethnicity, race, or other forms of categorisation.

The purpose of the study is to have a deeper knowledge of how social constructs such as culture, religion, and the media interact to define and influence human lives resulting in identity formation and [re]construction. It stemmed from the desire to spotlight a uniting force among diverse communities of people to promote the humanness in us all as opposed to acts of violence, especially xenophobia, towards 'the other.' The study demonstrates this by exemplifying how home-based (South African) and diasporic (Nigerian) cultural, diasporic, and religious identities are construed in the use and preference of Christian music, how these identities interact within similar religious but distinct cultural backgrounds, and the results of these interactions. These people are observed at the group (church services) and individual levels (interviews). For this reason, the discourse covers Christian music, language use, connections between home-based and diaspora, and outcomes of such relationships. The authors unpack the data from interviews as well as the ethnographic observations. From there, analysis and study conclusions are done.

Music and the Relevance of Language in South Africa and Nigeria

Religion within the African continent is perceived as an indivisible aspect of life that influences people's identity and serves as an instrument for the inculcation of moral values, as well as advancing socio-economic and political development (Agbiji & Swart 2015). Similarly, its practices, part of which is music and its accompaniments like clapping, dancing, ululation, etc., are integral aspects of the African community and familial relations (Lebaka 2015; Mbaegbu 2015).

Music is a tool for verbal and non-verbal expressions (cultural, ethnic, linguistic, performative, religious, and other means). Not only is it communicative, but it is also a manner by which traditions, cultures, identities, and practices are safeguarded and preserved (Abiolu, Alabi, Patrick & Abiolu 2022). Music in the various unique African cultures binds

the African people together, making it a common feature that cuts across cultures (Mbaegbu 2015). Varying music genres are ways by which people reinforce or preserve their identities and simultaneously accommodate other cultural identities and groups (Schäfer & Sedlmeier 2010)[3].

Religion and associated practices can promote peace or incite violence in some cases, depending on, for instance, how the media - through representations, religious leaders, and other key actors contribute to or dissuade believers from the creation of violent or safe spaces, as the case may be (Mitchell 2012). For these reasons, particular attention is required for portraying identity through music, in which language, through representation, plays an influential role.

Language is a critical element of South African, and indeed African music (King 2008). That is why historically, the efforts of groups like Amadodana aseWesile would not go unnoticed in their alteration of European-based hymns to a more African and South African-oriented rhythm through translations to local and indigenous languages. Other artists, such as Joyous Celebration and the Soweto Gospel choir, have contributed to sustaining the South African rhythmic Christian musical landscape (Bainbridge *et al.* 2015).

In Nigeria, the importance of language is also underscored. Early musical movements, such as those of the African Indigenous Churches (AIC) in Nigeria, clamoured for more indigenised and relatable forms of worship and Christian music practices, especially through language depictions (Ayegboyin & Ishola 1997). Attempts of Canon J.J Ransome-Kuti and Sam Ojukwu cannot be ignored in their musical compositions of hymns in indigenous languages (Osigwe 2016). This 'brought a significant change in the liturgical church life. The acceptance of native choruses in local languages [showed] the creativity and relevance of indigenous songs [to Nigerians]' (Akpanika 2012:407).

The relevance of highlighting the historical antecedents of the importance of language in music to South Africans and Nigerians is because it made such representations more endearing and relatable within those milieus. And as much as this was and still is the case, it has also been revealed that music transcends global barriers such as those of linguistic concerns, particularly in situations where people who are not conversant with the

[3] And with the advent of Pentecostalism came different contemporary and hybridised subgenres of Christian music (Rigobert 2009).

languages in which songs are sung still enjoy the rhythm, harmony, or flow of such musical contents (Vuoskoski, Clarke & DeNora 2017). This paper suggests that cultivating some awareness of the uniqueness of other people who are linguistically diverse or different from one's sphere of interaction can endear a deeper appreciation of one another.

Interactions between Home-based and Diaspora: Self and Others

Interactions are bound to occur in spaces of encounters, particularly between different peoples and identities. This is not farfetched between host cultures and integrating cultures, the diaspora. The diaspora is a distinct community held together by social relations that are beyond boundaries which link the diaspora as members of a transnational community (Brubaker 2005). But contrary to this, Tashmin (2016:18) asserted that 'not all diaspora communities are transnational, but many are, and the easy ability to maintain personal, cultural and economic connections over long distances may be important to the maintenance of diasporic identity'. In Brubaker's (2005:6) view, the diaspora develops a level of boundary [or culture/ identity] maintenance to preserve their distinctive cultural or national identity vis-à-vis a host society or societies. And much in line with Brubaker's opinion, this study argues that such boundaries are achievable through transposed religious practices such as Christian music and religious gatherings.

Music can be a medium for group inclusivity and exclusivity based on shared or divergent characteristics (Boer *et al.* 2011; Lidskog 2017). Music inclusivity and exclusivity constitute the process of 'self' – our music, and 'othering' – their music. Ethnocentrism – the belief in the superiority of one's culture – is not only a phenomenon attributed to culture or ethnicity but also prominent in artistic expressions and musical performances. For instance, Boer *et al.* (2013:2362) concluded from their study on music use and patterns that musical ethnocentrism – the preference for exclusive musical contents from one's cultural or national roots – communicates and strengthens the essence of cultural or national identity. Therefore, musical ethnocentrism and differentiation point to the cultural representations of what distinctively constitutes the people of a nation and how they preserve or reinforce their identities (Thompson 2015). But at the same time, it can showcase neglect of intercultural awareness and intercultural musical competence. Schwartz *et al.* (2006) argued and recognised that preserving

the knowledge of the 'self' should also be in line with considering new possibilities in different cultures and backgrounds. This will breed cultural adaptation/accommodation and cultural awareness/diversity as a response to new cultures instead of ethnocentrism.

And in a world of flows and counterflows, enhanced by the globalisation process, interactions between host and diasporic communities result in claims of wanting to belong or associate and conflicting encounters. Bohlman (2011) believed the migration and integration process between the diaspora and host communities spark political (negative) and aesthetic (positive) responses. The positive aesthetic outcomes recognise the migrant groups' diversity and add to their communities. This encourages intercultural competence, a situation where hosts and diaspora adopt an integrative worldview to accommodate the demands of living together (Leung, Ang & Tan 2014). The negative political outcomes are those of xenophobic attacks based on the assumption that migrant groups are threats to the host's physical, social, political, and economic well-being. The host adopts defensive reactions to the presence of the 'other' in their space (Hall 1992). Such responses are mitigated when there is an awareness of a shared framework. Music, as a universal and borderless phenomenon, and religion, as proposed in this current study, fills this void because there is a heightened sense of bond and togetherness consolidated by music (Mavra & McNeil 2007).

Of this, music is established as a cross-cultural phenomenon. It reflects aspects of individual identities and personalities (Rentfrow & Gosling 2007; Lidskog 2017). And for the diaspora, Slobin (1994:243) described the importance of music as,

> central to the diasporic experience, linking homeland and here-land with an intricate network of sound. Whether through the burnished memory of childhood songs, the packaged passions of recordings, or the steady traffic of live bands, people identify themselves strongly, even principally, through their music.

Music is thus a means by which people express their identities to make sense of the world (Hoene 2015; Lidskog 2017). The music reflects people's identity regarding choices and preferences and adequately presents, highlights, and constructs their cultural and musical experiences in cultural backgrounds (Frith 2004; Rastas & Seye 2016).

Methods

This study adopted a qualitative approach to explain the social phenomenon of Christian music concerning identity construction (Hancock 1998). Ten black South African Christians and ten diasporic Nigerian Christians in Durban, South Africa, were interviewed. The participant observation was done within the ECC and WCD. Their modes of worship were observed over eight weeks, four weeks per church. The ECC and WCD were selected as churches with a large concentration of the study sample to critically understand the dynamics of identity reinforcement and adaptation of South Africans and Nigerians in their use and choices of Christian music subgenres. Their personal experiences were brought to the fore to shed more light on this set objective of how they relate with other people who have somewhat similar religious but different cultural identities. These experiences require the participants to draw cultural meanings from their use of Christian music as a phenomenon (Padilla-Diaz 2015). The sampling technique of this study is purposive because purposive sampling identifies samples with rich information with specific characteristics (Struwig & Stead 2013).

Ten South Africans and ten Nigerians who reside in Durban were sampled for important reasons. For instance, the estimated percentage of those with a religious affiliation to Christianity within the Kwa-Zulu Natal province was 78.5% (Statistics South Africa 2015). And as of the last census in 2011, black South Africans were the highest racial population representation in Durban, which stood at 51.1% (Statistics South Africa 2011). The actual number of diasporic Nigerians in Durban is not available. However, the total number of migrants in KwaZulu-Natal, as reported by Statistics South Africa (2015b), is 234,570, a considerable number and significant enough to study. With this and the backdrop of a high percentage of those with religious affiliation with Christianity, this study focuses on black South African Christians in Durban.

The justification for this comprehensive selection of participants and Sundays of worship relies on data saturation to avoid repetition. As a result, it served as a guide in selecting 'how many groups [a researcher should] choose, and to what degree [s/he should] collect data on a single [or multiple] group[s]' (Glaser & Strauss 1967:60). A method adopted in this study to facilitate the data analysis process is hermeneutics; the theory of interpretation which was originally used to interpret ancient and biblical texts (Kinsella 2006). Hermeneutics is a descriptive process that employs an

interpretative/ narrative strategy used as the basis to organise and explain generated data for a research study (Mitchell & Egudo 2003). Taking up the role of a narrator enabled the authors to interpret observations from the interviews and ethnography through the interpretative and narrative strategies embedded within hermeneutics.

Participant Responses: Language Use and Christian Music Preferences

Language use has been a significant element in meaning-making and communicative encounters. Similarly, it is a vital marker of identifying with or dissociating from a group (King 2008). It is thus a tool for inclusion or exclusion. As much as linguistic exclusivity indicates cultural preservation or reinforcement, it is equally an indication of exclusion of those not part of such linguistic groups, particularly in a multicultural setting. This was evident during the participant observations of the churches, which resulted in musical ethnocentrism. In some instances, at the personal level, some participants were keen on relatable content and language, while others were not.

Nevertheless, a higher number of the participants showed an inclination to Christian music from their home cultures. In contrast, others indicated an appreciation for pan-Africanism, and western/foreign Christian musical genres regardless of their linguistic representations. Thus, the observations and the individual experiences were somewhat varied but still with congruent ideas.

Some South African responses revealed a preference for indigenous, hybridised, and pan-African Christian music. SA [P01][4] preferred the 'traditional Christian [music like those of] Deborah [Fraser, a South African Christian music artist], Pure Magic, [and] Jabu Hlongwane', who are South African Christian music artists. Similarly, SA [P03] preferred the traditional subgenres of South African artists such as Joyous Celebration, Dr. Tumi, and Benjamin Dube because of the way they 'market themselves [… and] the

[4] This symbolises the pseudonym used for participants all through the study. Therefore, P = Participant, 01-10 = the number the participant was at the time of the interview, and SA/Nig = South African or Nigerian. So, SA [P01] = South African Participant number 1, etc.

message'[5] of their songs. SA [P05] also preferred traditional subgenres, especially meaningful songs and those she understands. In the same vein, SA [P08] and SA [P10] preferred traditional subgenres from Joyous Celebration, while P10 [SA]'s preference for the Joyous Celebration choral group was because 'I like the dance, I like their movement, I like … the way they dress, [and for the language], I prefer both isiZulu and English…'.

Similarly, among Nigerians, the language in which the songs are performed is important – 'I [like] Tope Alabi [a popular Nigerian Christian music artist] because *she sings in my dialect … I understand all what she says*' [Nig, P06]; 'sometimes when I sing my language song, it's like I get [spiritually] connected on time' [Nig, P08]; '*language is very important*. You know, when it comes to Christian music, as a person, I believe when it comes to calling God's names, *my language is able to make me communicate*. It goes deeper; English just calls it on the surface' [Nig, P10]. This last statement speaks of how meanings may be lost in translations.

However, others were not particular about language. Some Nigerian participants responded,

> I'm sure you'll be familiar with Joyous Celebration [a South African singing sensation]; *even though I don't understand what they are saying, I dance to it* [their songs] [Nig, P02].
>
> … some of the ones here in South Africa, the isiZulu songs, *I don't understand them, but I like the rhythm*, so I go along with it [Nig, P05].
>
> … [E]ven if it is not translated, it has a very nice melody; I [as a Yorùbá lady] know about one or two [songs] which are sang in Igbo and not translated, but then, its melodious [Nig, P07].
>
> I listen to a lot of [isi]Zulu gospel songs, so it's not really about the language; it's about what it does in your spirit [Nig, P09].

Nig [P09] listened to 'lots of Nigerian gospel songs like Nathaniel Bassey, Sinach', who are contemporary Nigerian Christian music artists. Nig [P10] preferred traditional Nigerian Christian music artists like Tope Alabi and the

[5] Words or phrases in *italics* are the authors' emphases.

AjogbaJesu boys because '*they do a lot of beating* … I like songs that are like hyper, the beat is high, its running … that kind of music'.

Some South African participants indicated that their preferences were not limited to indigenous artists. For instance, SA [P04] revealed that her 'favourite Christian music is more of the American gospel, but if its anything South African, its mostly our praise songs [because of] *how we dance and play drums*', while SA [P09], 'the ones that I like are the overseas one, like your Kirk Franklins, Donnie McClurkins … and there is one that I like here in South Africa, I love his music, *instruments* and *he's also young* Dr. Tumi … he's very good. Sometimes there's music … old ones like those ones which were listened [to] by our mothers, the ones that [are] very slow when it comes to beats, so, I'm still young, so I would like to have this fast beat'. SA [P07] had a more pan-African preference, 'I like Benjamin Dube, I like Sinach [a Nigerian Christian music artist], I'm more into African Christian music'.

In addition, the medium of Christian music was a means to learn about other cultures. According to SA [P07], 'I have [learned about the Nigerian culture]. I feel they are one of those improving countries that obviously come from a challenging background, but you can see the people are actually trying to get the best out of the situation. They are moving forward with life'. Similarly, SA [P01] said, 'I do listen to them [Christian music from Nigeria], I don't know their names, but I listen … like [the Igbo song] *Igwe* …'. In the same media vein, some were exposed to 'otherness' through various forms of media contents, not only through Christian music. In the case of SA [P01], 'I do listen to P-Square [a defunct boy pop group] from Nigeria most of the time', and she learned about 'their [Nigerian] religion, their culture, [the] way they live. They believe more than us'. She came to this conclusion as a result of her exposure to Nigerian media content. SA [P08]'s exposure to 'otherness' was by 'maybe … watching a movie, those Nigerian movies and stuff, I would hear their songs that they sing'.

Inclinations to 'each individual's indigenous Christian music' showed identity reinforcement, while openness to 'other' genres of Christian music indicated identity accommodation. They saw beyond cultural or national differences to create a common ground through religion for interaction. As preference and consuming local content encouraged the promotion of local outputs and content from local artists, consumption of transnational or global content facilitated a global consciousness because such medium became a means for educative and social encounters.

Observations

Winners' Chapel Durban

The worship and fellowship mode of the Winners' Chapel Durban church was observed in August 2018, and the interviews were carried out concurrently. On the first Sunday of the month, out of a total of 17 songs during 'praise and worship,' 'thanksgiving,' 'pre-sermon,' and 'end of service' songs, 11 were 'Nigerian' songs mainly recognisable by the infusion of Nigerian languages [Yorùbá, pidgin English and Igbo dialects specifically] in the lyrics. For example, *Alágbádá iná, come and manifest yourself* ['Alágbádá iná' is a Yorùbá phrase used to describe God as He who clothes Himself with fire], *wetin I go give to you, my praise…* ['wetin I go give' is a pidgin English sentence which means what will I give], and *Ebube Dike Jehovah* ['Ebube Dike Jehovah' is an Igbo sentence that means Jehovah, the One who opens doors], among many other Nigerian songs. Five of these seventeen songs were English songs [i.e., foreign songs, either by other African or western artists], and one was South African [in isiZulu]. This was the South African gospel song *Wahamba nathi* by Solly Mahlangu.

For the second Sunday, out of a total of 11 songs, inclusive of special renditions and communion songs, nine were Nigerian songs, while two were English songs. There was no rendition of any South African song during this service. The Nigerian songs were equally a blend of Yorùbá, Igbo, and Pidgin English songs, while the English songs were foreign.

On the third Sunday, the 'praise and worship' session started with Benjamin Dube and Praise Explosion's *We Lift Him Higher*, which was rendered in English. The second song was *Yes, You are the Lord* by Denzel Prempeh, a Ghanaian artist. In addition, one more South African song, one English song, and two Nigerian songs were rendered. The song leader chose *Tambira Jehova* [*come and dance to the Lord*] by Joyous Celebration, a South African gospel choir. These were instances where musical renditions within a context can be adopted within another cultural context, though with different traditions but a similar religious identity. This Sunday service had a total of 21 songs, ten of which were Nigerian, eight songs were in English, and three were South African. And for the last Sunday service, out of 20 songs rendered during service, 14 were Nigerian songs, four were English songs, and two were South African songs. The predominant pattern during these services was an oscillation from Nigerian to foreign to South African Christian music and vice versa.

Conclusively, the observation was that most of the songs during these periods were a blend of Nigerian [Yorùbá, Igbo, pidgin English and Hausa], South African [isiZulu], and foreign praise songs. Still, they were mostly Nigerian songs, while there was evidence of cultural accommodation in song choices, dress representations and participatory audience strategies.

eThekwini Community Church

The eThekwini Community Church was observed in September 2018, and the participants were interviewed simultaneously. On the first Sunday of observation, 22 songs were rendered during service, of which 20 were in isiZulu and two were in English. Out of the 20 isiZulu songs, three were songs that had the tunes of English hymns. The first was *Ungumhlobo Wamu'Jesu [You Are My Friend Jesus]*, which had the tune of *What a friend we have in Jesus*. It, however, was not a literal translation of the hymn. The second was *Uyaphila Umphefumulo Wami, [It is well with my soul]*, and the third was *Umkhulu Kangakanami, [How great Thou art]*.

One of the isiZulu songs at the beginning of the service was *AmaZulu, Athembe Lona, Nathi Sithembe Lona [the heaven trust this name, we also trust it – the name of Jesus]*. For me, this was an intriguing and educative rendition because it referred to the intrinsic meaning of the word Zulu – which means 'heaven.' This was a direct cultural and religious intersection in song choice. Additionally, of the two English songs, the one before the offering was collected was '*God is shifting things for me*,' which was keyed into the offering mode, but this was not constant throughout the observations.

The third Sunday was no different in music representation. Of the 23 songs rendered during the service, 17 were in isiZulu, and six were in English. The performer-audience relationship was showcased using the word '*woza*' as a call to action to mimic whichever performance the lead singer performed or acted out. Other cultural expressions were obvious features in the church as well. The service ended with the song *Wahamba Nathi, Siyabonga, [You have walked with us, we thank you]*. This was symbolic as a way of reinforcing their religious identity in appreciation for the success of the church service. But a closing song was not a consistent occurrence in all the services.

The last Sunday of the month marked the last Sunday of observation. It was on this Sunday that Heritage month was celebrated. Some of the isiZulu and English songs were hymns, the isiZulu translations or variants, or the original English versions. *Gelekece, athi Gelekece ezonweni [Clean,*

completely out of sin] was the first song rendered that Sunday. It was fast-paced and energetic, facilitating a participatory culture, especially since it was at the beginning of the praise session during the church service. During this praise session, the performer [lead singer] danced the Zulu dance while the congregation clapped and ululated.

Unlike previous services, there was no closing song at the end of this service. Connecting song choices to any particular service period was not as easy. This was because the songs were all related to the manifestation of God's presence and anointing and not much about the different periods that made up church services.

These church service patterns were unique to both churches (WCD and ECC) because the Pentecostal mode of service left room for an unstructured pattern, unlike the Protestant church, which has similar structures of service and song renditions (Rigobert 2009; Johnson *et al.* 2010). Consequently, there were religious liberties expressed in both contexts.

Musical ethnocentrism was apparent in the churches but more palpable in the South African community. The motivating factors in these churches were linked to musical styles and patterns, traditional, contemporary, or hybrid, in as much as the styles reflected their national and cultural roots. Using the native language also made it easier to understand what was said by the locals but difficult for anyone without knowledge of the language. The dominant language in the South African church was isiZulu, while the Nigerian church adopted English as a universal approach. These factors, through the interrelatedness of language, culture, and tradition, provided strong links to preserve the cultural identities of the people, irrespective of the social contexts where they were, home or away from home. Since these mediated preferences were culture and context-specific, they were unique expressions of their cultural and national ideals (Boer *et al.* 2013). Though these may be expected because their cultural groups and ethnicity constituted higher percentages of the churches' population, there were still instances of the considerations of 'otherness' through the inculcation of Christian music from other ethnic groups in the churches. For instance, in the Nigerian church, some of their songs were represented in Yorùbá, Pidgin English, Igbo, Hausa, and a bit of isiZulu, and the lyrics of these songs were projected on screens at strategic places in the church. These observations were at the group level.

Cultural Representation

The language of representation speaks of practices, artefacts, and symbols that strengthen and accommodate cultural identities. It is within these forms of representation that meaningful experiences are gained (Hall 1997). Tashmin (2016) corroborated that the use of cultural symbols and narratives both within and away from their 'ideal or natural' context underscores attachments to cultural or national identity. These outcomes are affirmed in this paper. During the participant observations, each church manifested some musical practices that transcended national or cultural borders and were points of convergence in religious identity formation. For instance, some contemporary musical instruments were similar such as drums (jazz set – South Africans and Nigerians, djembe – South Africans only) and the piano (South Africans and Nigerians). In the case of using the djembe drum, it reveals cultural adaptation because the djembe is indigenous to Mali, West Africa.

Fritz *et al.* (2013) from their study affirmed that music and musical expressions, representations, and artefacts acquire new interpretations in different environments. And much in line with this view, this study also reiterates that these artistic expressions transcend borders to assume new meanings and positions, which bridge the 'self' and 'othering' divide.

Our Music and Their Music – Ethnocentric or Multicultural Impressions?

Choices and preferences for certain musical genres or practices have been shown to distinguish between the social interests of people and are an indication of cultural and musical differentiation (Thompson 2015). Cultural differentiation in music use and consumption can either result in ethnocentrism or multiculturalism, i.e., high cultural awareness and diversity (Boer *et al.* 2013).

During the observations and interviews, this paper identified cultural or musical differentiation lines in song choices among host and migrant communities. On the one hand, the consumption of local content addressed the issues of developing, supporting, and promoting local outputs and content from local artists. On the other hand, consumption of transnational or global content indicated an awareness of 'otherness,' but not necessarily derogatory because Christian music became an educative and informative tool in those

cases. This aligns with Abiolu *et al.*'s (2022) and Mbaegbu's (2015) views. In this research endeavour, it was established that although musical ethnocentrism was a dominant cultural phenomenon among these groups of people, as observable through the linguistic representation of Christian music choices, there was an awareness of multiculturalism and diversity. So also, the cultural and religious heritages of both the home-based and the diaspora were obvious in songs that were in their local dialects. Thus, such Christian musical traditions were exemplifiers of ways to maintain a connection to their roots even more because their local dialects made the songs relatable by which these groups, as home-based and diasporic people, preserved their identities (Boer *et al.* 2013). These people were living representatives of their cultures and heritages, at home and away from home (*Revised White Paper on Arts, Culture and Heritage*, Department of Arts and Culture, South Africa 2017).

The meanings and interpretations attached to the individual and collective readings and expressions are highly contested. Group interactions became even more contextual, and individual interactions more personalised and introspective. Therefore, individual and shared experiences influenced the meanings derived from sociocultural and religious exposures. Not only did these influence meaning, but they also shaped identities and perceptions of us versus them scenarios. By this, 'our' music and 'their' music became depictions of 'culture-specific music [that were] unique expression of national, [religious], and cultural aspirations and ideals' of different people regarding Christian music that originated from their cultural backgrounds, supporting the findings of Boer *et al.* (2013: 2360).

Therefore, appreciation for one's indigenous music traditions over the other or admiration for non-indigenous music should not be a basis for cultural differentiation but rather a channel for education and awareness as well as appreciating cultural diversity, provided that such preferences do not tilt towards discriminatory tendencies. As Yang (2013) and Abiolu (2020b) observed, this paper avers that in the face of the homogenising characteristic of globalisation and gradual cultural erosion, deliberate and consolidated attempts should be made to safeguard [Christian] music cultures in local communities as they welcome or become more open to other musical practices through globalised practices. By ensuring this, social cohesion becomes realisable. And because of the observable intersectionality of human music cultures due to the ubiquity of music (Fritz 2013), alongside unity (or the nearness thereof) in identities, as shown in this study, a greater

level of cross-cultural cognisance and intercultural competence can be achieved.

Conclusion

This paper explored music use and preference at the individual and group level and how the 'self or collective identity' is represented within diverse religious contexts. This study revealed that when South African religious identities interacted with Nigerian and other identities from different cultural frameworks and vice versa, these resulted in accommodative cultural features. These characteristics were visible in cultural practices such as song choices and how they attempted to teach songs from 'other' groups into church worship. This was at the church level. At the individual level, though some people were inclined to their traditional Christian music genres, others showed cross-cultural and pan-African approaches to song choices from other cultural groups.

As these groups relayed these experiences, coupled with observations, the study concluded that Christian music could be a medium to foster religious and sociocultural bonds serving as gateways to nurturing intercultural competence and celebrating cultural diversity and multiculturalism. This avenue facilitates cordial interaction between the 'self' and the 'other.' So also, media portrayals and the role of socio-religious organisations like the Church in preserving people's identities and fostering goodwill among different people should not be relegated, seeing the impact of these factors on the study participants and the ethnography report. The study advances the initiation of viable and sustainable communication through religious music and forestalls clashes between different groups and communities of people.

Acknowledgement

I wish to thank the organisers of the Durban University of Technology's 4th Interdisciplinary Research and Innovation Conference 2019 for the opportunity to present this paper before it was recommended for publication.

References

Abiolu, R.T.I. 2020a. *The Role of Christian Music Use in Identity Construction among Black South Africans and Diasporic Nigerians and Congolese in Durban, South Africa*. PhD thesis. University of KwaZulu-Natal.

Abiolu, R.T.I. 2020b. Understanding Christian Music as a Catalyst for Social Cohesion within Sociocultural and Religious Settings in South Africa. In P. Kariuki, M. Lauda Joel Goyayi & S. Mhlongo (eds.): *Social Cohesion in the Last Decade: Taking Stock to Inform the New Decade.* Durban: Democratic Development Program.

Abiolu, R.T.I, O.J. Alabi, H.O. Patrick & O.A. Abiolu. 2022. Exploring the Value Systems Embedded in Indigenous Yorùbá Music Genres and Yorùbá Nursery Rhymes. In Salawu, A. & I.A. Fadipe (eds.): *Indigenous African Popular Music. Volume 1. Pop Music, Culture and Identity*. Cham, Switzerland: Palgrave Macmillan. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-97884-6_7

Agbiji, O.M & I. Swart. 2015. Religion and Social Transformation in Africa: A Critical and Appreciative Perspective. *Scriptura: Journal for Contextual Hermeneutics in Southern Africa* 114,1: 1 - 20. https://doi.org/10.7833/114-0-1115

Akpanika, E.N. 2012. Christianity in Africa: The Renewal of Indigenous Music: A Case Study of the Presbyterian Church of Nigeria. *American Journal of Social Issues & Humanities* 2,6: 406 - 411.

Ayegboyin, I.D & I.S. Ademola 1997. *African Indigenous Churches: An Historical Perspective*. Lagos: Greater Heights.

Bainbridge, J., J. Carillet, L. Corne, A. Murphy, M. Phillips & S. Richmond. 2015. *South Africa, Lesotho and Swaziland.* Cape Town: Lonely Planet.

Boer, D., R. Fischer, M.L. Gonzalez Atilano, J. de Garay Hernández, L.I. Moreno Garcia, S. Mendoza, V.V. Gouveia, J. Lam & E. Lo 2013. Music, Identity, and Musical Ethnocentrism of Young People in Six Asian, Latin American, and Western Cultures. *Journal of Applied Social Psychology* 43,12: 2360 - 2376. https://doi.org/10.1111/jasp.12185

Boer, D., R. Fischer, M. Strack, M.H. Bond, E. Lo & J. Lam. 2011. How Shared Preferences in Music Create Bonds between People: Values as the Missing Link. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin* 37,9: 1159 – 1171. https://doi.org/10.1177/0146167211407521

Bohlman, P.V. 2011. When Migration Ends, When Music Ceases. *Music and Arts in Action* 3,3: 148 - 165.

Brubaker, R. 2005. The 'Diaspora' Diaspora. *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 28,1: 1 - 19. https://doi.org/10.1080/01419870.2012.729674

Department of Arts and Culture, South Africa 2017. *Revised White Paper on Arts, Culture and Heritage Third Draft*. (Accessed on 03 May 2019.) http://www.dac.gov.za/sites/default/files/Revised%203rd%20Draft%20RWP%20on%20ACH%20FEBRUARY%202017_0.pdf.

ECC website. *eThekwini Community Church (ECC)*. (Accessed on 05 July 2021. https://ethekwini-community-church.business.site/?utm_source=gmb&utm_medium=referral#summary.

Frith, S. 2004. Towards an Aesthetic of Popular Music. In Frith, S. (ed.): *Popular Music: Critical Concepts in Media and Cultural Studies: Music and Identity* 4. Oxon: Routledge.

Fritz, T.H, P. Schmude, S. Jentschke, A.D. Friederici & S. Koelsch 2013. From Understanding to Appreciating Music Cross-Culturally. *PLoS ONE* 8,9: 1 - 6. https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0072500

Fritz, T. 2013. The Dock-in Model of Music Culture and Cross-cultural Perception. *Music Perception: An Interdisciplinary Journal* 30,5: 511 - 516. https://doi.org/10.1525/mp.2013.30.5.511

Glaser, B.G & A.L. Strauss. 1967. *The Discovery of Grounded Theory. Strategies for Qualitative Research*. New Brunswick and London: Aldine Transaction, a Division of Transaction Publishers.

Hall, S. 1992. The Question of Cultural Identity. In McGrew, T., S. Hall & D. Held (eds.): *Modernity and its Futures: Understanding Modern Societies*. Book IV. Cambridge: Polity Press in Association with the Open University.

Hall, S. 1997. Introduction. In Hall, S. (ed.): *Representation: Cultural Representations and Signifying Practices*. London: Sage.

Hancock, B. 1998. *Trent Focus Group for Research and Development in Primary HealthCare: An Introduction to Qualitative Research*. Nottingham: Trent Focus.

Hoene, C. 2015. *Music and Identity in Postcolonial British South-Asian Literature*. New York: Routledge. https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315772684

Johnson, T.L, J.E Rudd, K. Neuendorf & J. Guowei 2010. Worship Styles, Music and Social Identity: A Communication Study. *Journal of Communication and Religion* 33,1: 144 - 174.

King, R.R. 2008. Beginnings: Music in the African Church. In King, R.R. J.N. Kidula, J.R. Krabill & T. Oduro (eds.): *Music in the Life of the African Church*. Texas: Baylor University Press.

Kinsella, E.A. 2006. Hermeneutics and Critical Hermeneutics: Exploring Possibilities within the Art of Interpretation. *Forum Qualitative Sozialforschung/ Forum: Qualitative Social Research* 7,3: Art. 19. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/48667075_Hermeneutics_and_Critical_Hermeneutics_Exploring_Possibilities_within_the_Art_of_Interpretation

Lebaka, M.E.K. 2015. The Value of Traditional African Religious Music into Liturgy: Lobethal Congregation. *HTS Teologiese Studies/ Theological Studies* 71,3: 1 - 6. https://doi.org/10.4102/hts.v71i3.2761

Leung, K., S. Ang & M.L. Tan 2014. Intercultural Competence. *Annual Review of Organizational Psychology and Organizational Behavior* 1, 1: 489 - 519. https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev-orgpsych-031413-091229

Lidskog, R. 2016. The Role of Music in Ethnic Identity Formation in Diaspora: A Research Review. *International Social Science Journal* 66, 219 - 220: 23 - 38. https://doi.org/10.1111/issj.12091

Mavra, M. & M. Lori 2007. Identity Formation and Music: A Case Study of Croatian Experience. *Human Architecture: Journal of the Sociology of Self-Knowledge* 5,2: Article 2: 1 - 20.

Mbaegbu, C.C. 2015. The Effective Power of Music in Africa. *Open Journal of Philosophy* 5: 176 - 183. https://doi.org/10.4236/ojpp.2015.53021

Mitchell, J. 2012. *Promoting Peace, Inciting Violence: The Role of Religion and Media*. London and New York: Routledge. https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203148082

Mitchell, M. & M. Egudo 2003. *A Review of Narrative Methodology*. Edinburgh, South Australia: DSTO Systems Sciences Laboratory. https://doi.org/10.1037/e426492005-001

Osigwe, C.N. 2016. Contemporary Nigeria Church Music: A Search for True Identity and Cultural Relevance. *International Journal of Music and Performing Arts* 4,2: 65 - 71. https://doi.org/10.15640/ijmpa.v4n1a6

Padilla, A.M. & W. Perez 2003. Acculturation, Social Identity, and Social Cognition: A New Perspective. *Hispanic Journal of Behavioral Sciences* 25,1: 35 - 55. https://doi.org/10.1177/0739986303251694

Padilla-Diaz, M. 2015. Phenomenology in Educational Qualitative Research: Philosophy as Science or Philosophy Science? *International Journal of Educational Excellence* 1,2: 101 - 110. https://doi.org/10.18562/IJEE.2015.0009

Patrick, H.O. 2020. Winning Hearts and Minds: Fostering Inclusiveness through Community Development Tactics in South Africa. In Kariuki, P., M.L.J Goyayi & S. Mhlongo (eds.): *Social Cohesion in the Last Decade: Taking Stock to Inform the New Decade*. Durban: Democratic Development Program.

Rastas, A. & E. Seye 2016. Music as a Site for Africanness and Diaspora Cultures: African Musicians in the White Landscape of Finland. *African and Black Diaspora: An International Journal* 9,1: 82 - 95. https://doi.org/10.1080/17528631.2015.1055652

Rentfrow, P.J. & S.D. Gosling 2007. The Content and Validity of Music-Genre Stereotypes among College Students. *Psychology of Music*. 35,2: 306 - 326. https://doi.org/10.1177/0305735607070382

Rigobert, K. 2009. Pentecostalism in Kinshasa: Maintaining Multiple Church Membership. *African Communication Research* 2,1: 145 - 166.

Schäfer, T. & P. Sedlmeier 2010. What Makes Us Like Music? Determinants of Music Preference. *Psychology of Aesthetics Creativity and the Arts*. 4,2: 223 - 234. https://doi.org/10.1037/a0018374

Schwartz, S.J., M.J. Montgomery & E. Briones 2006. The Role of Identity in Acculturation among Immigrant People: Theoretical Propositions, Empirical Questions, and Applied Recommendations. *Human Development* 49,1: 1 - 30. https://doi.org/10.1159/000090300

Slobin, M. 1994. Music in Diaspora: The View from Euro-America. *Diaspora: A Journal of Transnational Studies* 3,3: 243 - 251. https://doi.org/10.1353/dsp.1994.0012

Statistics South Africa 2011. *Durban*. (Accessed 02 May 2019.) http://www.statssa.gov.za/?page_id=4286&id=10350

Statistics South Africa 2015a. *General Household Survey*. (Accessed 16 March 2017.) http://www.statssa.gov.za/publications/P0318/P03182015.pdf

Statistics South Africa 2015b. *Mid-year Population Estimates*. (Accessed 16 March 2017.) https://www.statssa.gov.za/publications/P0302/P03022015.pdf

Struwig, F.W & G.B. Stead 2013 *Research: Planning, Designing and Reporting*. Cape Town: Pearson.

Tashmin, N. 2016. Diaspora and Multiculturalism. *World Scientific News (WSN)* 28: 13 - 29.

Thompson, R.L. 2015. *The Production of Gospel Music: An Ethnographic Study of Studio-Recorded Music in Bellville, Cape Town*. Master's dissertation. The University of the Western Cape.

Udok, E.C. & A.F. Odunuga. 2016. Music and Pentecostalism: The Nigerian Experience. *Review of Arts and Humanities* 5,1: 52 - 60. https://doi.org/10.15640/rah.v5n1a5

Vuoskoski, J.K, E.F. Clarke & T. DeNora. 2017. Music Listening Evokes Implicit Affiliation. *Psychology of Music* 45, 4: 584 - 599. https://doi.org/10.1177/0305735616680289

WCD website 2021. *Winners Chapel Durban: Home*. (Accessed on 05 July 2021.) https://www.winnerschapeldurban.com/

Yang, Y. 2013. Teaching Traditional Music in Mainland China. In Leong, S. & B.W. Leung (ed.): *Creative Arts in Education and Culture: Perspectives from Greater China*. Dordrecht: Springer. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-94-007-7729-3_10

Dr. Rhoda T.I. Patrick
Assistant Professor
Redeemer University
Canada
rtpatrick@redeemer.ca

Professor Ruth Teer-Tomaselli
Professor Emeritus
Centre for Culture and Media in Society (CCMS)
University of KwaZulu-Natal
South Africa
teertoma@ukzn.ac.za